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Parsons. —

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ILLUSTRATIONS O F P R O P H E C Y:

IN THE COURSE OF WHICH
ARE ELUCIDATED MANY PREDICTIONS, WHICH OCCUR

IN ISAIAH, OR DANIEL,
IN THE WRITINGS OF THE EVANGELISTS,
OR THE BOOK OF REVELATION;

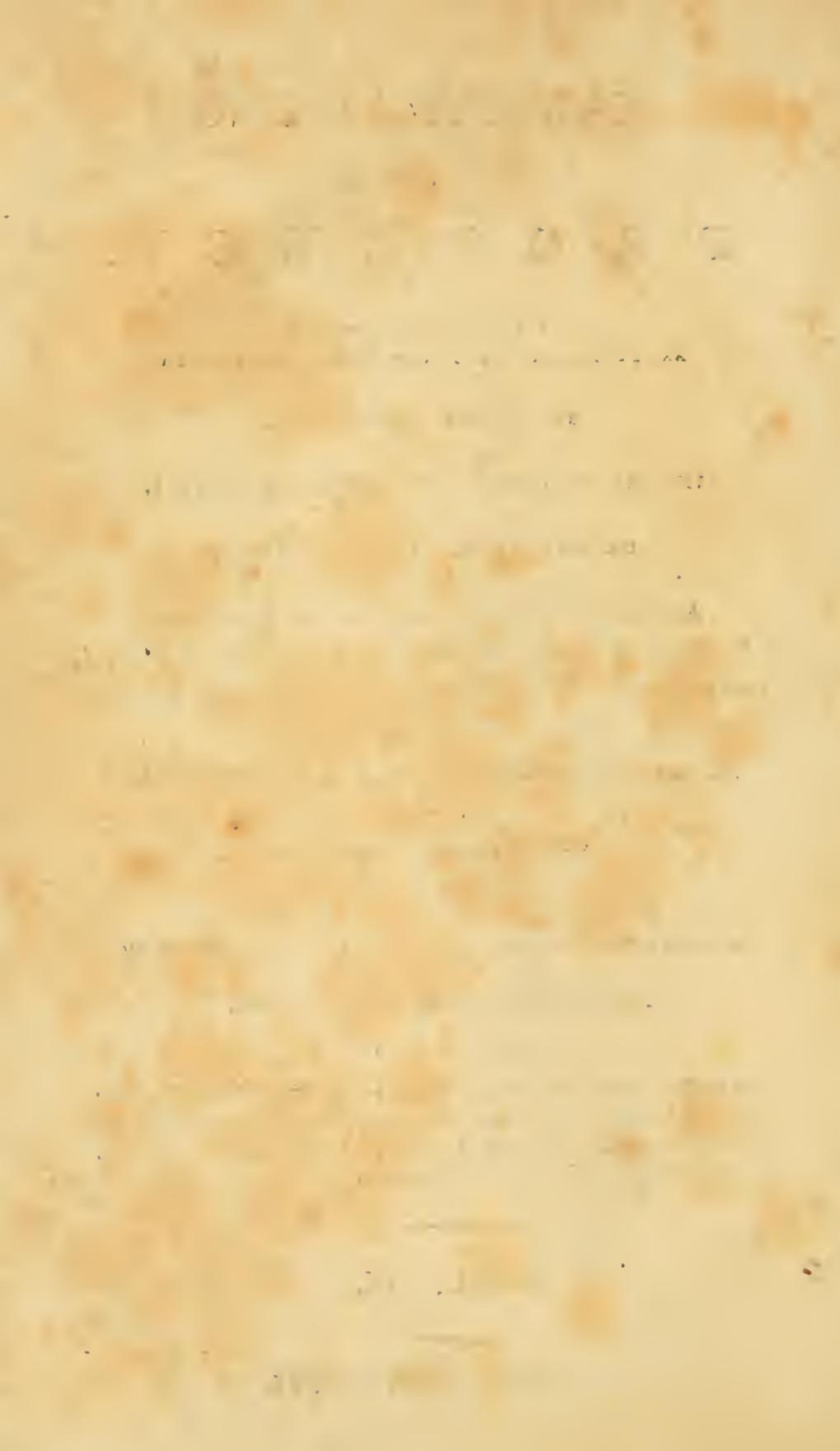
And which are thought to foretell, among other Great Events,
A Revolution in France, favourable to the Interests of Mankind,
The Overthrow of the Papal Power, and of Ecclesiastical Tyranny,
The Downfall of Civil Despotism,
And the subsequent Melioration of the State of the World :

TOGETHER
WITH A LARGE COLLECTION OF
EXTRACTS
Rev. Joseph Towers
INTERSPERSED THROUGH THE WORK, AND TAKEN FROM
NUMEROUS COMMENTATORS;

AND PARTICULARLY FROM
Joseph Mede, Vitringa, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Dr. Henry More, Dr. John Owen, Dr. Cressener, Peter Jurieu, Brenius, Bishop Chandler, Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. William Lowth, Fleming, Bengelius, Daubuz, Whitby, Lowman, Bishop Newton, and Bishop Hurd.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE FATE OF THE TEN HORNS OF THE SECULAR BEAST.

FROM ch. xvi. of the apocalypse a prophecy has been cited, which foretells the overthrow of a number of confederated princes. But there are prophecies yet more express. There are prophecies, which clearly announce that every antichristian government in Europe shall be destroyed. To the philanthropist such conclusions, if satisfactorily deduced from the prophetic scriptures, must be capable of imparting the purest pleasure.

If I am asked, why I take so much pains to explain the prophecies, which foretell the arbitrary conduct and the subsequent destruction of the antichristian princes of Europe, I reply, that I have the highest authority for doing it, the particular recommendation of the prophet himself. At the close of the description of the ten-horned Beast, which represents these kings, St. John adds, (xiii. 9, 10.), *If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity : he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword*¹. Now the first of these sentences unquestionably signifies, that the reader of the apocalypse should, to this part of it, pay a marked attention, and study it with the greatest care. Thus, as bp. Newton observes², ‘it was customary with

¹ The two great evils produced by the ten-horned Beast, says an annotator on this verse, ‘will be slavery and death. And God will, in his due time, arise and avenge.’ Cradock.

² In loc.

' our *Saviour*, when he would have his auditors pay a particular attention to what he had been saying, to add, '*He who hath ears to hear let him hear.*' The subsequent sentence of the prophet Mr. Pyle thus paraphrases : ' he will assuredly vindicate the cause of his true religion, ' and pull down the antichristian powers that oppress it, ' by a most exemplary destruction ; and cause his true ' and faithful servants to reap the blessings of Christianity in safety, glory, and peace.' Perhaps this verse does not merely denounce the destruction of the anti-christian monarchies themselves, but may denote more particularly, with respect to individual princes, that the time will come, when he who enslaveth his people shall himself be imprisoned ; when he who maketh havock with the sword shall himself be put to death.

I shall next quote from ch. xvii. an important passage, which foretells the overthrow of the antichristian monarchies, briefly indeed, but clearly. *And the angel said unto me—the Ten Horns which thou sawest are Ten Kings, which have received no kingdom as yet ; but receive power as kings one hour with the Beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them.* That this is not spoken of the conduct of the Ten Kings at any particular time, but of their conduct in general, is clear and indisputable. Can any man then, pretending to the slightest skill in the division of prophecy, attentively inspect these verses (v. 12, 13, 14), and at the same time entertain a doubt (however ignorant he may be of what has actually passed in the world), whether the mass of European princes have not been eminently hostile to human happiness and to genuine Christianity³ ? As

³ 'The splendor, luxury, self-interest, martial glory, &c. which pass for essentials in Christian governments, are totally opposite to the meek, humble

As the Roman Western empire was not broken into separate portions, and governed by a number of distinct and independent princes, till several centuries after the delivery of his prophecy, our inspired apostle accordingly apprizes us, that, in his time, the epoch of their dominion was not arrived. They had, as he expresses himself, *received no kingdom AS YET.* After observing that we do not read in the book of Revelation of any other personage denominated a Beast, excepting the two-horned and the ten-horned Beasts; I shall cite the next clause of v. 12, which asserts, that *the Ten Kings receive power as kings one hour with the Beast.* The Beast pointed to in this passage the prophet speaks of as distinct from the Ten Kings; and he thereby has admonished us, that he has not here in view the greater of the two Beasts, but the smaller, who has two horns and is the representative of the antichristian priesthood. ‘What we translate *one hour*, μία ώρα, ought,’ says Lowman, ‘to have been translated *the same hour* or point of time, as several learned interpreters have justly observed’.—The Beast then, and the Ten Kings or Kingdoms, are to be contemporary powers, or to reign at ‘the same time.’ *These have one mind*, i. e. says Lowman, ‘they have the same design and intention⁵.’ Will it not be suspected by some, that the full exposition of this prophetical clause is this, that, whilst their joint reign subsists, I mean that of the antichristian kings and their allies in the priesthood, too many among them will have the same common design of pillaging the property,

⁴ humble, self-denying spirit of Christianity; and whichsoever of these finally prevails over the other, the present form of the government must be dissolved.’ Hartley on Man, 1749, 8vo. vol. II. p. 366.

⁴ As for instance Vitringa and bp. Newton.

⁵ Pref. p. 17.

and of usurping the rights, of mankind? Besides, in another view, how true an idea do these verses suggest of the despots of Europe! They speak a similar language to some before quoted from ch. xiii. Consult the pages of modern history; and examine, if they have not uniformly given their power and strength unto the Beast, that has two horns like a lamb? Have they not, to the authors of spiritual despotism, constantly imparted aid? Are not these the persons who have most successfully made war with the lamb? Has not an unlawful power been assumed by them over the religion of Jesus? When they have not dared themselves to model and to alter it, have they not authorised the claim in a foreign priest or a domestic synod? Are not the annals of every country, and of almost every period, stained by the blood of the disciples of the Lamb, which they have shed; and have they not levelled their bitterest opposition against those, who have been most distinguished for purity of faith, of practice, and of external worship?

The sentence pronounced against the several anti-christian monarchies of Europe in v. 8 and 11 of this chapter, I must not altogether omit. In the former place, it is affirmed, that *the Beast having Ten Horns*, which at the time of the prophecy had no being, shall arise, and afterwards *shall go into perdition*, or, as it might have been translated, *shall go into destruction*. In the latter, it is again said of him, that he *goeth into perdition*.

‘ These Ten Horns,’ says an early commentator, ‘ are Ten European Kings, and whoever reckons them up, I find, brings in the Kings of Britain, for one of the horns of this terrible and fearful monster⁶.’ But this is a subject, on which I shall, for certain reasons which

⁶ Haughton on Antichrist, p. 88.

it is not difficult to comprehend, decline entering: and I shall only observe, that though *every other European monarchy* should stand justly chargeable with notorious antichristianism, it does not *of necessity* follow, that that of Great Britain carries upon it the same fatal marks; nor, though *every other writer* on the subject should maintain, that the English monarchy is unquestionably and of course one of the Ten Horns, is it an *inevitable inference*, that the evidence should strike me with equal force, or that I should entertain the opinion at all? It is, however, apprehended, that on this point the mind of the intelligent and unprejudiced reader will not long hesitate to decide.

As the events, foretold by St. John in ch. xvii. are of great importance, and terminate in a manner favourable to the best interests of mankind, he resumes the subject in ch. xix. *And I saw the Beast, and the Kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, (i. e. against Christ) and against his army. And the Beast⁷ was taken, and with him the False Prophet⁸, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast, and them that had worshipped his image: these were both cast alive into a lake of fire.* This passage alike respects the oppressive governments and oppressive hierarchies of the European world. The final overthrow of the antichristian church, says a learned commentator on prophecy, ‘will be accomplished in the subversion of those civil powers, which have been its only and its long support⁹.’ ‘It is nothing,’ says a

⁷ ‘The Beast and the False Prophet,’ i. e. says bp. Newton (in loc.), ‘the Antichristian Powers, Civil and Ecclesiastical.’

⁸ Mr. Wakefield translates it, *the False Teacher*.

⁹ *Commentaries and Essays*; printed for Johnson. Signature Synergus, p. 485.

celebrated writer, ‘ but the *alliance* of the kingdom of Christ with the kingdoms of this world (an alliance which our Lord himself expressly disclaimed), that supports the grossest corruptions of Christianity; and perhaps we must wait for the fall of the civil powers before this most unnatural alliance be broken. Calamitous, no doubt, will that time be. But what convolution in the political world ought to be a subject of lamentation, if it be attended with so desirable an event? May the *kingdom of God*, and of Christ (that which I conceive to be intended in the Lord’s prayer) truly and fully come, though all the kingdoms of the world be removed in order to make way for it¹⁰.’

Fire is a symbol of destruction; and accordingly the *casting of the Beast and the False Prophet into a lake of fire*, denotes, to use the words of an early apocalyptic writer upon this passage, ‘ the perpetual ruin of all anti-christian tyranny, and an utter end of all wicked dominion¹¹.’ In the 14th v. of the xxth chapter, immediately after the description of the general resurrection and the day of judgment, the same¹² language is employed. It is said of *Death*, that he was *cast into a lake of fire*. Here also the expression has a figurative acceptation: here also it denotes, not torment, but destruction¹³: here also it is applied, not to a real, but an ideal personage. The ten-horned Beast and the False Prophet

¹⁰ Priestley’s Hist. of the Corruptions of Christianity, vol. II. p. 489.

¹¹ The Irenicon Abridged, by W. Sherwin, 1674, p. 37.

¹² In the original the two passages vary not at all. In both it is την λίμνην τοῦ πυρός, which our translation arbitrarily renders, in one place, a lake of fire, in the other, *the lake of fire*.

¹³ ‘ This *lake of fire* is but a symbolical notion, or representation of the perpetual continuation and unchangeableness of that state, into which those matters are reduced, which are said to be thrown therein; implying, that they shall no more affect mankind, as being to them utterly destroyed.’ Daubuz.

were both cast alive into a lake of fire. ‘ This,’ says Dr. Lancaster in his abridgment of Daubuz, ‘ not only signifies, that the punishment of the Beast and of the False Prophet will be exceeding dreadful, but also that it will, and at the same time the consequences of it, be more terrible than that of their adherents. For we must consider, that—the Beast and False Prophet are bodies politic and perpetual or successive; and that the design here is to shew us, that Christ will not only destroy at last the persons, who at that time are in possession of what is signified by the Beast and False Prophet, but also utterly extirpate the succession of the tyranny and false prophecy for ever. So that the Beast and the False Prophet are persons in a double capacity; that is, persons in general, enemies to Christ, and also in possession of a power, which is to be extinguished with them. And therefore their particular judgment must be considered with that double view.’ Of these two emblematic personages the prophet asserts, not only that they were thrown into *a lake of fire*, but that they were thrown *alive*. Now, says Daubuz, ‘ *alive* signifies one having power and activity;’ and therefore ‘ when they are said to be *cast alive*,’ this may be designed ‘ to shew, that this sudden Revolution shall happen to them whilst they are vigorous and active, strengthening themselves to resist¹⁴, and little expecting to be suddenly overcome, and that all the power of this tyranny and false prophecy shall be so destroyed, that it shall never be able to act again. That is, not only that the persons of them that hold the power shall be destroyed, which is but a transient punishment; but also, that their suc-

¹⁴ Perfectly does this correspond with the account of the war of Armageddon, in which the confederated antichristian princes are to levy mighty forces, and vigorously to exert themselves, immediately previous to their complete overthrow.

' cession shall be stopped, and the like power shall never be revived.'

But enough has been said to shew, that a momentous conclusion is to be drawn from the words of St. John. A conclusion highly consolatory and encouraging. Since we have not only seen, that the duration of the sovereignty of the *Ten Kings* is limited, it being declared, that *they receive power as Kings one hour with the Beast* (xvii. 12)¹⁵; but have seen it farther announced by the voice of the prophet, that *the Lamb shall overcome the Ten Kings* (xvii. 14), that *the Beast having Ten Horns shall go into perdition* (xvii. 8, 11), and again, that this *Beast was taken, and cast into a lake of fire* (xix. 20), i. e. totally destroyed; we are, on the authority of prophecy, delivered clearly and repeatedly, authorized to conclude, that all the Monarchies of Europe which are antiehrisitian will at length be destroyed. And were scripture altogether silent, we might gather from the light of reason, that all governments, founded on despotism and oppression, MUST be offensive to the Deity. ' From the known perfections of God, we conclude he wills the happiness of mankind; and though he condescends not to interpose miraculously, that that kind of civil polity is most pleasing in his eye¹⁶, which is productive of the greatest felicity¹⁷. '

The

¹⁵ It is also said, in ch. xiii. 5, of the *Beast having Ten Horns*, that *power was given unto him to continue forty and two months*.

¹⁶ We read but of one government appointed by the Deity; and it was not an HEREDITARY and MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT, like those of the surrounding nations, but a FREE and POPULAR one. I now cite from a respectable anonymous writer. ' The government which God ordained over the children of Israel consisted of three parts, besides the magistrates of the several tribes and cities. They had a chief magistrate, who was called judge or captain, as Joshua, Gideon, and others; a council of 70 chosen men; and THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE

The great Mr. Mede lays it down as a matter undeniably established, that the two-horned and the ten-horned Beasts expire together¹⁸. The former being regarded as the representative of the antichristian priesthood, reason herself indeed assures us it is highly probable, that though some particular horns of the Secular Beast, with their attendant hierarchies, will be earliest demolished; yet that the fall of the other civil and ecclesiastical tyrannies, linked as they are by so close a union to each other, will be events nearly contemporary. That they will be *absolutely* contemporary, the 9th and 10th verses of ch. xviii. seem to contradict; since they certainly countenance the idea, that the antichristian princes of Europe, some time previous to their own complete overthrow, will witness, within the limits of the Western Roman empire, the total downfall of priestly usurpation.
‘We are now to expect soon,’ says Bengelius in the conclusion of his Exposition of the Apocalypse, ‘the harvest, and the vintage; the pouring out of the vials; the judgment of Babylon; the final rage of the Beast, and his destruction.’ And he shortly after adds, ‘the

‘PEOPLE: and these judges or captains had not the name or power of kings, neither was their power transmitted to their children.’ Remarkable is the declaration of Hosea, which he makes in the name of the Supreme Being (xiii. 11), *I gave thee a king in mine anger.*

¹⁷ Hall’s Apol. for the Freedom of the Press. Pref.

¹⁸ Clav. Apoc. Pars Prima, Synchronismus II. p. 523. ‘As these two Beasts,’ says Mr. Whiston, ‘are such great companions while they live together, so it is certain, that their final period is at one and the same time, and that they perish with the same common destruction,’ p. 69. The next are the words of a more modern, a more orthodox, but I will not say, an honester writer. ‘These two Beasts,’ says bp. Hallifax, ‘being inseparable one from the other, in their rise and in their extinction, must of course be considered as contemporaries,’ p. 245. I just add, that that part of the apocalypse (ch. xvii.), where the whore of Babylon is described as *sitting upon the ten-horned Beast*, evidently implies, that the tyrannizing antichristian priesthood and the Ten Kings should co-exist.

' Mighty and the Nobles of this world are astonished, ' when they are told there will soon be a Great ' Change¹⁹.' This celebrated German, it will perhaps be thought, was somewhat premature, when he stated this astonishment to have taken place at the time *he wrote*²⁰. But as applied to the present æra his statement seems perfectly correct. The materials of a Great Change in the European world are already collected; and rapid is their increase. At length the period is arrived, when all the plunderers of mankind, however discriminated by titles or offices, feel alternate emotions of astonishment and terror; and are seriously apprehensive of being buried under the foundation of a Mighty Revolution.

¹⁹ Int. to the Apoc. ut supra, p. 326.

²⁰ His Exposition was published in 1740.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON PROPHECY IN GENERAL, AND THE HEBREW PROPHETS IN PARTICULAR.

HITHERTO I have been *principally* employed in citing extracts, or suggesting thoughts, illustrative of the apocalyptic predictions. But as a considerable number of those, which occur in the chapters immediately succeeding, and in the subsequent part of the work, are taken either from Daniel, or from Isaiah, or from some other prophetic writer of the Jewish dispensation, I have concluded, that some extracts, relative to the Hebrew prophets, and to prophecy in general, may

be properly introduced, and that this part of the work furnishes a convenient place for their insertion. Had so large an assemblage of *general observations* been introduced in the beginning of the work, and *added to* those, relative to the apocalypse, which are brought forward in the iid and ivth chapters, I should have been apprehensive, lest a considerable proportion of my readers, being principally solicitous to penetrate the import of *particular prophecies*, would have neglected to bestow upon them that degree of attention which they justly claim.

‘ To know future events,’ says Dr. Sykes, ‘ and to be able to foretell them, is not, cannot be the effect of study, or peculiar temperature of body; it cannot be taught in schools, since it depends upon an infinity of free contingent actions, which he alone who governs all things can direct or foresee. If, therefore, events have been foreseen and foretold, at such distance of time, as excludes the knowledge of human minds, and the powers of their conjectures, it must be owing to divine influence, and to that alone¹. ’

There are, it may be observed, several propositions, to prove any one of which, would be to prove the non-existence of prophecy. But then these propositions are so unreasonable, so unfounded, that to give a simple statement of them will be sufficient to convince the honest inquirer, that they are completely incapable of proof. If Collins, in his work against prophecy, ‘ would have acted the part of a fair and reasonable adversary, he should,’ says Dr. Samuel Chandler, ‘ have proved prophecy an impossible thing; either that there is no God; or that if there is, he doth not concern himself about the affairs of nations and kingdoms; or that if

¹ Principles and Connexion of Nat. and Rev. Rel. p. 176.

‘ he

• he doth, he knows nothing before it comes to pass ; or
 • that he hath no wise purposes to answer by over-ruling
 • the affairs of the world, and executing the purposes of
 • his own good pleasure ; or that if he hath, he cannot
 • discover these purposes to men ; or that if he could,
 • there is no wise and kind purpose to be answered by
 • such a revelation ; or that if there is, those to whom he
 • vouchsafes a revelation cannot discover it to others².

Reserving all the other general observations on prophecy to a subsequent part of the chapter, I shall here introduce those extracts, which respect the authenticity of the Hebrew scriptures.

By ‘the subsistence of the Jewish people at this time,’ says Dr. Lardner, ‘all are assured of the antiquity and genuineness of the scriptures of the Old Testament. These are received by them, and read in their synagogues : and they allow, that therein are contained promises of a great and eminent deliverer. None therefore can pretend, that the scriptures, so often appealed to by Christ and his apostles, are forgeries of Christians³.’

‘There can,’ says Dr. Priestley, ‘be no doubt but that the canon of the Old Testament was the same in the time of our Saviour as it is now⁴; nor could it have

² Vindic. of Dan. 1728, p. 30.

³ Lardner’s Works, vol. X. p. 84.

⁴ ‘The Jewish synagogues in all countries were,’ says Mr. Gray, ‘numerous : wherever the apostles preached, they found them ; they were established by the direction of the rabbins in every place, where there were ten persons of full age and free condition.’ Accordingly the jealous care, with which the scriptures were preserved in the tabernacle, and in the temple, was ‘not more calculated to secure their integrity, than that reverence which afterwards displayed itself in the dispersed synagogues, and in the churches consecrated to the Christian faith.’ A Key to the Old Testament by the Rev. Robert Gray, late of St. Mary Hall, Oxf. 1791, p. 13, 16.

been corrupted materially after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity⁵, on account of the sect of the Samaritans, which took its rise about that time. For these people professed the same regard to the sacred books with the Jews themselves, and were always at variance with them about the interpretation of the scriptures. The Samaritan copy of the Pentateuch is now in our hands, and excepting some *numbers*, in which the different copies and translations of all ancient writings are peculiarly subject to vary, and a single text, in which mount Gerizim and mount Ebal are interchanged, it is the very same with the Jewish copy. Not long after this, the books of the Old Testament, beginning with the Pentateuch, were translated into Greek, and dispersed, by means of the Jews, into almost every part of the known world. There is not the least probability, that any change, worth any man's attempting to make, or in the least affecting any principal point of the Jewish religion, was made during their captivity; which, however, was not so long, reckoning from the time of the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, but that many of those who returned from it had a perfect remembrance of the temple of Solomon, which had been burned in the siege by Nebuchadnezzar; for they wept when they saw how much the new temple was inferior to it, and can it be supposed, but that some of these people would have taken the alarm, and a schism have been occasioned, if any material change had been attempted to be made in the constitution of the law, or the contents of the sacred books.—If we go farther back into the Jewish history, we shall be unable to pitch upon any time, in

⁵ The Jews, according to Prideaux, returned from their captivity at Babylon in the year 535 before the Christian era.

‘ which any material change in the sacred books could
‘ have been attempted, with the least prospect of success.
‘ It was one of the most earnest instructions of Moses
‘ himself, that the book of the law, a copy of which was
‘ lodged in the ark, should be the subject of constant
‘ reading and meditation in every Israelitish family; and
‘ it was expressly appointed, that it should be read pub-
‘ licly every seven years, at the feast of Tabernacles,
‘ Deut. xxxi. 9, 13; and the Levites, who were dis-
‘ persed through all the twelve tribes, were particularly
‘ appointed to study and to explain it to the rest of the
‘ nation; and notwithstanding the times of defection and
‘ idolatry, they were never entirely without prophets,
‘ and even many thousands of others, who continued
‘ firm in the worship of the true God, and therefore must
‘ have retained their regard to the sacred books of the
‘ law.—Upon the whole, the Jews have, no doubt, acted
‘ the part of most faithful and even scrupulous guardians
‘ of their sacred books, for the use of all the world in
‘ the times of Christianity. After the last of the pro-
‘ phets, Malachi, they admitted no more books into their
‘ canon, so as to permit them to be read in their syna-
‘ gogues, though they were written by the most eminent
‘ men in their nation; it being a maxim with them, that
‘ no book could be entitled to a place in the canon of
‘ their scriptures, unless it was written by a prophet, or a
‘ person who had had communication with God. That
‘ the scriptures of the Old Testament have not been
‘ materially corrupted by the Jews since the promulga-
‘ tion of Christianity,—is evident from the many pro-
‘ phecies still remaining in their scriptures, concerning
‘ the humiliation and sufferings of the Messiah, in which
‘ the Christians always triumphed when they disputed
‘ with the Jews. These passages, therefore, we may
‘ assure ourselves, would have been the first that the
‘ Jews

‘ Jews would have practised upon, if it had been in their power, or in their inclination to do it.’⁶

‘ When corruptions in worship and manners, and many superstitious usages, grew among them, they were,’ says Dr. Worthington, ‘ obliged to devise an oral law, to be handed down by oral tradition, to countenance those corruptions and innovations; which law they afterwards collected into a body, and committed to writing likewise. But the *Mishna* had been needless and superfluous, durst they have incorporated their traditions with the scriptures. As they have not done this, in a case in which they were most tempted to do it, there is less room to suspect their having wilfully corrupted them in other respects.’ So scrupulously vigilant were the Jews in preserving ‘ the scriptures, that their Masorites numbered not only the sections, but even the words and letters, that no fraud or inadvertency might corrupt—the least iota of what they esteemed so sacred. If a word happened to be altered in any copy, it was to be laid aside as useless, or given to a poor man to teach his children by, on condition it was not brought into the synagogue. The prince was to copy the original exemplar of the law, laid up in the sanctuary, with his own hand: and every Jew was to make it his constant discourse and meditation, to teach it to his children, and wear part of it on his hands and forehead.’⁷

‘ We shall,’ says Mr. Gray, ‘ be still farther convinced, that the sacred volume has preserved its genuine purity in every important point, if we consider how little the Septuagint version of the scriptures differs from the Hebrew copies, notwithstanding the

⁶ Institutes of Nat. and Rev. Rel. 1782, vol. I, p. 297.

⁷ Vol. I, p. 136, 140.

‘ many

many ages that have elapsed since the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the king of Egypt, who was the second monarch of the Macedonian race, about 270 years before Christ, and under whose reign this translation was made into Greek. It has been maintained, indeed, by some learned men, that only the Pentateuch was translated at first, and that the other books were rendered into Greek successively at different times; however this may have been, they were all translated long before the birth of Christ. This version has no important variations from the Hebrew, except in some chronological accounts, occasioned probably by the carelessness of the copyists. It was used in all those countries, where Alexander had established the Grecian language, and seems to have been admitted into the Jewish synagogues in Judæa, and even at Jerusalem, where that language prevailed; and the Septuagint was certainly most used there in the time of our Saviour.—Thus does the general coincidence between the Hebrew copies⁸, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, demonstrate the unaltered integrity of the scriptures in important points, as we now possess them, and this integrity is still farther confirmed by the conformity which subsists between those various translations of the Bible into different languages, which have been performed since the time of our Saviour.—It appears, therefore, that, from the time of their first inspiration to the present day, the sacred writings have been dispersed into so many different hands, that no possible opportunity could be furnished for confederate corruption, and

⁸ In the bible of Kennicott are the most considerable variations of nearly 700 different Hebrew manuscripts; and many more have been collated by the more recent labours of De Rossi.

' every designed alteration must immediately have been
' detected'.

' All the books of scripture have also,' observes Dr. Priestley, ' many *internal marks* of their being the ' genuine production of the ages, in which they are said ' to have been written, as they contain so many allusions ' to particular persons, places, opinions, and customs, ' which are known, from other allowed histories, to ' have existed in those times¹⁰.' In agreement with this remark of Dr. Priestley, Dr. Hartley asserts, that ' his- ' tory and chronology were in so uncertain a state in ' ancient times, that the prophecies concerning foreign ' countries *could not* have been adapted to the facts, *even* ' after they had happened, with so much exactness as ' modern enquirers have shewn the scripture-prophecies ' to be, *by a learned nation*, and much less by the Jews, ' who were remarkably ignorant of what passed in fo- ' reign countries¹¹.'

The pretensions of the Hebrew prophets ' to be con- ' sidered as God's appointed servants, were,' says Mr. Gray, ' demonstrated by the unimpeachable integrity of ' their characters; by the intrinsic excellence and ten- ' dency of their instruction; and by the disinterested ' zeal, and undaunted fortitude, with which they perse- ' vered in their great designs. These were still farther ' confirmed by the miraculous proof which they dif-

¹⁰ Key to the Old Test. p. 20, 22. After observing that the Septuagint may have been translated from *very ancient* Hebrew manuscripts, bp. Newcome adds, ' this observation may be extended to the Chaldee paraphrase of Jonathan, made about the time of Christ; to the Syriac version, which is generally attributed to the first century; to the imperfect Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, who lived in the second century; and even to the Latin version, of which Jerom was the author in the fourth century.' *Attempt towards an Improved Version of Ezekiel* Dublin, 1788. Pref. p. 36.

¹¹ Institutes, vol. I. p. 203.

" On Man, vol. II. p. 152.

‘ played of divine support, and by the immediate completion of many less important predictions which they uttered. Such were the credentials of their exalted character, which the prophets furnished to their contemporaries ; and we, who having lived to witness the appearance of the second dispensation, can look back to the connexion which subsisted between the two covenants, have received additional evidence of the inspiration of the prophets, in the attestations of our Saviour and his apostles ; and in the retrospect of a germinant and gradually maturing scheme of prophecy, connected in all its parts.—We have still farther incontrovertible proofs of their divine appointment, in the numerous prophecies, which, in these latter days, are fulfilled, and still under our own eyes continue to receive their completion’¹².

The next quotation is from that ingenious and truly liberal prelate, Dr. Newcome, bp. of Waterford. ‘ God raised up a succession of prophets among his people for many wise and gracious purposes. They were not only designed to retain the Jews in the worship of the one true God ; but to spread the knowledge of him among the neighbouring nations, by the fame of their predictions and miracles. They were a barrier against those prevailing kinds of superstition which consisted in the supposed evocation of departed spirits, and in consulting imaginary local deities, for the purpose of gratifying the natural thirst which all mankind have for the knowledge of futurity.—It must also be observed, that the attestations given by the prophets to the Mosaic law, their instructions and exhortations, their reproofs and threatenings, were powerful means of preserving the Jews in obedience, and eminent displays of the di-

¹² Key to the Old Test. p. 813.

' vine goodness and compassion. Another design in
' sending the prophets was, that—they might record
' God's dealings with his people and with other adjoining
' nations and empires; and might thus transmit to
' after ages a most instructive history of his adorable
' ways in governing the world. Josephus asserts¹³, that,
' from the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes,
' the prophets who succeeded that legislator wrote the
' transactions of their own times.—This assertion is confirmed by the sacred writers; who mention the name of
many prophets as having recorded the affairs of the
Jewish nation. A farther and most important reason
for instituting the prophetic order was, that, by a long
series of predictions, the attention of the Jews might be
turned to the coming of their Messiah; and that the
faith of succeeding ages in that great event might be
thus confirmed. The writings of these prophets bear
plain signatures of their divine authority. Examine
the books of the Greek and Roman sages; and observe
what discordant opinions *they* contain on almost every
point of theology and philosophy. But in the Hebrew
prophets there is a wonderful harmony of doctrine for
above a thousand years¹⁴; unparalleled in the writings of any country. History teaches us, that a great
number of their prophecies has been accomplished;
and we know that some of them are accomplishing at
this day. It also peculiarly deserves our notice, that
these holy men entertained the most worthy conceptions of the Deity in the midst of an idolatrous nation;
and inculcated the supreme excellence of moral duties,
when all around them, even the few worshippers of
Jehovah himself, were solely intent on ritual observ-

¹³ Contr. Ap. I. 8.

¹⁴ From Moses before Christ about 1500, to Malachi before Christ about 436,

'ances. The writings, which these men of God have
 'transmitted down to us, will be eminently useful in
 'every age of the Christian church; not only as they
 'contain illustrious prophecies of many events and espe-
 'cially of our Blessed Lord's appearance, but for their
 'magnificent descriptions of the Deity, for their animat-
 'ing lessons of piety and virtue, and for the indignation
 'which they express and the punishments which they de-
 'nounce against idolatry and vice: which particular
 'topics, among many other instructive and important
 'ones, are treated by them with uncommon variety,
 'beauty and sublimity, and with an authority becoming
 'ambassadors of The Most High¹⁵.

In enumerating the uses of prophecy in ancient times, Dr. Jortin says,

' 1. It served to secure the belief of a God and of a providence. As God is invisible and spiritual, there was cause to fear, that in the first and ruder ages of the world, when men were busier in cultivating the earth than in cultivating arts and sciences, and in seeking the necessaries of life, than in the study of morality, they might forget their creator and governor; and therefore God maintained amongst them the great article of faith in him, by manifestations of himself; by sending angels to declare his will; by miracles; and by prophecies. These were barriers against atheism.'

' 2. It was intended to give men the profoundest veneration for that amazing knowledge from which nothing was concealed, not even the future actions of creatures, and the things which as yet were not. How could a man hope to hide any counsel, any design, or thought from such a being?'

¹⁵ An Attempt towards an Improved Version of the Twelve Minor Prophets, 1785, pref. p. 5.

' 3. It contributed to keep up devotion and true religion, the religion of the heart, which consists partly in entertaining just and honourable notions of God and of his perfections, and which is a more rational and a more acceptable service than rites and ceremonies.'

' 4. It excited men to rely upon God, and to love him, who condescended to hold this mutual intercourse with his creatures¹⁶.'

With respect to the Hebrew prophets, ' whose inspired writings still continue to instruct mankind, it may,' says Mr. Gray, ' be affirmed, that in the long and illustrious succession from Moses to Malachi, *not one* appears, who was not entitled to considerable reverence by the display of great and extraordinary virtues. Employed in the exalted office of teaching and reforming mankind, they appear to have been animated with a becoming and correspondent zeal.—The most intemperate princes were sometimes compelled unwillingly to hear and to obey their directions, though often so incensed by their rebuke, as to resent it by the severest persecutions. Then it was, that the prophets evinced the integrity of their characters, by zealously encountering oppression, hatred, and death, in the cause of religion. Then it was, that they firmly supported trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about, destitute, afflicted, tormented¹⁷.'

To the same purpose speaks Mr. Lowth. ' With what undaunted courage and constancy did they reprove the popular vices of the times they lived in? Not sparing the greatest persons either out of fear or flattery. And if

¹⁶ Rem. on Eccl. Hist. 2d ed. vol. I. p. 60.

¹⁷ Heb. xi. 36, 37. Key to the Old Test. p. 328.

' we suppose them to have acted like men in their wits
' (and there is no tolerable reason to suspect the con-
' trary), we must conclude, that nothing but a sense of
' their duty could prompt them to do this; for they
' could propose no advantage to themselves by it, but on
' the contrary were to expect all the scorn and misery,
' which the angry and revengeful temper of wicked men
' in power, whom they had offended, could bring upon
' them. And it could certainly be no pleasure to be
' continually reproving men, when there was little or no
' hopes of reclaiming them: nay when they had not so
' much civility as to thank them for their good intentions,
' and take the good advice, which they offered, kindly at
' their hands. If it had not been purely out of a prin-
' ciple of conscience, and that they were persuaded of
' the truth and great concern of these things, and there-
' fore spoke, they might, with much more advantage to
' themselves, have let men be quiet and go on securely
' in their sins. Many of their troubles and sufferings we
' find recorded in their own books, but several other
' scripture-writers assure us, that they were generally
' martyrs for the truth's sake, and yet none of these suf-
' ferings could prevail with them to retract any thing
' they had said, or to confess that they had been deluded
' themselves, or imposed upon others, and said, *the Lord*
' *saith*, though he had not spoken.'

We find, says the same writer, that they set forth the absurdity of Pagan idolatry with great strength ' of argu-
' ment: and endeavour to give men clear and distinct
' notions of God's spirituality, unity, omnipresence, uni-
' versal providence,—and justice in rewarding men ac-
' cording to their works. They unfold the methods of
' providence in disposing of kingdoms, and making use
' of wicked princes and nations to be the instruments of
' God's justice in punishing the sins of others. Such
' dis-

' discourses do not look like the idle dreams of a melancholy and disturbed fancy, but do indeed answer the character they pretend to'.¹⁸

' Whilst other nations,' says Dr. Priestley, ' were addicted to the most wretched superstitions, having recourse to various divinations, and arts of witchcraft, whenever they wanted to get intelligence concerning future events, or the assistance of superior powers, the Jewish people were taught to hold all these things in deserved contempt and abhorrence. They were instructed to expect no information concerning future events, or assistance in any undertaking, but from the one living and true God; and they were commanded to punish all those who pretended to the abominable arts of divination and witchcraft with death. It is observed, also, that the Jewish prophets delivered themselves with gravity and seriousness, worthy of the majesty of him that sent them, and did not use those violent convulsions, foamings at the mouth, and extravagant gestures, which the heathen diviners had recourse to, in order to dazzle and impose upon those who confuted them. So far is there from being any pretence for saying, that the Jews were naturally more intelligent than their neighbours, and attained those just notions of religion and morality by their own reason and good sense, that their own history always represents them as stiff-necked, and slow of understanding; and to this very day their enemies constantly reproach them as being the most stupid of mankind. Besides, their history shews, that the Jews were naturally as prone to idolatry and superstition as any other people could be; and their frequent relapses into the idolatry

¹⁸ Lowth's Vindication of the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Old and New Testament, 1692, p. 118, 121.

' of their neighbours—demonstrate, that, had it not been
' for divine instructions, inculcated again and again, they
' would have been far from shewing an example of a
' purer religion, or more rational worship, than such as
' prevailed in other countries¹⁹.'

' The characters of the eminent persons mentioned in
' the scriptures arise,' says Dr. Hartley, ' so much, in an
' indirect way, from the plain narrations of facts,' and
' their sins and imperfections are so fully set forth by
' themselves, or their friends, with their condemnation
' and punishment,—that we have in this a remarkable
' additional evidence for the truth of this part of the
' scripture-history.' At the same time the character of
the prophets in general was uncommonly excellent. Far
too excellent, indeed, ' to allow the supposition of an im-
pious fraud and imposture; which must be the case, if
they had not divine authority²⁰. '

If the prophetic writings of the Jews were the fabrica-
tions of fanaticism or imposture, ' what imaginable
reason is there,' asks a divine of the last century, ' why
the oracles of all the Heathen nations should never
have been much regarded, and now, in a manner, be
utterly lost, and that the books of the Jews should still
be preserved in their full authority; but the power and
advantage of truth in these, and the want of it in
them²¹? '

The great variety observable in the style of the books
of the Old Testament ' makes it improbable,' says Dr.
Doddridge, ' they should have been the work of one,
and the unity of design, that they should have been the
invention of many: for if these supposed inventors
lived in different ages, they could not have consulted

¹⁹ Institutes, vol. I. p. 366. ²⁰ On Man, vol. II. p. 170.

²¹ Jenkin's Reasonableness and Certainty of the Chr. Rel. 1698, vol. I.
p. 253.

' with each other ; and if they lived in the same age, the largeness of their plan would only have subjected them to new difficulties, without being likely to answer any valuable end²².' To the same purpose speaks bp. Hurd. In all the Hebrew prophets a unity of design is conspicuous ; ' yet without the least appearance of collusion, since *each* prophet hath his own peculiar views, and enlarges on facts and circumstances unnoticed by any other. Farther still, these various and successive prophecies are so intimately blended, and, as we may say, incorporated with each other, that the credit of *all* depends on the truth of *each*. For, the accomplishment of them falling in different times, every preceding prophecy becomes surety, as it were, for those that follow ; and the failure of any one must bring disgrace and ruin on all the rest²³.'

The greater part of the Hebrew prophets are written in poetry²⁴. Now the graceful dignity of the Hebrew poetry cannot, observes a great proficient in biblical learning, ' be always perceived in a verbal translation ; which not uncommonly disguises the original, as much as a prosaic rendering would cast a veil over the beauties of Homer or Sophocles. However,' says this writer, ' various kinds of beauty will ever shine by their native splendour throughout the Hebrew scriptures²⁵.'

Amongst other considerations, which may be adverted to as accounting for the obscurity to be found in the Hebrew scriptures, it may be remarked, that they are the productions of persons, who lived in A PERIOD OF TIME, and in A COUNTRY OF THE GLOBE, far remote from our own. Accordingly, says bp. Chandler,

²² Doddridge's Lect. 4to. 1763, p. 280.

²³ Vol. I. p. 136.

²⁴ On this point see lectures 18, 19, and 20 of the *Prælections* of bp. Lowth.

²⁵ Newcome's *Ezekiel*, pref. p. 38.

' the

• the Hebrew, as other Eastern languages, is entirely different from the European. Many things are there left to be supplied by the quickness of the reader's apprehension, which are with us expressed by proper words and repetitions. Particles disjunctive and adversative, significative marks of connexion, and of transition from one subject to another, are often omitted here. Dialogues are carried on, objections answered, comparisons made, without notice in the discourse²⁶.

Besides, the remains of the Hebrew language are, bp. Newcome observes, ' comprehended in one volume; ample indeed, and greatly diversified as to its matter and style, but of very inconsiderable bulk, when compared with the Greek and Roman writings, which have escaped the wreck of time. Hence,' says the learned prelate, ' it follows, that we are not acquainted with its full extent. If the book of Jasher and of Lamentations, all the odes of Solomon, and all his writings on natural history, were now extant; if the larger annals of the kings of Judah and Israel, and the histories ascribed to several prophets, had also been transmitted to us, the Hebrew tongue would have been enriched with many additional words and phrases, and many dark passages in the books which are preserved would have been placed in the clearest light.'

But notwithstanding the existence of such passages be admitted, yet, says this able critic, ' there are very few words or phrases in the Hebrew scriptures, of which a probable explanation cannot be given, either from the nature of the thing, or the context, or a comparison of the doubtful place with parallel ones, or the aid of the sister languages, or the interpretations of the ancient translators.—The books of Moses contain an authentic system of the religious

²⁶ Def. of Chr. from the Proph. Intr. p. 11.

' and political laws under which the Hebrews lived.
' The miscellaneous contents of their sacred writings
' largely explain their customs and opinions. Their
' own writers, since the volume of their sacred writings
' was completed, supply no small assistance on these
' subjects: and the accounts which historians and tra-
' vellers give of the East, where manners continue unal-
' tered through a course of ages, are a farther source of
' most useful information.—We also derive important
' assistance from the Masoretic punctuation; from the
' grammars, lexicons, concordances, and commentaries
' of the later Jews, and from the more complete, learned,
' and judicious ones of modern times;—and from that
' grand and highly useful undertaking, the collation of
' Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts. The difficulties
' in the Hebrew scriptures will be diminished in propor-
' tion as our external helps are multiplied; and as these
' inestimable books are carefully studied by men, who
' add to sagacity and judgment a large share of human
' learning, and that insight into the nature of language,
' which arises from logical and critical inquiries, and
' from an acquaintance with the structure of the learned
' tongues and of the kindred oriental dialects²⁷.

I shall, says the great Dr. Clarke, in his *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, point 'at some particu-
' lar extraordinary prophecies, which deserve to be care-
' fully considered and compared with the events, whether
' they could possibly have proceeded from chance or
' from enthusiasm.' Among those to which he has ap-
pealed, I shall cite only a part of what he says respect-
ing the fate of those opulent cities of antiquity, Baby-
lon and Tyre. ' Concerning Babylon it was particu-
' larly foretold, that it should be²⁸ shut up and besieged

²⁷ Newcome's Ezekiel, pref. p. 31, 36, 37.

²⁸ Is. xiii. 17, xxi. 2.

‘ by the Medes, Elamites, and Armenians: that the
 • river²⁹ should be dried up: that the city should be
 • taken in the time³⁰ of a feast, while her mighty men
 • were drunken; which accordingly came to pass, when
 • Belshazzar and all his thousand princes, who were
 • drunk with him at the feast, were³¹ slain by Cyrus’s
 • soldiers. Also it was particularly foretold, that God
 • would make³² the country of Babylon a possession for
 • the bittern, and pools of water; which was accordingly
 • fulfilled by the overflowing and drowning of it, on the
 • breaking down of the great dam in order to take the
 • city. Could the correspondence of these events with
 • the predictions be the result of chance? But suppose
 • these predictions were forged after the event: can the
 • following ones also have been written after the event?
 • or, with any reason, be ascribed to chance? *The wild
 beasts³³ of the desert—shall dwell there, and the owls
 shall dwell therein: and it shall be NO MORE inhabited
 for EVER.—They shall not³⁴ take of thee a stone for a
 corner,—but thou shalt be desolate for EVER, saith the
 Lord—Babylon³⁵, the glory of kingdoms,—shall be as
 when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah: it shall
 NEVER be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from
 generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian
 pitch tent thare, neither shall the shepherds make their
 fold there: but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there.*
 • Concerning Tyre, the prediction is no less remarkable:
 • I will³⁶ make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a
 • place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built NO
 • MORE.—The merchants³⁷ among the people shall hiss

²⁹ Jer. l. 38. li. 36.³⁰ Jer. h. 39, 57.³¹ Cyropædia, lib. 7³² H. xiv. 23.³³ Jer. l. 39.³⁴ Jer. li. 26.³⁵ H. xiii. 19, 20, 21³⁶ Ezek. xxvi. 14.³⁷ Ezek. xlvii. 36

' at thee, thou shalt be a terror, and NEVER shall be any more. All they³⁸ that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee³⁹.'

' You actually see the completion of many of the prophecies' of scripture, says bp. Newton, ' in the state of men and things around you, and you have the prophecies themselves recorded in books, which books have been read in public assemblies these 1700 or 2000 years, have been dispersed into several countries, have been translated into several languages, and quoted and commented upon by different authors of different ages and nations, so that there is no room to suspect so much as a possibility of forgery or illusion.' And it may be added, that ' the more you know of ancient and modern times, and the farther you search into the truth of history, the more you will be satisfied of the truth of prophecy⁴⁰.'

' Jesus himself,' says the bishop of Worcester, ' appeals to the spirit of prophecy, as bearing witness to his person and dispensation. Search the scriptures, says he to the Jews,—they are they which testify of me⁴¹.— How generally they did so, he explained at large in that remarkable conversation with two of his disciples after his resurrection, when, beginning at Moses and ALL the prophets, he expounded unto them in ALL the scriptures⁴² the things concerning himself.' Accordingly ' the argument from prophecy is not to be formed from the consideration of single prophecies, but from all the prophecies taken together, and considered as making one system; in which, from the mutual de-

³⁸ Ezek. xxviii. 19.

³⁹ A Disc. concerning the Being and Attributes of God, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation, 9th ed. p. 426.

⁴⁰ Vol. III. p. 420, 423.

⁴¹ John v. 39.

⁴² Luke xxiv. 27.

' pendance and connexion of its parts, preceding prophecies prepare and illustrate those which follow, and these, again, reflect light on the foregoing: just as, in any philosophical system, that which shews the solidity of it is the harmony and correspondence of the whole; not the application of it in particular instances. Hence, though the evidence be but small, from the completion of any one prophecy, taken separately, yet, that evidence being always something, the amount of the whole evidence, resulting from a great number of prophecies, all relative to the same design, may be considerable; like many scattered rays, which, though each be weak in itself, yet, concentrated into one point, shall form a strong light, and strike the sense very powerfully⁴³.'

The passages that follow relate to prophecy in general.

If the infidel object against the divine original of the predictions of scripture, that there is much of darkness and of difficulty belonging to them, let it be remembered, that this objection is far from being peculiar to prophecy. It does, says Dr. Blair, in his sermon on our Imperfect Knowledge of a Future State, plainly appear 'to be the plan of the Deity, in all his dispensations to mix light with darkness, evidence with uncertainty. Whatever the reasons of this procedure be, the fact is undeniable.' Indeed 'upon the supposition of immortality, this life is no other than the childhood of existence; and the measures of our knowledge must needs be proportioned to such a state⁴⁴.'

Since natural religion is by no means exempt from difficulties, it is, in truth, far from being reasonable to expect, that none should be found in revealed religion. With respect to those which attend the Jewish and Christian revelations, it may, says Dr. Priestley, be remarked,

⁴³ Hurd, vol. I. p. 35, 47.

⁴⁴ Serm. vol. I. p. 88, 100.

that

that the question is not, whether any of the particulars I have been considering, '*separately taken*, be likely or unlikely to come from God, but whether *the whole system*, attended with such difficulties, may be divine. If it were possible that any person should be asked, *a priori*, whether it was probable, that, under the government of a wise and good being, an innocent child should inherit the diseases, poverty, and vices of its parent; or whether no distinction would be made between the righteous and the wicked in war, pestilence, famine, or earthquakes, he would certainly answer it was not probable; though when he should come to know, and attentively consider the whole system, of which such events make a part, he might be satisfied, that it was the result of perfect wisdom, directed by infinite goodness; and even that a scheme more favourable to happiness or virtue could not have been formed; and the time may come, when we shall know and acknowledge the same with respect to the *extraordinary*, that we do with respect to the *ordinary*, dispensations of the Divine Being⁴⁵.

Many enquirers into the prophetic pages of scripture have, says bp. Hurd, been misled by the folly of commenting on prophecy by the false lights of the imagination.—It is true that prophecy, in the very idea of that term, at least in the scriptural idea of it, implies the divine agency; and that, exerted not merely in giving the faculty itself, but in directing all its operations. Yet I know not how it is, that, when men address themselves to the study of the prophetic scriptures, they are apt to let this so necessary idea slip out of their minds; and to discourse upon them just as they would or might do, on the supposition that the prophet was

⁴⁵ Institutes, vol. II. p. 88.

' left at liberty to dispense this gift, in all respects, as he
 ' should think proper. No wonder then, that they
 ' should misconceive of its character, and entertain very
 ' different notions about the exercise of this power from
 ' what the scriptures give them of it.'

If the power and the mode of predicting were entirely at the disposal of man, ' it is likely enough that the prophet, for his own credit, or for what he might fancy to be the sole end of prophecy, might chuse' to predict future events ' with all possible clearness, and in such sort that obstinacy itself must see and admit the completion of them: but' if, on the contrary, ' the prophet was only the minister and instrument of the divine counsels, in the high office committed to him,' those who assume it as a principle, ' that divine prophecy must be delivered with the utmost clearness and perspicuity, and fulfilled with irresistible evidence,—will do well to answer, at their leisure, the following questions. How do they know in what manner, and with what circumstances, it was fit for divine wisdom to dispense a knowledge of futurity to mankind? How can they previously determine the degree of evidence, with which a prediction must be either given or fulfilled? What assurance have they, that no reasonable ends could be served by prophecies, expressed with some obscurity, and accomplished in a sense much below what may seem necessary to unavoidable conviction? Can they even pretend, on any clear principles of reason, that very important ends, perhaps the most important, may not be answered by that mode of conveyance, which appears to them so exceptionable? Can they, in a word, determine before-hand, I do not say with certainty, but with any colour of probability, what *must* be the character of divine prophecy, when they know not the reason, most undoubtedly not *all* the reasons, why it is given, and have

' have even no right to demand that it should be given at all? Till these, and other questions of the like sort, be pertinently answered, it must be in vain to censure the ways of providence, as not corresponding to our imperfect and short-sighted views⁴⁶.'

' The ill success of men in explaining prophecies of events, not yet come to pass, can,' says the bp. of Worcester in another place, ' in no degree discredit those prophecies, unless it be essential to this sort of revelation to be so clearly proposed, as that it may and must be *perfectly understood*, before those events happen; the contrary of which I have shewn. 'The very idea of prophecy is that of *a light shining in a dark place*⁴⁷: and a place is not *dark*, if we have light enough to discern distinctly and fully *every remote corner of it*. But the thing speaks itself. For to what end is the prediction delivered in obscure and enigmatical terms, if the purpose of the inspirer was, that the subject of the prediction should be immediately, and in all its circumstances, precisely apprehended? Why, then, is any distinction made between Prophecy and History? *The mode of writing* clearly demonstrates, that something, for a time at least, was meant to be concealed from us⁴⁸.'

It has been objected, as a circumstance altogether strange and improbable, that so signal a gift as that of prophecy should have been bestowed upon the Jews, a nation so obscure, inconsiderable, unenlightened. On this point also I quote from bp. Hurd. To prove the truth of Christianity, and to foreshew the advent of the Messiah, with the revolutions and the establishment of his kingdom; was, says the prelate, the purpose of

⁴⁶ Hurd, vol. I. p. 3. 4, 15, 18.

⁴⁷ Pet. i. 19.

⁴⁸ Hurd, vol. II. p. 66.

prophecy. ‘ It was therefore confined to one nation, ‘ purposely set apart to preserve and attest the oracles of ‘ God ; and to exhibit, in their public records and whole ‘ history, the proofs and credentials of an amazing dis-‘ pensation, which God had decreed to accomplish in ‘ Christ Jesus.—The *testimony* thought fit to be given ‘ was not one or two prophecies only, but a *scheme* of ‘ prophecy, gradually prepared and continued through a ‘ large tract of time. But how could such a scheme be ‘ executed, or rather how could it clearly be seen that ‘ there was such a scheme in view, if some *one* people ‘ had not been made the repository, and, in part, the in-‘ strument of the divine counsels in regard to Jesus; ‘ some *one* people, I say, among whom we might trace ‘ the several parts of such a scheme, and observe the de-‘ pendence they had on each other ?—For had the notices ‘ concerning the redeemer been dispersed indifferently ‘ among *all* nations, where had been that uncorrupt and ‘ unsuspected testimony, that continuity of evidence, ‘ that unbroken chain of prediction, all tending, by just ‘ degrees, to the same point, which we now contemplate ‘ with wonder in the Jewish scriptures ? It is not then ‘ that the rest of the world was overlooked in the plan ‘ of God’s providence ; but that he saw fit to employ the ‘ ministry of *one* people : this last, I say, and not the ‘ other, is the reason why the divine communications ‘ concerning Christ were appropriated to the Jews. ‘ Yes, but some one of the greater nations had better ‘ been intrusted with that charge.’ This circumstance, ‘ I allow, might have struck a superficial observer more : ‘ but could the integrity of the prophetic scheme have ‘ been more discernible amidst the multiform and in-‘ finitely involved transactions of a mighty people, than ‘ in the simpler story of this small Jewish family ? Or ‘ would the hand or work of God, who loves to mani-‘ fest

' fest himself by weak instruments, have been more con-
' spicuous in that designation?—The benefits of pro-
' phesy, though conveyed by one nation, would finally
' redound to all; and the more *effectually*, we have seen,
' for being conveyed by one nation. May we not con-
' clude then (having the *fact*, as I said, to reason upon)
' that, to obtain such purpose, it was fit to select a pecu-
' liar people? And, if thus much be acknowledged, it
' will hardly be thought a question of much moment,
' though no answer could be given to it, why the Jews
' had that exclusive privilege conferred upon them⁴⁹.

It has been urged, by the objectors against prophecy, that the pointing out of future events is to be satisfactorily accounted for by that superior degree of sagacity, by which some men are seen to be distinguished; and that conjectures, as experience informs us, will not unfrequently be realized by chance and a felicity of coincidence. This objection bp. Hurd has answered at considerable length. Much as I have quoted from this able writer, I am unwilling to omit the insertion of a part of his reply. That the completion of two or three predictions, though they perfectly correspond to the events to which they are applied, does not infer a certainty of inspiration, the bishop of Worcester readily admits. If, however, says the prelate, 'the prophecies in the Old and New Testament be *very numerous*, and if those prophecies, so many of them, I mean, as are alleged in this controversy with unbelievers, have had a reasonable completion,—it must appear highly credible and probable, that so numerous prophecies, so fulfilled, had not their origin from human conjecture, nor their accomplishment from what we call *chance*. For mere conjecture is not usually so happy; nor chance so con-

⁴⁹ Vol. I. p. 75—79.

' stant. Farther still; if the scriptural prophecies have been completed in numerous instances, and if in *no* instance whatsoever can it be clearly shewn, that they have failed in the event, the presumption is still stronger that such coincidence could not be fortuitous; and a material difference between scriptural prophecy and pagan divination is, at the same time, pointed out. For, that, in the multitude of pretended oracles in the days of paganism, some few only should come to pass, while the generality of them fell to the ground, may well be the sport of *fortune*. But, that very many prophecies, recorded in our scriptures, have had an evident completion, when not *one* of all those, there recorded, can be convicted of imposture, must surely be the work of design.' But the prophecies of scripture are not merely *numerous*. A great number of them are also eminently *minute* and *circumstantial*. ' On the whole, the general evidence for the truth of Christianity, as resulting from the scriptural prophecies, though possibly not *that*, which some may wish or expect, is yet apparently very considerable. Some coincidences might fall out, by accident; and more might be imagined. But when *so many*, and *such* prophecies are brought together, and compared with their corresponding events, it becomes ridiculous (because the effect is in no degree proportioned to the cause) to say of such coincidences, that they are the creatures of *fancy*, or could have been the work of *chance*⁵⁰.'

' The truth of our religion, like the truth of common matters, is,' says bp. Butler, ' to be judged of by all the evidence taken together. And unless the whole series of things which may be alleged in this argument, and every particular thing in it, can reasonably be supposed

' to have been *by accident*; (for here the stress of the argument for Christianity lies;) then is the truth of it proved.—It is obvious, how much advantage, the nature of this evidence gives to those persons, who attack Christianity, especially in conversation. For it is *easy* to shew, in a short and lively manner, that such and such things are liable to objection; that this, and another thing, is of little weight in itself; but *impossible* to shew, in like manner, the united force of the whole argument in one view⁵¹.

' The following qualities,' says Dr. Johnston of Holywood, ' seem inseparable from prophecy; at least they are found in every prophecy which I have considered; and appear to me to be closely connected with the very nature of prophecy, 1st. That the prophecies are expressed in dark, but never in contradictory language. 2d. That, BEFORE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT, THE GREAT OUTLINES OF THE EVENTS MAY BE DIS-COVERED WITH CERTAINTY; but not all the minute circumstances. 3d. That, the nearer the time of their accomplishment approaches, more of the predictions may be known.—And 4th, that neither before the event shall the general meaning of the prophecy, nor after the event shall the full meaning of it, appear to the generality of mankind; but they shall appear to those persons only, who study it, with competent knowledge, uprightness, and diligence⁵².'

That there are difficulties in the prophets, at present inexplicable to the upright and the diligent, as well as to the careless and the ignorant, is on all hands admitted. But surely the admission of this fact does not necessarily lead to the conclusion, that these difficulties will never be removed, either by the fulfilment of the events pre-

⁵¹ Butler's Analogy, p. 401.

⁵² On the Apoc. vol. I. p. 6.

dicted, or by the successful industry and the united talents of succeeding critics. Four or five centuries ago, antecedently to the resurrection of letters, how extremely little was known of the Jewish or the Christian prophets, with any degree of accuracy or certainty, in comparison of what now is known! Is there not then ground to believe, that a renewal of the same efforts will be productive of similar effects? Is there not reason, not merely to hope, but confidently to conclude, that many of those obscurities, which now in a considerable degree darken the face of prophecy, will be cleared up by the acumen and research of the commentators who shall hereafter appear; and that future ages will consequently possess a very superior acquaintance with the prophetic scriptures, as well as with every other species of knowledge?

Dr. Hartley, in the second part of his *Observations on Man*, enters upon the evidences of the prophetic scriptures. That ‘*the degree of obscurity, which is found in the prophecies of the scriptures, is not so great as to invalidate the foregoing evidences for their divine authority: but, on the contrary, is itself an indirect testimony in their favour,*’ is the thirty-first proposition of that work. In order to prove this, this celebrated physician observes, ‘*First*, that there are a sufficient number of prophecies, whose interpretation is certain, clear, and precise, to shew that their agreement with the events predicted is far above the powers of chance, or human foresight. But for the proof of this point, which takes in a great compass of literature, I must,’ says Dr. Hartley, ‘refer to the writers who have treated it in detail. And as those, who have examined this point with accuracy and impartiality, do, as I presume, universally agree to the position here laid down, so those who have not done it, can have no pretence for asserting the contrary;

' trary ; this being an historical matter, which is to be de-
' termined as others of a like kind, viz. by the historical
' evidences.—*Secondly*, that, even in the types and pro-
' phecies where interpreters differ from each other, the
' differences are often so inconsiderable, and the agree-
' ments so general,—as to exclude both chance and hu-
' man-foresight, i. e. to infer a divine communication.—
' *Thirdly*, I observe that those types and prophecies,
' whose interpretation is so obscure, that interpreters
' have not been able to discover any probable applica-
' tion, cannot any ways invalidate the evidence arising
' from the rest. They are analogous to those parts of
' the works of nature, whose uses, and subserviency to
' the rest, are not yet understood. And as no one calls
' in question the evidences of design, which appear in
' many parts of the human body, because the uses of
' others are not yet known ; so the interpretations of pro-
' phesy, which are clearly or probably made out, remain
' the same evidence of design, notwithstanding that un-
' surmountable difficulties may hitherto attend many
' other parts⁵³ of the prophetic writings. *Fourthly*, it is
' predicted in the prophecies, that *in the latter times*
' great multitudes will be converted to the Christian
' faith ; whereas those who preach or *prophesy* during
' the great apostasy, shall be able to do this only in an
' obscure, imperfect manner, and convert but a few.
' Now the past and present obscurity of prophecy agrees
' remarkably with this prediction ; and the opening,
' which is already made, since the revival of letters, in

⁵³ ' The obscurity or unintelligibleness of one part of a prophecy, does
' not, in any degree, invalidate the proof of foresight, arising from the ap-
' pearing completion of those other parts which are understood. For the
' case is evidently the same, as if those parts, which are not understood,
' were lost, or not written at all, or written in an unknown tongue.'

Butler's Analogy, 1750, p. 366.

‘ applying the prophecies to the events, seems to presage, that *the latter times* are now approaching; and that by the more full discovery of the true meaning of the prophetic writings, and of their aptness to signify the events predicted, there will be such an accession of evidence to the divine authority of the scriptures, as none but the wilfully ignorant, the profligate, and the obdurate can withstand. It is therefore a confirmation of the prophetic writings, that, by the obscurity of one part of them, a way should be prepared for effecting that glorious conversion of all nations, which is predicted in others, in the time and manner in which it is predicted⁵⁴. ’

Perhaps the following remarks of Dr. Worthington are not altogether inapplicable to the conclusion of the preceding extract from Dr. Hartley. Time may ‘ operate, and often doth, on the side of both probability and credibility. It is a proverbial saying, that time brings every thing to light. It often detects frauds and impostures, removes false colourings and disguises, and overcomes prejudices, which obscured the evidence, and kept the mind in suspence from giving its assent. It may bring new proofs to light, which lay hid before; and what was no more than barely probable, or credible, may become absolutely certain. Sir Isaac Newton had made a probable conjecture, concerning the form of the earth: what he rendered probable, the French geometricians have since demonstrated to be certain. Things incredible to some persons and ages, have been known to others for certain truths. The late discoveries in philosophy, and the reports of travellers, are full of instances of this kind; and what the philosopher knows for certain, shocks the faith of the peasant.

⁵⁴ On Man, 1749, vol. II. p: 157.

' Apply this to revelation. At the first preaching of the gospel, it was thought a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead, Acts xxvi. 8. And Paul seemed, to the men of Athens, to be a setter-forth of strange Gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection, ch. xvii. 18, and yet Jesus and the resurrection were soon afterwards believed in by great numbers there and elsewhere⁵⁵.

Of the importance of contemplating, frequently and accurately, those arguments in support of revelation, which are derived from prophecy, Christians, I apprehend, are not in general sufficiently apprized. ' Faith,' says an eminent writer, ' is not one absolute and determinate thing, but it admits of degrees; proceeding from a simple assent to a proposition, which arises from a bare preponderancy of the arguments in favour of it, and advancing by the most insensible gradation, to that fulness of persuasion, which arises from the perception of the greatest clearness and strength of the evidence for it. The passions and affections, if they be at all moved by a bare assent, will be extremely languid, though the thing itself be of the greatest moment; whereas a full persuasion of the reality of an interesting object excites the most vigorous and fervent emotions. The difference of the impression they make upon the mind is properly compared to the effect of an object, placed at a very great, or a very small distance. If any thing in the conduct of life depend upon belief, we shall, in the former case, be hardly influenced by it at all; a very small motive being sufficient to overpower the effect of so superficial a faith; at best we shall be irresolute and inconstant; whereas, in the latter case, we shall be determined to vigorous and immediate ac-

tion. It is, therefore, of the greatest consequence, not only that unbelievers be made converts to the Christian faith, but that the faith of believers themselves be strengthened, and they be thereby converted from merely *nominal* into *real* Christians.—Now faith is increased by the very same means by which it is first generated, viz. by an attention to the proper evidences, and a frequent contemplation of the object of it. Those persons therefore, who call themselves Christians, and who must be supposed to wish to feel and act as becomes Christians, should study the evidences of their religion.—They should both frequently read the scriptures, and also other books, which tend to prove their truth, and illustrate their contents⁵⁶.

Having so long confined the attention of the reader to general remarks alone, I shall shortly again bring before his view some illustrations of particular prophecies: having had an opportunity, on the subject of the present chapter, of selecting from a more than ordinary number of excellent writers, I shall abstain from introducing any observations of my own.

The present chapter consists almost entirely of extracts. If this circumstance be conceived to call for an apology, I have only to observe, that it seemed important to the cause of truth and to the interests of revelation, that all the principal arguments on the credibility of prophecy, arguments which have already been clearly stated by different writers, should be brought together⁵⁷ into a tolerably narrow compass; and that I was unacquainted with any work, in which this useful task had been com-

⁵⁶ Priestley's Institutes, vol. I. p. 168.

⁵⁷ At the same time it may not be improper to observe, that those general remarks on prophecy, which are introduced in the ivth chapter of the present work, occur not again in the xith; and therefore these two chapters may, with propriety, be perused in connexion.

pletely performed. And though there may occasionally, in the course of the extracts, have been somewhat of repetition, it may be remarked, that the ideas repeated are generally sufficiently important, to deserve to be brought before the mind again and again, and to be placed in a variety of lights.

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE MONARCHICAL IMAGE AND THE TEN-HORNED BEAST IN DANIEL.

THE predictions, relative to modern times, which occur in chapters ii. and vii. of Daniel, are peculiarly worthy of examination; for they are more than usually clear, and will reflect a light on the apocalyptic prophecies¹. But, previously to entering on a brief examination of them, I shall cite a few short testimonies of writers respecting this distinguished prophet.

With respect to the authenticity of the book of Daniel, ‘there is,’ says bp. Newton, ‘all the external evidence that can well be had or desired in a case of this nature; not only the testimony of the whole Jewish church and nation, who have constantly received this book as canonical; but of Josephus particularly, who commends him as the greatest of the prophets; of the Jewish Targums and Talmuds, which frequently cite and appeal to his authority; of St. Paul and St. John, who have copied many of his prophecies; of our Sa-

¹ ‘Comparing scripture with scripture is the best way to understand both the one and the other,’ bp. Newton, vol. I. p. 494.

' viour himself, who citeth his words, and styleth him '*Daniel the prophet* ;' and ' of ancient historians, who relate many of the same transaftions.—Nor is the internal less powerful and convincing than the external evidence ; for the language, the style, the manner of writing, and all other internal marks and characters, are perfectly agreeable to that age ; and he appears plainly and undeniably to have been a prophet by the exact accomplishment of his prophecies, as well those which have already been fulfilled, as those which are now fulfilling in the world².'

Dr. Samuel Chandler, in speaking of Daniel, says, ' upon account of his extraordinary piety and wisdom, he is taken notice of and commended by Ezekiel³, who was his fellow prophet and contemporary.—The purity of the language in which the book is written, both of the Chaldee and Hebrew⁴, is an undeniable argument of its great antiquity.' For ' since every language, from the very nature of it, is in a constant flux, and in every age deviating from what it was in the former ; the purity of Daniel's language makes it evident, that it must be written before the purity of those languages was lost, i. e. about the time when Ezekiel's Daniel lived and flourished⁵.'

Porphyry, an heathen philosopher of the third century, and a pupil of Longinus, who wrote an elaborate work in fifteen books against Christianity, did, as we are informed by Jerom, object against the character of

² Vol. II. p. 16. ³ XIV. 14; xxviii. 3.

⁴ ' This prophecy is writ partly in Hebrew, and partly in Chaldee : for which this reason may be assigned ; that those parts of it in which the Babylonian empire was concerned were writ in that language, viz. from ch. ii. 4. to the end of the viith chapter : a great part of which was probably entered into their public registers.' Mr. Lowth's Intr. to Dan.

⁵ Vindic. of Dan. p. 61. G.

Daniel, that he was criminal in accepting with so much readiness the honours conferred upon him at Babylon. ‘ But there is no ground,’ says the excellent Lardner, ‘ for such a censure: Daniel was guilty of no mean compliances: he ascribed all his wisdom to God; and upon every occasion preserved his integrity without blemish, and openly professed his zeal for true religion, and the worship of God according to the directions of the law of Moses. It was not decent for him to refuse the honours bestowed by a great king, when no sinful compliances were exacted; and when he might, in the high station to which he was advanced, both promote the interest of true religion, and the welfare of his people in a strange country. Daniel does not appear to have been fond of worldly honours. When Belshazzar made him great promises, he answered: *Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another*⁶.’

A learned anonymous writer, in his observations on the book of Daniel, says, ‘ I think it no inconsiderable argument, that it has not been foisted in upon the world by Christian or Jewish zealots, that parts of it have continued so long in obscurity, and now, in this age, are gradually explained. Had any imposition been designed, these pretended oracles would have been understood at the first moment of their publication, as well as now; and would not have waited for elucidation till this time, so long after the views of a false prophet must have been at an end’.

‘ Our blessed Saviour,’ says Dr. Aphorp, ‘ has so asserted the authority of the prophecies of Daniel, as to rest his own veracity on their truth⁷;’ and it is of

⁶ Dan. v. 17. Lardner’s Works, vol. VIII. p. 203.

⁷ Commentaries and Essays, vol. I. signature Syntegus, p. 508.

⁸ Vol. I. p. 237.

Daniel that Sir I. Newton says, ‘to reject his prophecies, ‘is to reject the Christian religion. For this religion is ‘founded upon his prophecy concerning the Messiah⁹.’

‘I conceive Daniel,’ says Mede, ‘to be *Apocalypsis Contrafacta*, and the apocalypse *Daniel Explicate*, in that where both treat about the same subject; namely what was revealed to Daniel concerning the Fourth Kingdom, but *summatim* and in the gross, is shewed to St. John *particulatim*, with the distinction and order of the several fates and circumstances¹⁰;’ ‘The apocalypse of John,’ says Sir I. Newton, ‘is written in the same style and language with the prophecies of Daniel, and hath the same relation to them, which they have to one another, so that all of them together make up but one complete prophecy¹¹.’

Of the predictions in ch. ii. and ch. vii. of Daniel such is the preciseness, that they admit not of two interpretations¹². That they refer to a remote period, the prophet has himself declared, telling us in the former of those chapters (v. 28), that they related to *what shall be in the LATTER days*.

In chapter ii. it is predicted, that the great *Image*, symbolical of the monarchies of the world, shall be overthrown and destroyed; and (v. 34 and 42) that its *Ten Toes* shall be shattered to atoms. ‘The great idol of Daniel was,’ says a valuable writer, ‘very properly used as a representation of the grand imposture under

⁹ P. 25.

¹⁰ P. 964.

¹¹ P. 254. With respect to Sir I. Newton’s character as a critic and a theologian, the testimony of an adversary may be cited. ‘The first of philosophers,’ says Mr. Gibbon, ‘was deeply skilled in critical and theological studies.’ Decl. and Fall of the Rom. Emp. vol. VIII. p. 272.

¹² Dr. Sykes, speaking of chapters ii. and vii. of Daniel, says, ‘the prophetic style is plain and easy; and the terms such as will admit of very little, if any debate.’ Est. on the Tr. of the Chr. Rel. p. 12.

' living princes, who were worshipped as Gods, which
' was to continue to deceive the whole world from
' Daniel's time forward.' And speaking of St. John's
prediction, that men shall *worship* the ten-horned Beast,
he says, '*worshipping*, as I have already shewed, rightly
' expresses that unreasonable idolatrous respect, which
' mankind have in all ages shewn to absolute princes, by
' treating them as Gods¹³.' And it is observed by bp.
Chandler, that human figures, in early times, were, ' as
' the remains in ancient coins still shew, the usual sym-
bols, whereby cities and people were known. And
' the metal they were made of, and the colours that
' adorned them (of which the herald's art preserves yet
' some traces), were farther marks to distinguish them
' from each other¹⁴.'

The demolition of the metallic image is represented under a well-known figure, that of *a stone*, which, being *cut out without hands, smote the image on his feet, and brake them to pieces*; which prophecy conveys a similar meaning to a passage in the apocalypse already expatiated upon, that *the Lamb shall overcome the Ten Kings*. '*The Ten Toes of the image*', says Mr. Lowth, when speaking of the Roman empire, ' signify the Ten Kings,
' who were in after-times to divide this kingdom among
' themselves denoted by *the Ten Horns* of this fourth
' Beast, mentioned in ch. vii. 7, compared with Rev.
' xvii. 12.' By the stone being a species of mineral
altogether different from that of which the image was
composed, it was, says bp. Chandler, ' implied, that this

¹³ An Ess. on Script. Proph. and particularly on the Three Periods of Daniel, 1724, p. 58, 84. This writer expresses his expectation, that the year 1790 would be a memorable epocha, distinguished by great and momentous events; but his expectation was grounded on an erroneous computation of the periods of Daniel. See p. 158.

¹⁴ Def. of Chr. p. 95.

' new kingdom should be not only different in number, or a distinct empire, but of another nature from that of the image¹⁵.' Like an unshapen stone, alike destitute of polish and of magnitude, the dispensation of Jesus was to be principally propagated by men of the plainest manners, unadorned by learning, and undignified by rank; and, at its first rise, it was to make a small and comparatively inconsiderable progress. 'The stone cut out without hands,' says Mat. Henry, 'represented the kingdom of Jesus Christ.' It is said to be '*cut out of the mountain without hands*, for it should be neither raised, nor supported by human power or policy; no visible hand should act in the setting it up, but it should be done invisibly by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts: this was *the Stone which the builders refused*, because it was not cut out by their hands, but it is now become *the Head Stone of the corner*.' Mat. Henry also observes, that Christ himself declares (Mat. xxi. 44), with a reference to this prophecy¹⁶, that *on whomsoever this Stone shall fall, it will grind him to powder*. And to whom does the prophecy of Daniel relate? Unquestionably to the Ten antichristian Monarchies, which are established, somewhere or other, in the European quarter of the globe. Let tyrants read this asseveration of our Saviour, and tremble.

In v. 32 and 33 it is declared, that *this image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay*. Now the commentators prove at large, that the golden part of the monarchical

¹⁵ Def. of Chr. p. 97.

¹⁶ That our Saviour in his discourses had these prophecies of Daniel very frequently in view, Dr. Sykes has proved in his Ess. on the Chr. Rel. p. 30, 79.

image represented the empire of the Assyrians, the silver that of the Persians, the brass that of the Greeks, and the iron and the clay that of the princes of the Roman empire. It was on account of its great strength, as the prophet himself informs us, that the fourth empire was compared to the last of these metals. *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise¹⁶.*

' Daniel's own interpretation is,' says bp. Chandler, ' so plain, that no unbiassed person can easily mistake in the empires he prophesies of. He is express in the number. There shall be four kingdoms; and he counts the Babylonian, then in being, for the first¹⁷. History tells us, the Medo-Persian broke, and succeeded the Babylonian. The Greek empire came into the place of the Persian by conquest, and is therefore the third. No historian ever confined the Greek empire to Alexander's person, or made a distinct empire of the four kingdoms, that arose upon his death. The Greek was destroyed in its two latest branches, that of the Seleucides and Ptolemies by the Roman, which is consequently the fourth kingdom, and answers in every respect to its iron character¹⁸.'

Since it is said in v. 34, that *the stone smote the image*; and in v. 35, that *then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces TOGETHER¹⁹*, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was

¹⁶ V. 40.¹⁷ V. 38.¹⁸ Def. of Chr. p. 99.

¹⁹ In v. 45 it is again said, that *the stone, which was cut out of the mountain without hands, brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold.*

found for them²⁰; we must of necessity assent to the observation of bp. Hurd, that ‘the four kingdoms of Daniel—form a prophetic geography, being considered, ‘in the eye of prophecy, as coexistent’ and ‘as still alive²¹;’ and we must conclude, that not only in Europe, but in all the countries of the globe, formerly possessed by the Babylonians and Persians, the Greeks and Romans, the modern antichristian monarchies shall be so completely destroyed, that not the minutest portion of their power shall be suffered to maintain its ground. From an observation, shortly to be alleged from Sir I. Newton, this conclusion will appear farther evident. All the best commentators do, indeed, agree, that the fourth of Daniel’s empires is the Roman in its largest signification; and that it includes, not only the republican government of the Consuls, not only the arbitrary government of the Emperors, but the multiplied dominion of their successors, the Ten Kings: and it must therefore be admitted, in consistency with this, that the other metals are not merely emblematic of the empires of Assyria, of Persia, and of Greece, properly so called, but likewise of the modern as well as the ancient monarchies, erected in those parts of the globe. These last, in the strict acceptation of the words, had indeed perished antecedently to the first propagation of Christianity; so that the symbolic stone, having no existence, could not possibly have contributed to break *them* in pieces.

The words of Jurieu and of bishops Newton and Chandler, I next cite, though it must be acknowledged, that on a matter, predicted with so much plainness, there

²⁰ The expression alludes, says Mr. Lowth, ‘to the threshing-floors in the Eastern countries, which were usually placed on the tops of hills.’

²¹ Vol. II. p. 143.

is little need of farther elucidation or of additional authorities. ‘These *Ten Toes*,’ says the divine of Rotterdam, ‘are the Ten Kings, which were to make up the kingdom of Antichrist²², and reign together with him, in the last period of the Roman empire, during the 1260 years marked in the Revelation²³.’ ‘The kingdom of Christ,’ says the bishop of Bristol, ‘was first set up, while the Roman empire was in its full strength with legs of iron. The Roman empire was afterwards divided into Ten lesser kingdoms, the remains of which are subsisting at present. The image is still standing upon his feet and toes of iron and clay:—but the stone will one day smite the image upon the feet and toes, and destroy it utterly²⁴.’ Not unsimilar is the language of bp. Chandler. ‘The kingdom of the mountain,’ says the prelate, ‘shall beat the feet of the monarchical statue to dust²⁵.’ In truth, the prophet himself does not merely predict, that the feet of this image of monarchy shall be broken in pieces; but he afterwards speaks without a figure, adding by way of explanation, v. 44, that *all these kingdoms shall be broken in pieces and consumed*. To darken the import of such language would be a vain attempt. As the ruin of these Ten Kings appears plainly announced by the voice of prophecy, will not some of the readers of Dr. Gill’s Exposition of Daniel, when they peruse his enumeration²⁶ of the countries which they govern, take especial notice of the imperial dominion in Germany, and of the monarchies

²² In order to understand the apocaypse, it is of the first importance, that the reader fix in his mind correct ideas of the genuine extent of the antichristian empire, and learn who are the persons who hold within it a high pre-eminence of crimes and power.

²³ Vol. II. p. 290.

²⁴ Vol. I. p. 426.

²⁵ Def. of Christianity, p. 106. The distinction of Mr. Mede, here after to be given in his own words, the bishop here adopts

²⁶ On Dan. vii. 24.

of Sardinia and Spain ; and be ready to suspect, that the overthrow at least of these tyrannic governments is not removed to any very remote distance ?

It is observed in v. 42, that *the Toes of the Feet were part of iron and part of clay*, i. e. says Mat. Henry, the Ten Kingdoms differed in point of strength ; and in the next verse it is added, *whereas thou sawest iron mixt with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another.* This, says Mr. Lowth, signifies that ‘ these Ten Kingdoms shall be a medley of people of different nations, laws, and customs : ‘ and although the kings of the several nations shall try ‘ to strengthen themselves by marriage-alliances into one ‘ another’s families, yet the different interests which they ‘ pursue, will make them often engage in wars with each ‘ other.’ Before it was otherwise. Antecedently to the dominion and independence of these countries, Pagan Rome formed one firm compact body, governed by the same laws, and acknowledging the same sovereign.

‘ It is,’ declares Dr. More, ‘ the universal sense of all ecclesiastic writers, that the Fourth Beast is the Roman empire, as both Cornelius a Lapide and Gaspar Sancius, both of them jesuits, yet do roundly assert²⁷.’ ‘ That the Roman empire,’ says Dr. Worthington²⁸, ‘ was to be divided into Ten Kingdoms, was understood from this prophecy, and from Daniel’s vision of the Fourth Beast, with Ten Horns, corresponding to it, by many of the ancient fathers²⁹, who lived some centuries before any such division was made, or seemed in the least probable. And that this was the tradition of ecclesiastical writers in general before his time, is testified by St. Jerom³⁰.’ To the same purpose speaks Joleph-

²⁷ Myft. of Iniq. p. 410.

²⁸ Vol. II. p. 77.

²⁹ Such are Tertullian and Irenæus, Cyril and Arethas.

³⁰ Hieron. in Dan. vii.

Mede. That the Roman empire was ‘the fourth kingdom of Daniel was believed by the church of Israel both before and in our Saviour’s time; received by the disciples of the apostles, and the whole Christian church for the first 400 years³¹, without any known contradiction. And I confess, having so good ground in scripture, it is with me *tantum non articulus fidei*, little less than an article of faith³².’

It is to ch. vii. which contains the parallel vision of the *Four symbolic Beasts*, that the attention of the reader is now solicited. Here also the same events are predicted, and the monarchies both of Europe and of Asia are threatened. After giving a prophetic account of the four first Beasts, Daniel says in v. 7, *I was seeing after this in the visions of the night, and behold a fourth Beast formidable and terrible, and strong exceedingly, which had large teeth of iron; it devoured and broke in pieces, and trampled upon the remains with its feet, and it was distinguished from all the Beasts that were before it, for it had Ten Horns*³³. ‘The Ten Toes and the Ten Horns,’ says bp. Newton, ‘were alike fit emblems of the Ten Kingdoms, which arose out of the division of the Roman empire³⁴.’ The generality of commentators, though they hesitate not to acknowledge, that the Ten Horns signify the modern kingdoms seated in the Western part of the Roman empire, yet, without any reason which I can discover, but a well-founded apprehension of giving offence, think proper to apply all the former descriptive part of the verse to Pagan Rome. But that they are not authorized in this restricted application of

³¹ See this point proved at length in Dr. Cressener’s Appendix to his *Demonst. of the First Principles of the Prot. Appl. of the Apoc.*

³² Vol. II. p. 899.

³³ This is from the Improved Version of Mr. Wintle.

³⁴ Vol. I. p. 496.

it, an unprejudiced inspection of the prophet's own words will be sufficient to shew. The description is alike applicable to the general conduct of the Roman emperors, and to that of the Ten princes who have since ruled over the Western provinces of their empire; nor could the prophet, without departing from his symbol, have pourtrayed it in language more strong and expressive. This emblematic personage had large iron-teeth, Now Dr. Lancaster informs us, that 'teeth are frequently used in scripture as the symbols of cruelty, or of a devouring enemy.' Its stamping of the remains or the residue with its feet 'alludes,' says Mr. Lowth, 'to the fury of wild beasts, who stamp upon that part of their prey which they cannot devour.' And have not the tyrants of Europe been equally lavish in their expences; equally violent in their oppressions? Of the revenues extorted by them from their subjects, have they not wasted much more than they have enjoyed?

Having treated of the Ten Horns in v. 7 and 8, Daniel immediately subjoins in v. 9 and 10, *I beheld till the thrones were cast down³⁵, and the Ancient of Days did sit, and the judgment was set*, i. e., says Mr. Sam. Clark, God 'did judge and punish these tyrannical empires, and delivered his people from their oppression.' In v. 9 the prophet, speaking of the Supreme Being, says, *his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels³⁶ as burning fire*; i. e. according to the explication of the same annotator, 'the Revolutions and dispensations of

³⁵ To this clause Poole and Clark, bp. Hall and Dr. Priestley, ascribe without hesitation the obvious sense; but the Hebrew word, says Calvin, may be translated *thronos fuisse vel erellos vel dejetos*. The expression, says Dr. Priestley, clearly implies 'violence in their dissolution.' Fast Serm. for Feb. 28, 1794, p. 6.

³⁶ 'Grotius observes, that the ancient thrones and *sellæ curules* had 'wheels.' Wintle.

' his providence³⁷' will be ' very destructive to the wicked.' Daniel adds in v. 11, *I was attentive till the Beast was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was delivered up to the burning of fire*³⁸. ' To kill or slay,' says Dr. Lancaster, ' is to be explained according to the nature of the subject spoken of ;' and ' to kill a kingdom ' is to destroy utterly the power it had to act as such.' That to burn with fire is an expression of similar import, there has before been occasion to note. In v. 12 the prophet announces, *that concerning the rest of the Beasts, they had their dominion taken away.* ' Beasts,' says Jurieu on this passage, ' do certainly denote states and empires ; so that it seems as if all sovereign power, i. e. Monarchical, should be taken away³⁹.' The symbols of the prophet are indeed interpreted for us in this very chapter, as they were apparently communicated to him in his vision by an angelic being. *I came near,* says Daniel (v. 16), *unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the thing.* We are accordingly informed by the angel of the vision, that *the Fourth Beast, which had Ten Horns, shall be the Fourth Kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces ; and that the Ten Horns out of this Kingdom are Ten Kings that shall*

³⁷ Agreeably to this bp. Newcome observes, in commenting on the 1st ch. of Ezekiel, that the wheels spoken of by that prophet, ' are supposed to express the Revolutions of God's providence, which are regular, though they appear intricate.'

³⁸ This is from Mr. Wintle's Improved Version.

³⁹ Vol. II. p. 382. From a comparison of this passage with p. 379, where he declares, that the millennium will not be a state of anarchy, but that ' there shall be some to govern, and others to obey,' Jurieu appears to have expected, that Republics would be every where established.

arise⁴⁰. And in v. 26 it is added (the angel still speaks), But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end⁴¹.

But who are *the rest of the Beasts*, whose dominion was to be *taken away*? Let Sir I. Newton inform us. In explaining this passage, he observes, that ‘ all the four ‘ Beasts are still alive;’ and adds, that ‘ the nations of ‘ Chaldea and Assyria are *still* the first Beast. Those of ‘ Media and Persia are *still* the second Beast. Those of ‘ Macedon, Greece, and Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria and ‘ Egypt, are *still* the third⁴².’ Whilst the Hebrew prophet declares, that the ten-horned *Beast was slain*, he adds of these other emblematic *Beasts* (v. 12), *yet THEIR lives were prolonged for a season and time*. Does not this clause plainly enough intimate, that, after the arbitrary⁴³ monarchies of Europe shall have been obliterated, the despotic governments of Asia and of Africa, though their existence will indeed be *prolonged for a*

⁴⁰ V. 23 and 24.

⁴¹ With respect to this verse, cited in a former chapter, it scarcely needs be observed, that it manifestly refers to *the Ten Horns*, as well as to *the little Horn*, of *the Beast*. See Brenius.

⁴² Obs. on Dan. p. 31. Another interpretation, yet more extensive in its import, is noticed and explained by Mede. The expression, *the rest of the Beasts*, may, he says (p. 255), be understood as not limited to the three first symbolic Beasts, but as comprehending the kingdoms of the world in general. *Vau*, rendered in our version, *as concerning*, he observes may be translated *also*; ‘ *also the rest of the Beasts, &c.* As for the word *Beasts* to be taken here for other kingdoms as well as the Four great ones, it needs make no scruple. For we shall find it so in the next chapter, where it is said of the Medo-Persian *Ram* (verse 4), that *no Beasts might stand before him*, that is, no State or Kingdom was able to resist his power: so here may *the rest of the Beasts* be the States and Kingdoms contemporary with ‘ *the Fourth Beast*.’

⁴³ I confess, that if I followed the commentators, I should not restrict this destruction of monarchies to those which are arbitrary, but should say *the monarchies in general seated in that part of the world of which the prophet speaks*. On this point the reader must judge for himself.

time, yet that they also will, at length, most assuredly fall? And does not reason herself teach us, that this will probably happen? Is it not to be expected, that political Liberty will be progressive in its course; and that it will flourish on the continent, and among the islands, of Europe, before it is transplanted into the warmer climes of the old world, which are less favourable to its growth?

Though North America stands at such a distance from the European continent, and consequently the changes which happen there must have a very diminished influence on this quarter of the globe; though it has gained far less by its revolution than almost any nation on that continent would have done, because it never bowed its neck under the yoke of despotism, or an accumulation of taxes, and never did an expensive court annoy its provinces, to serve as a rallying point to vice and corruption, and a center from which they might copiously flow; it nevertheless powerfully encouraged the authors of the French Revolution during its commencement and prosecution, and threw a strong ray of light on the measures they were to adopt, and the principles they were to consecrate. As soon as France then, a nation of such populousness, ingenuity, and distinguished attainments, seated as it is in the very center of Europe, and possessing a language so generally studied, shall completely have baffled the efforts of the confederated princes; and, restored to internal order, shall begin to reap, in a season of tranquillity, those golden fruits, which are the natural growth of an equal government, representative in its construction, and founded on the rights of man; is it not to be expected, that its example will prove irresistible, and that in no long time it will be followed by the more enlightened of the European nations? The probability of events following each other

in this train statesmen and princes have not failed to discern and to dread ; and they act accordingly.

That the antichristian monarchies and aristocracies of the world may be demolished, reason instructs us to hope, as well on account of the oppressor as the oppressed. To raise men to a giddy height of unjust power and unmerited titular distinction, is to expose them to a series of moral dangers, of the most serious kind, and which they cannot reasonably be expected to surmount. Perceiving that their vanity will be indulged, their wants supplied, their desires anticipated, without exertion, without knowledge, without virtue ; they commonly glide insensibly into the ignominious lap of indolence ; and, dissipating their time in the company of the profligate, and in an insipid routine of amusements, yield themselves up to the tyranny of passions, alike injurious to society and to the individual. This subject has almost always been considered in much too narrow a point of view. That this is only the commencing stage of our existence is a truth which ought permanently to impress our minds. It ought therefore to be an anxious subject of our enquiry, what is the state of society, and what is the species of government, which is best adapted, by its influence on morals, to fit and prepare men for a future world. Now those existing governments, which are founded on oppression, and trample on the rights of man, are so fatally operative in the extinction of light and virtue, that they are decidedly calculated to disqualify men for a state of future existence. Indeed when we advert to the general condition of mankind, distributed as they are, into those who tyrannize, and those who are the objects of tyranny ; when we reflect, that a numerous and distinct class of vices are the natural growth of *each* of these situations ; when we thence collect, that the great mass of human-kind appear, *in consequence*

quence of this, in a great degree to be incapacitated for the elevated employments of heaven and the purity of its pleasures, the overthrow of all such governments cannot but strike the mind, as having a degree of importance, which it is not in the power of language to express, or of the human understanding to calculate. Hence also it appears (and it is an awful consideration), that he who is instrumental in perpetuating a corrupt and wicked government, is also instrumental in unfitting his fellow-men for the felicity of the celestial mansions, and in perhaps occasioning them to occupy, through all the successive stages of their future existence, a lower rank than that to which they would otherwise have attained.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON THE NUMBERS WHICH OCCUR IN DANIEL AND ST. JOHN.

IN a work like the present it would probably be thought by many a material omission, were no notice to be taken of the numbers which are found in Daniel and St. John. By the former of these inspired writers we are told, that the little horn shall continue in power for *a time, and times, and the dividing of time*¹. The latter, speaking of the Gentiles, or spurious Christians, says (xi. 2), *the Holy City shall they tread under foot 42 months*; and in the following verse, that *the two witnesses shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-*

¹ VII. 25. ‘Amongst the old prophets, Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood.’ Sir I. Newton’s Obser. on Dan. p. 15.

score days, clothed in sackcloth. In describing the ten-horned Beast, he says (xiii. 5), *that power was given unto him to continue 42 months.* In the 14th v. of the xiith ch. the true church of Christ is represented in a forlorn and persecuted state, under the emblem of a woman flying into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time; and in v. 6 is said to continue there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

' Now all these numbers,' says bp. Newton, ' you will find upon computation to be the same, and each of them to signify 1260 years. For—a time, all agree, signifies a year²,—and a time, and times, and the dividing of time, or half a time, are 3 years and a half, and 3 years and a half are 42 months, and 42 months are 1260 days, and 1260 days in the prophetic style are 1260 years. From all these dates and characters it may fairly be concluded, that the time of the church's great affliction, and of the reign of Antichrist, will be a period of 1260 years³. '

That these are *definite* numbers, says Mede, is unquestionable. ' The scriptures,' he observes, ' use no numbers indefinitely but such as the use of speech in the language of the people had made such.' And ' compound numbers are never taken indefinitely, either in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew: compound numbers, I mean those which are compounded of units, tens and hundreds, &c. those which are of *heterogeneal* parts; such as 42, the number of months in the apocalypse;

' By a time, it is agreed by interpreters, is meant a year, by way of excellence, as a period the most distinguished.' Wintle on Dan. vii. 25. Thus when Daniel says of Nebuchadnezzar (iv. 16), *let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him: and let seven times pass over him*; the seven times signify seven years.

^a Vol. I. p. 488; vol. III. p. 380.

' 1260, the number of days; three times and a half, which is a number of a fraction⁴.' Among the other circumstances, says this distinguished commentator, which render it evident, that *days* are to be taken for *years*, and *months* for *months of years*, is this: the events described by the prophet are far too numerous, too important, and require far too long a period, to suffer us to suppose, that they can be accomplished within the narrow limits of three single years and a half⁵. To prove that the substitution of a day for a year was consonant to the language of the ancient Hebrew prophets, a passage from Ezekiel may be appealed to, where he says⁶, *thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: and I have appointed thee each day for a year*. In that other famous prophecy of Daniel, that of the 70 weeks or 490 days, they are, says the learned Dr. Cressener⁷, taken for so many years 'by almost the unanimous consent of all interpreters.' 'Since we can,' says the excellent Mr. Whiston, in this prophecy of the Seventy Weeks 'positively appeal to the event on our side, and allege the exact fulfilling of the ancient prophecies in this sense of days for years;—there can remain no reasonable doubt in the case⁸.'

With respect to the time, when the 1260 years *commenced*, and consequently when they shall terminate, I venture to advance nothing of my own, nor place my confidence in the calculations of others. But as some

⁴ P. 741.

⁵ P. 742, 743. See another reason in p. 131.

⁶ IV. 6.

⁷ Dem. of the Prot. Appl. of the Apoc. 170.

⁸ P. 17. 'The way of counting by weeks of years seems,' says bp. Chandler, (Def. of Chr. p. 112), 'to have been used by the ancients.'

'Varro, at the time of writing his book inscribed *Hebdomades*, saith, he was entered in the 12th week of (his) years, i. e. his 78th year. Aul.

'Gell. Noct. Att. iii. 10.'

of my readers will be likely to enquire, whether no dates, apparently in unison with fact and probability, have been assigned for the commencement and for the conclusion of the 1260 years; and as I am unwilling altogether to disappoint them, and to leave those who have not before made any enquiries on the subject totally uninformed upon it, I shall state the two æras, which have been specified by Mr. Bicheno, the writer of a sensible pamphlet before referred to; and shall allege some of the reasons which may be advanced in favour of them.

To prepare the reader for what follows, a short quotation from Mr. Whiston shall, however, be previously given. At the expiration of the 1260 years ‘there is to be a Great Earthquake (Apoc. xi. 13); the $\tauο\ \deltaενδον$, of the City is to fall; in that Earthquake 7000 names of men are to be slain:—and soon after the seventh angel is to sound the great trumpet, for the restoration of the Jews, and for pouring out of the seven vials or last plagues upon the Beast’s kingdom, in order to its utter ruin and destruction for ever⁹.’ In agreement with this statement, Mr. Bicheno supposes, that the conclusion of the 1260 years and the syimbolic earthquake in the Tenth Part of the city are contemporaneous; and consequently, since the symbolic earthquake, or French revolution, predicted by St. John in ch. xi. did actually take place in the year 1789, that the 1260 years terminated at that memorable epoch. It cannot be denied, that it is a circumstance in favour of this method of calculating them, that the period specified corresponds with the idea, which learned men had previously formed of the 1260 years. Many have supposed, that this is the period during which antichristian tyranny over the persons and the consciences of men was destined especially to prevail, and to

remain almost unchecked. It was not *immediately* upon the expiration of these years, that its overthrow was to be accomplished. But as it was exerted to a considerable extent, antecedently to the commencement of that period, so likewise for some time subsequent to it, this antichristian system of oppression was to subsist, but without its wonted firmness, its pristine stability, and that servility of acquiescence, with which its measures had been heretofore submitted to throughout the countries of Europe. At the conclusion of this period it was to receive some mighty shock. And do not the events of the French revolution, and the effects it has already produced, admirably correspond with these pre-conceived notions? Have not the interests of the papacy and of ecclesiastical tyranny, as well as of civil despotism, in consequence of that revolution, received such a fatal wound as will never be healed?

But if the year 1789, the æra of the French revolution, be thought to be an epoch singularly suitable for the *conclusion* of the 1260 years: the next enquiry is, whether on the year, and about the time, when that period *commenced*, means were adopted to promote, confirm, and extend the tyranny of princes and of priests over the faith and consciences of men. I now transcribe a part of what Mr. Bicheno has urged to prove, that in the year 529 this did actually happen; and the reader with a glance of his eye will perceive, that there elapsed from the year 529 to 1789 exactly 1260 years. In the year 529, ‘*the Justinian Code* was first published¹⁰, by ‘which those powers, privileges, and immunities were ‘secured to the clergy; that union perfected between

¹⁰ The following are the words of cardinal Baronius, in his account of the year 529, *hoc eodem anno idem Justinianus Imperator, quem dederat colligendum emendandumque codicem suo nomine Justinianeum appellatum, absolutum confirmavit, vulgavitque.*

' things civil and ecclesiastical, and those laws imposed
 ' on the church, which have proved so injurious to Chris-
 ' tianity, and so calamitous to mankind. And which
 ' code, through the zeal of the clergy, has been received,
 ' more or less, as the foundation of the jurisprudence of
 ' almost every state in Christendom; and that not only
 ' in things *civil*, but *ecclesiastical*.' It was also in the
 year 529, that ' a new order of monks, which in a manner
 ' absorbed all the others established in the West, was in-
 ' stituted by Benedict of Nursia.—This and other monas-
 ' tic orders (sinks of ignorance, indolence, and vice!)
 ' were the fountains, from whence issued all sorts of
 ' abominations, and the rivers which carried superstition,
 ' oppression, and violence to all parts of the earth'¹¹. Of
 the corrupt opinions and antichristian practices, which
 prevailed at this period, ample memorials may be found
 in Mosheim; who observes with respect to the Benedic-
 tines, that they ' laboured most ardently to swell the
 ' arrogance, by enlarging the power and authority, of the
 ' Roman pontiff¹²'. How highly favourable the founding
 of the Benedictine order was to the aggrandisement of the
 priesthood and pontificate, some idea may be formed from
 an observation of the lofty language and the exulting tone,
 with which Baronius has spoken of it in his account of
 the year 529. On the code of Justinian, and on the con-
 duct of the emperor who promulgated it, I shall not har-
 rass the attention of the reader by the multiplication of
 extracts. One passage, however, and that a sufficiently
 long one, shall on this subject be cited from a writer of
 the last century, who was accurately acquainted with ec-

¹¹ Signs of the Times, p. 61.

¹² Eccl. Hist. vol. I. p. 448. It was also in the year 529, that the pre-
 lates who met in the second council of Vasio endeavoured to augment the
 authority of the Holy See, commanding that the name of the Roman Pon-
 tiff should be recited in their respective churches.

clesiastical history. It is from an apocalyptic work of Dr. Cressener, and from a chapter wherein he is professedly treating on 'the first date of the rise of the Beast,' that the passage is taken. Antecedently to the quotation of it, it may be proper to inform the reader, that Justinian was raised to the imperial throne in the year 527. In the beginning of his reign, says Dr. Cressener, Justinian publishes an edict concerning his faith, wherein he 'threatens all who should dissent from it, that they shoulc have no manner of indulgence; and that, upon the discovery of them, they should suffer the law as professed heretics, which was to be banished the Roman territories, and which was never executed upon the generality of dissenters before. And here does *his* faith appear to be made *the rule and measure* of orthodoxy to the whole empire, upon a penalty which had terror enough in it. This faith he sends to pope John for his concurrence with him in it; and tells him, "that he did it to conform all to the church of Rome; " that it was always his desire to preserve the unity of the apostolic see;"—and for that purpose "to bring all the Eastern churches under his subjeⁿction, and to unite them to the see of his Holiness." Pope John's answer to him does repeat the same thing out of his letter, with great thanks to him, as, that he did preserve the faith of the Roman church, and did bring all else under the subjeⁿction of it, and did draw them into the unity of it. Therein also does Justinian expressly call the church of Rome *the Head of all Churches*, and desires a rule of faith for the bishops of the East. The pope on the other side confirms the emperor's faith to be *the only true faith*, and that which the Roman church did always hold.—All this intercourse betwixt the pope and the emperor is inserted into the code of the Imperial law, as the standard and rule for all to

' conform to, under the penalty to be judged to be heretics.—Though the emperor's faith should be accounted orthodox, yet the inducing such a new penalty, which should force it upon the consciences of all men, as so necessary to salvation, that a man could not possibly be a member of the catholic church without the profession of it, was certainly unwarrantable, and the first beginning of that tyrannizing power in the Roman church, which made the whole world to conform to all its arbitrary decrees, and to worship it with a blind obedience to all its most unreasonable commands.' Among the extravagant commands of Justinian one was, that all such should be anathematized, '*who did not damn all those whom they called heretics*: which certainly was one of the highest acts of tyranny over the consciences of the universal church, and which of all their injunctions was the most difficult to subscribe unto¹³.'

But probably there may be some persons, who may think, that the commencement of the 260 years had better be dated from the year 547 than from the year 529; partly because Justinian's tyrannic proceedings in his management of councils, in his persecution of heretics, and in his endeavours to bring about a uniformity of faith throughout the Roman empire, cannot be supposed to have been carried nearly to their full extent earlier than that year¹⁴; and partly because they may be of opinion

¹³ Dem. of the Prot. Appl. of the Apoc. p. 306.

¹⁴ See Cressener, *ut supra* p. 307—312. Justinian, says the jesuit Petavius, innumerabilibus edictis Catholicæ fidei et ecclesiastice disciplinæ consuluit. *Rationarium Temporum*, p. i. l. vii. c. 5. This celebrated emperor was an unfeeling bigot. 'The reign of Justinian,' says Mr. Gibbon, 'was an uniform, yet various scene of persecution; and he appears to have surpassed his indolent predecessors, both in the contrivance of his laws and the rigour of their execution.' To the Samaritans of Palestine he offered only the alternative of baptism or rebellion.—It has

opinion with Dr. Cressener and other writers, that in this calculation 18 years are to be deducted from the 1260¹⁵, since 1260 apocalyptic years, each consisting only of 360 days, amount to no more than 1242 solar or Julian years¹⁶.

Some quotations shall now be added, which may serve to illustrate the opinion, that St. John by no means meant to intimate, that the conclusion of the 1260 years would be the epoch of the *complete overthrow* of civil or of spiritual tyranny. During the 1260 years, says bp. Newton, ‘*the holy city, the true church of Christ, was to be trodden under foot, which is the lowest state of subjection; the two witnesses were not only to prophesy, but to prophesy in sackcloth, that is in mourning and affliction; the woman, the church, was to abide in the wilderness, that is in a forlorn and desolate condition; and power was given to the Beast ποντικι*¹⁷, not merely to continue, as it is translated, but to practise, and prosper, and to do according to his will¹⁸.—It doth not therefore follow, that the Beast is to continue, to exist, for

¹⁵ been computed that 100,000 Roman subjects were extirpated in the Samaritan war, which converted the once-fruitful province into a desolate and smoaking wilderness. But, in the creed of Justinian, the guilt of murder could not be applied to the slaughter of unbelievers; and he piously laboured to establish with fire and sword the unity of the Christian faith.’ Decl. and Fall of the Rom. Emp. vol. VIII. p. 320, 323, 324. On Mr. Gibbon’s inaccurate use of the word *pious* (as it is an inaccuracy of which he is fond) I might here expatiate, were this a work adapted for such a discussion.

¹⁶

547	
1242	
<hr/>	
1789	

¹⁷ See Cressener ut supra, p. 238, 239; and Fleming’s Discourse on the Rise and Fall of the Papacy, p. 24—26.

¹⁸ XIII. 5.¹⁹ See the word explained in the same way by Vitringa.

'no longer a time'¹⁹.' Though the power of princes and of priests over the persons and the consciences of men was to decline at the termination of the 1260 years, and was speedily to fall into a weak and shattered slate; it is not therefore to be concluded, that at this epoch their authority was *all at once* to be overthrown, and their oppressions were to cease in *all* the streets of the symbolic city. 'Nothing,' says the bp. of Worcester, 'has been more censured in protestant divines, than their temerity in fixing *the fall of Antichrist*; though there are certain data in the prophecies, from which very probable conclusions on that subject may be drawn. Experience, it is said, contradicts this calculation. But it is not considered, that the fall of Antichrist is not a single event, to happen all once; but a *flare of things*, to continue through a long tract of time, and to be gradually accomplished.—Suppose the ruin of the Western empire had been the subject of a prediction, and some had collected beforehand from the terms of the prophecy, that it would happen at a particular time; when yet nothing more, in fact, came to pass, than *the first irruption of the barbarous nations*; would it be certain that this collection was groundless and ill made, because the empire subsisted in a good degree of vigour for some centuries after? Might it not be said, that the empire *was falling* from that era, or perhaps before; though, in the event, it *fell* not, till its sovereignty was shaken by the rude hands of Attila, or rather, till it was laid flat by the well-directed force of Theodosius²⁰?' At

¹⁹ Vol. III. p. 314, 382. See similar observations in the *Field of Nat. and Rev. Rel.* by Dr. Clarke, p. 482.

²⁰ Vol. II. p. 71. And though nothing more came to pass in the year 1789 than the French Revolution; would it be certain that the fall of Antichrist might not be dated from that year, and that such an inference was ground-

At the close of the 1260 years, says the author of an '*Essay on the Numbers of Daniel and John*', 'the Beast was to meet with a visible check to his power²¹.' The Beast will not be destroyed, says Durham, at the expiration of the 1260 years; but, to use this early commentator's own words, his power will be clipped, and his authority shaken²². The seventh trumpet, says Mr. Whiston, which has the vials for its contents, is not to commence till after the 1260 years are expired; so that the 1260 years bring to a conclusion only the '*Prevailing Tyranny* of the Beast.—But the end or destruction of the Beast himself' will not take place 'till the end of the same trumpet, or the conclusion of the vials²³.' To the same purpose speaks Dr. More. 'That the reign of the Beast does not end with the sixth trumpet' is, says this learned writer, 'a thing I do easily grant; but yet in the mean time, I contend that the fulfilling of his 42 months is at the *exitus* of the sixth trumpet, which respects the duration of the *entireness* thereof; which entireness was broken at the *rising of the witnessess*.—Unless the affairs of Europe should break of a sudden, as, Olaus says, the Frozen ocean does, and then immediately sinks (which is a miracle above belief), I see no probability at all of any other sense of the stinting the reign of the Beast to 42 months than I have already declared²⁴'.

groundless and ill made, because the antichristian empire subsisted in a good degree of vigour for some years after? Might it not be said, that the empire was falling from that æra, or perhaps before; though, in the event, it fell not, till its sovereignty was shaken by ——————, or rather, till it was laid flat by ——————? Here are chasms in the sentence, which our ignorance of futurity renders necessary, and which must be filled up at a future time.

²¹ Burton's *Ess. on the Numbers of Dan. and John*, 1766, p. 263.

²² P. 553.

²³ P. 88, 89.

²⁴ On the Apoc. p. 263; and Myst. of Inq. p. 382.

Now some probably may be of opinion, that the affairs of Europe *have* suddenly broken, and taken a new direction; and that a mighty change will be effected in the circumstances of mankind by means of the revolution of France, by the spread of its principles and the progress of its arms. They may also not unreasonably conclude, that, in this quarter of the world, the wheels of the existing fabrics of government, complex as they are in their original construction, injured by the rust of age, often impeded by the collision of jarring interests, and every where clogged by the interference of superfluous weights, will in a short time be stopped by the obstructions which will be thrown in their way; and that those, who have hitherto regulated their movements, will cease to direct them, or to put in motion those engines of oppression, in the management of which they now discover so much expertness, as they will be driven from their posts, covered with disgrace, and depressed by disappointment. The People, they may expect, will hereafter be the great First Moving Cause that shall actuate the machine of government; and the agents, whom they shall appoint, will determine on the specific mode on which it shall be constructed, and adjust and superintend its several operations, however numerous or complicated.

The change in the political world, already accomplished in France, some perhaps may conceive, is equal in point of greatness, in point of rapidity, in point of benefit, to the most striking change which the natural world can produce. With respect also to some of those lofty edifices of power, which are scattered over the surface of the European continent, it will perhaps be thought, that the *rapidity* with which these unwieldy fabrics, though they have subsisted during the revolution of centuries, and to the superficial observer appeared possessed of strength which nothing could overpower or shatter, shall sink and break in pieces, in consequence

sequence of that alteration of sentiment which shall prevail, and that ardor of patriotism which shall be kindled, may not unaptly be compared to the suddenness, with which a vast sea of ice, that before exhibited a prospect the most dreary and comfortless, is subdued by thaw, and all its different compartments, on the change of weather and the kindly approach of summer, melt and disappear; notwithstanding that sea has been so frozen by a northern winter, as to have lasted a long succession of weeks, and notwithstanding it appeared to the eye of the uninformed, too firm to be broken, and too hard to be dissolved.

I now proceed to take some notice of the numbers which occur in the xiith ch. of Daniel; and as this concluding chapter of the Hebrew prophet is short and a very remarkable one, I shall embrace this opportunity of quoting the greater part of it, and of introducing a few extracts in illustration of it. ‘The prophecies of Daniel,’ says Sir I. Newton, ‘are all of them related to one another, as if they were but several parts of one general prophecy, given at several times²⁵.’ In agreement with this remark, it has been concluded, that his predictions in ch. xii. have a relation to what he has elsewhere foretold with respect to the expiring of persecution, the destruction of the antichristian monarchies, and the subsequent reign of genuine Christianity in the world.

In v. 4 it is said, *but thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* ‘To shut up a book,’ says Mr. Lowth, ‘and to seal it, is the same with concealing the sense of it,—as hath been observed upon ch. viii. 25. And the same

²⁵ P. 24.

reason is assigned in both places for this command, viz. because there would be a long interval of time between the date of the prophecy, and the final accomplishment of it.—But the nearer that time approached, the more light should men have for understanding the prophecy itself; as is implied in the following words. *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* Many shall be inquisitive after truth, and keep correspondence with others for their better information: and the gradual completion of this and other prophecies shall direct observing readers to form a judgment concerning those particulars which are yet to be fulfilled. But the latter words, though they may be admitted to have a peculiar reference to prophetic knowledge, may also be reasonably thought to refer to the augmentation of knowledge in general. But what is *the time of the end?* In its strict and proper sense, says an intelligent commentator on Daniel, it ‘is that time, wherein the years of Antichrist are finished²⁶.’ Though the *nature* of the wonders foretold in this book of prophecy was thus imperfectly revealed to Daniel, somewhat was communicated to him relative to the *period* of their accomplishment. For one of the angels of the vision is represented in v. 6 as saying unto another angel, in the presence of Daniel, and for his information, *how long shall it be to the end of these wonders?* And, says Daniel (v. 7—12), *I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.* And I heard, but I understood not: then said

²⁶ Parker on Dan. p. 122.

I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand: but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

The period here specified by Daniel, *a time, times, and an half*, signifies, says Mede, the 1260 years during which the ten-horned Beast was to reign²⁷. The extract which follows is from the paraphrase of Dr. Wells. *And I heard the angel swear by Him, ‘that lives for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half of time, i. e. the said wonderful things are not to be accomplished, till the expiration or end of that portion of time of the Fourth Kingdom, during which (according to what was made known unto Daniel in a former vision, viz. chap. vii. 25) the little horn shall wear out the saints of the most High, and they shall be given into his hand.’* As the words, repeatedly employed by Daniel in ch. vii. *the saints of the Most High*, are most certainly not to be understood of the Jews, but of genuine Christians; so in like manner there is reason to believe, that that kindred expression, *the holy people*, has in ch. xii. exactly the same signification²⁸. The clause

²⁷ P. 885.

²⁸ That *the holy people*, in ch. xii. v. 7 of Dan. is to be understood of genuine Christians, the learned Dr. Goodwin conceived to be unquestionable, p. 185. ‘The Christians may,’ says bp. Newton (on Dan. vol. II. p. 48), ‘full as well as the Jews be comprehended under the name of the holy

clause containing these words Waple²³ endeavours to illustrate by referring to a passage in the apocalypse. By the ‘accomplishment of the scattering, or dispersion of ‘the power of the holy people can,’ he says, ‘be meant ‘no other than the woman’s coming out of the wilderness²⁴, where the holy people were dispersed and scattered.’ But I do not conceive, that the prophet’s words oblige us to conclude, that genuine Christians will cease to be oppressed, immediately at the expiration of the 1260 years. When he says, *that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and that when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished;* the meaning may be, that it is, for the 1260 years, that the whole body of true Christians shall be principally exposed to the attacks of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny; and that some time afterwards, when the period of their being in a dispersed and precarious and persecuted state shall be completely accomplished, then that all the principal events foretold by Daniel shall be finished. I shall shortly have occasion to introduce a quotation from St. John, wherein he has manifestly copied from the 7th v. of the xiith ch. of

‘*holy people*’ By ‘*the holy people*,’ says a learned writer, who was quoted in the last chapter, and whose signature is *Synergus* (*Comment. and Eff.* p. 481), ‘I understand the Christians distinguished by that general title ‘from the rest of the world, without any regard to their moral character, ‘or any thing besides their outward profession.’ Thus it appears, that the appellation of *the holy people*, with respect to extent of import, is differently understood by different writers.

²³ On Rev. x. 7.

²⁴ It is in ch. xii. v. 6 of the Rev. that the symbolic woman is represented as ‘flying into a wilderness,’ (I am now quoting from Mr. Lowman,) ‘to intimate, the condition of the church would be difficult and dangerous in these times, like the Israelites, when they wandered in the wilderness.’ ‘The wilderness into which she fled intimates,’ says a foreign writer, ‘the church’s obscurity, poverty, and distress.’ *New Syst. of Apoc.* p. 60.

Daniel, at the very time when he is speaking of the seventh trumpet and the destruction of the antichristian empire³¹. Here then the reader will be furnished with a new reason for concluding, that each of the prophets is speaking of the same period and the same events.

Many, says Daniel, shall be purified, and made white, and tried. ‘The persecutions of the faithful,’ says Mr. Lowth, ‘are designed for the trial of their faith, and purifying their lives.’ And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. That this computation cannot refer to the desolate state of Jerusalem and the profanation of its temple, appears evident, because a much longer period than 1290 years has elapsed, since the city and the temple were exposed to the insults of Antiochus, or Titus, or Hadrian. ‘The same expressions,’ says Mr. Lowth, ‘made use of to describe Antiochus’s persecution,’ chap. xi. 31, are here applied to the desolations made by Antichrist, of which the former was a figure.’ Mr. Wintle, to whom the public are indebted for a New Translation of Daniel, observes, that ‘the language is borrowed from the service of the Jewish temple, and applicable to the church of God in a variety of states and forms: that it is here particularly meant to have its illustration during the times of the Christian church must,’ says Mr. Wintle, ‘be evident, not only from the whole series of the foregoing remarks, but because the days cannot be taken in their strict sense, but must be understood for so many years.’ ‘The setting up of the abomination of desolation,’ bp. Newton in like manner remarks, is ‘a general phrase³².’ To set up the abomi-

³¹ See the note from Vitringa, at the bottom of p. 299.

³² Vol. II. p. 193.

nation that maketh desolate, says Mr. Parker, is to establish ‘antichristian idolatries and superstitions, corrupt doctrine and unlawful worship;’ and to take away the daily sacrifice is to take away ‘the true doctrine and worship instituted by Christ³³.’ ‘Here,’ says Mr. Lowth, ‘the time allotted for the persecutions of Anti-christ, till the church be entirely cleansed and purified, is enlarged from 1260 days, denoted by *time, times, and an half*, ver. 7, to 1290 days.’ The prophet immediately adds, *Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.* The state of mankind, at the end of this second period of 45 years, is to be substantially meliorated³⁴.

Mr. Bicheno, who calculates, that the first period which Daniel specifies, *a time, and times, and an half*, or the 1260 years, terminated in the year 1789, about which time also the resurrection of the witnesses and the earthquake in the Tenth Part of the city took place, consequently supposes, that the 1290 years will end in the year 1819, and the 1335 years in 1864. During the first of these periods, reaching from the year 1789 to 1819, he concludes, that all the seven vials are to be poured out; ‘a season,’ says he, ‘it is likely of great calamities, but especially to the enemies of Christ’s kingdom.—To gather and try the Jews preparatory to their conversion, to destroy the remains of tyranny, and to purify

³³ Parker on Dan. p. 109, 133. ‘The offering daily sacrifices is an expression very proper to denote the external of the Christian worship.’ Comment and Eff. ut supra, signature Synergus, vol. I. p. 473.

³⁴ Bp. Newton says, ‘it is, I conceive, to these great events, the fall of Antichrist, the restoration of the Jews, and the beginning of the glorious millennium, that the three different dates in Daniel of 1260 years, 1290 years, and 1335 years, are to be referred,’ vol. III. p. 393. That the Jews will be restored to their own land in the course of 30 years, after the conclusion of the 1260, I do not, however, myself conceive to be at all probable. See Rom. xi. 25.

' and enlarge the Gentile church, will occupy forty-five
' years more.—This is the time of which Daniel says,
' *Blessed is he that cometh to it,* and which is the year
' 1864³⁵.'

Such is the statement of Mr. Bicheno. On the probability of it the reader must judge for himself. Persuaded that the fixing of future dates is a business of infinite delicacy, I should certainly myself have been very unwilling to have spoken in so peremptory a manner respecting the epochas of Daniel, or on *the period* when any unaccomplished events are destined to happen³⁶. With respect to the time when the proper millennial period shall commence, I do not allow myself even to conjecture; and, on the number of years which will be occupied in the effusion of the vials, I likewise conceive myself incompetent to give any opinion. Of this, however, I am persaaded, that they will be poured out much sooner than *many* commentators have supposed.

The following is the opinion of an ingenious French commentator. It ' may be affirmed as certain and indubitable,—that when the vials come to be poured out, ' there shall be no long distance between the pouring out ' of one of them, and the effusion of the rest. Because ' it is said in the xth chapter, v. 6, that *the angel sware* ' *that there should be time no longer.* That is to say, that ' there should be no more delay; that the judgments of ' God shall overtake the Beast, without any respite be- ' twixt one and another.—Before the pouring forth of ' the first' vial ' be ended, the second shall begin, and so ' the rest³⁷.' The whole of the angelic oath, relating to

³⁵ Signs of the Times, p. 60, 65.

³⁶ In justice to Mr. Bicheno it ought, however, to be observed, that he speaks in a far less confident tone, than that which many preceding calculators have employed.

³⁷ New Syst. of the Apoc. p. 250.

the period of the seventh trumpet, which I have alluded to as being copied from Daniel, is thus sublimely expressed. *And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be no longer delay³⁸ : but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound³⁹, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets⁴⁰.* By Mr. Pyle a part of this passage is thus paraphrased. ' Having lifted up his hands to heaven, in the same manner as the angel in Daniel is represented to have done⁴¹, he, ' in the name of the Almighty and ' Eternal Father of all things, protested, that whatever ' the said Daniel, or any other prophet had foretold con- ' cerning the kingdom of Christ, and the glorious success ' of it here upon earth, *in the latter times*, should be all ' punctually fulfilled. And particularly that part of ' Daniel's prediction, that the reign of the antichristian ' kingdom of idolatry and persecution was to continue, ' after it is in its full height, but for a time, and times, ' and a half time (i. e. for 1260 years and no longer), ' should be verified in the period of this seventh trum- ' pet.' With respect to the expression, *the mystery of*

³⁸ Thus Mr. Wakefield translates this clause. In our common translation it is, *that there should be time no longer.* That *χρόνος* signifies *delay* may be seen in the lexicous of Constantine and Hederic; that it here bears that signification is the statement of Brightman, of Doddridge, and of Vitringa; and it is observed by Daubuz, that in this place it is thus understood by ' most interpreters and versions.'

³⁹ Daubuz renders the words, *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished;* and adds, *that the original might have been translated, when he shall HAVE sounded.*

⁴⁰ X. 5, 6, 7.

⁴¹ XII. 7.

God,

God, it signifies, says Vitringa, ‘ the oracles of the prophets, which interpret the secret will of God;’ and it consists, adds this eminent commentator, of the great concluding events which they foretell; namely, of the remarkable judgments by which the enemies of Christ’s kingdom shall be destroyed, the establishment of that kingdom throughout the globe, and the consequent universal prevalence of virtue and holiness.

Whenever the vials ‘ begin,’ says Dr. Beverly in his *Scripture Line of Time*⁴², ‘ they move with so swift a course, that it is impossible there should be any delay in them after they are begun, or that any of them should be entered, and not all of them in their order swiftly poured out.’ It is observed by Brightman, (a commentator always treated with great respect by Vitringa,) that the seventh trumpet, which, he says, has the seven vials for its constituent parts, ‘ should be dispatched in a short time, and should not linger so long as the former trumpets did, but should fly rather with swift wings⁴³.’ ‘ The effects of the seventh trumpet,’ says Mr. Waple, ‘ shall not take up any long time in their accomplishing; but shall be performed with speed, and of a sudden; which may perhaps be the meaning of ερχεται ταχυ: for, as a judicious person hath acutely observed, the sixth trumpet comes immediately after the fifth, as well as the seventh after the sixth; and therefore it cannot be distinguished from the others by its immediate succession, which is common to them all; but by the speed of its motions and the quickness of its events⁴⁴.’

That the vials will be poured out rapidly, seems to be countenanced by the 8th verse of the xviiith ch. of St. John, where that prophet, when speaking of the sym-

⁴² Published in London in 4to. in 1684, p. 187.

⁴³ See p. 380, 506.

⁴⁴ On ch. xi. 14.

bolic Babylon, says, *her plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine.* Against the opinion, that the vials will be poured out with a considerable degree of rapidity, the word *vial* may itself appear to militate; for, as it signifies a vessel with a narrow mouth, it would seem to denote, that God's wrath will be poured out not all at once, but slowly, and by little and little. But the objection has no solid foundation. The fact is, the word *vial* is an improper rendering; for it communicates to the mind of the English reader an idea entirely different from that which the Greek original suggests. On this point it will be sufficient to appeal to two of the most learned of the commentators. 'We have 'proved,' says Daubuz⁴⁵, that $\varphiιxλη$, the word here used, 'is a bowl or basin proper for libations, to pour the 'liquor contained *all at once*.' A $\varphiιxλη$ 'is supposed by 'all interpreters,' says Vitringa⁴⁶, 'to have certainly had 'the shape of a *cup*, and this has lately, by a certain 'writer of eminent learning, been very clearly demon- 'strated⁴⁷.' It is manifest then, that the word under consideration, instead of favouring the alleged objection, when examined, favours the expectation, that these divine judgments will be rapidly executed.

⁴⁵ P. 681.⁴⁶ P. 689.⁴⁷ Braunio, Select. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 5, sect. 64, 65.

four volumes of the divine communications were of such a complexion as to be incapable of being applied to the benefit of the church, is, says Vitringa, to support an hypothesis that is at variance with reason⁸. Reason, indeed, teaches us to expect, says this distinguished commentator, that, when the sealed book is divided into seven volumes or periods, *some proportion* between the length of these periods should be preserved⁹. But bp. Newton and those who coincide with him¹⁰ represent, that all the six first¹¹ seals were fulfilled between the reign of Vespasian and the death of the emperor Theodosius, a period of only 325 years, whilst the seventh seal alone was to run on from that time, through a long succession of centuries, to the end of the world. Some sort of proportion also might be expected to be found with respect to the length of the visions themselves¹². But according to bp. Newton, the account of the seventh seal, and of what is contained under it, fills *four entire chapters* of the apocalypse; whilst the description of the other seals for the most part occupies only *two or three verses*. The fact is, says Vitringa, and it is the opinion of Daubuz, of the celebrated Cocceius, and of many others¹³, that the seven trumpets, described in chapters viii, ix, and xi, are by no means to be included under the seventh seal, but constitute a new series of distinct visions. Independently of these objections, Vitringa has decisively proved, that the advocates of the hypothesis under consideration have in *applying* the emblems of

⁸ P. 232.⁹ P. 231.¹⁰ Lest I should lead the reader into mistake, I remind him, that Vitringa wrote earlier than bp. Newton, and therefore had not him in view, but other commentators of similar sentiments.¹¹ The first seal, according to bp. Newton, occupies the scanty term of about 28 years.¹² See Vitringa, p. 226.¹³ See Vitringa, p. 319.

the prophet to particular events, been singularly unsuccessful. Thus for instance, when it is said in the delineation of the second seal, that *there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword*: these emblems are pronounced to be prophetic of the events which happened in the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, a period which was in fact distinguished by a more than common portion of tranquillity and general prosperity. But, says Vitringa, if these symbols are to be applied to the wars which the Romans carried on with other nations, ‘would not the aspect of that period, ‘when the Roman empire was on all sides harassed by ‘the Goths and Scythians, the Persians and Germans, ‘about the times of Decius and Gallus, and was almost ‘oppressed by these nations, be far more suitably ex-‘pressed by the symbolic figure of a *red horse*¹⁴, than the ‘happy times of Trajan and Hadrian¹⁵?’ Improbable as this interpretation is on the very face of it, it may boast the patronage of a crowd of expositors, and these too respectable. Does not this serve to shew, what I

¹⁴ VI. 4. That a *red horse* and a *sword* are the symbols of slaughter, the commentators unite in observing.

¹⁵ P. 233. ‘If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would,’ says Mr. Gibbon, ‘without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose character and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws.’ Decl. and Fall of the Rom. Emp. vol. I. 8vo. 1792, p. 126.

believe is the fact with respect to *the generality of commentators*, that they are averse to the toil of examining for themselves, and are often ready to adopt the opinions of their predecessors with unbecoming servility?

By Vitrunga the seven seals are far otherwise explained. They are, he says, the seven Greater Events or important changes, which were to befall the church even to the consummation of all things; and this explication of them has been embraced and vindicated by a number of very early commentators¹⁶, as well as by many learned men, who, subsequent to the æra of the Protestant Reformation, have cultivated the study of the prophetic scriptures.

The following account of the seals, which is principally extracted from the invaluable commentary of Vitrunga, contains only a statement of their accomplishment; for to enter into an examination of their respective symbols, would be to depart from the purpose of the present work. *The first seal* foretells the brilliant success and rapid propagation of the Gospel, and its long exemption from any extensive persecution. Commencing from the publication of the prophecy, it reaches from the reign of Nerva to that of Decius, a period of 150 years. *The second* denotes the efforts which the Pagans afterwards made to extirpate that faith, and those cruel and wide-extending persecutions, raised against the professors of it, by the orders of Decius and Valerian, of Dioclesian, Galerius, and Maximin.

¹⁶ Among others, it was adopted by the abbot Joachim in the 12th century, by Pierre d' Olive in the 13th, and by Ubertinus de Casalis in the 14th. These apocalyptic writers Vitrunga entitles *viri eruditii et pii*; and certainly, little as their names are now known, each of them did, in his own time, excite in the world a degree of attention, which it is the fortune of few theologians of the present age to obtain. See Vitrunga, p. 30, 239; and Mosheim's account of the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries.

With respect to the third seal, I differ from all former writers; and it is therefore necessary, that I should give an account of its symbols, as well as of its supposed completion. That it has been generally misunderstood, cannot be denied, for, in their explication of it, the best commentators differ extremely. Mede and Goodwin, Grotius and Hammoud, Lightfoot, Waple, and Fleming, Vitringa, Bengelius, and the anonymous French author of the *New System of the Apocalypse*, Lowman, Johnston, and Daubuz, ALL differ materially from each other, in their interpretations of the third seal; and of these commentators, the twelve first are at variance with each other with respect to the time. By every person, then, who acknowledges the authority of the apocalypse, it cannot but be thought a point of some consequence, to ascertain the signification of a prophecy, the import and application of which have hitherto been a subject of such general dispute. It is thus expressed: *And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine*¹⁷.

Since the end of the second seal or period, and the beginning of the fourth, are fixed by Vitringa¹⁸, those, who adopt his opinion respecting the seals in general, of

" VI. 5, 6. In v. 5 it ought to have been rendered, *I heard the third living creature say*; and in v. 6, *I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures*. It is thus in the versions of Wakefield and Doddridge.

¹⁸ Vitringa regards the third seal as a prediction of the numerous theological contests, which occurred in the period referred to; of the consequent scarcity of spiritual food, that is to say, of true doctrines; and of the care, which the governors of the church took accurately to weigh in the theological balance the different opinions which were advanced, and to prescribe a correct standard of faith.

course know *the period* of the *third seal*, previously to their examination into the import of its particular symbols. The third seal then reaches from about the year 324, when Constantine obtained the sole possession of the Roman empire, and the religion of Jesus ceased to be attacked by pagan persecutors, to about the year 629, when the power of the Saracens arose, and they first waged war against Christianity and the emperor of the East. In order, therefore, to ascertain the completion of the third seal, or the important events predicted to happen in the intervening period, it is necessary to state the established signification of the principal symbols; and to enquire, by a minute reference to history, whether that statement aptly corresponds to the general character and the leading events of the period, of which the prophet is supposed to have given a concise description.

'*The horse*,' says Dr. Lancaster in his Symbolical Dictionary, 'is the symbol of war and conquest;' and '*black*,' he observes, 'signifies afflictions, disasters, and anguish'¹⁹. The period, of which the prophet speaks, must then have been remarkable for the greatness of the conquests made in it; and it must have been more than usually calamitous. But there is another prophetic emblem, which will more specifically ascertain the character of the period. A '*balance*, joined with symbols, denoting the sale of corn and fruits by weight,' is, observes Dr. Lancaster, 'the symbol of scarcity: *bread by weight* being a curse in Lev. xxvi. 26, and in Ezek. iv. 16, 'where it is said, *I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care, and they shall drink water by measure, and astonishment.* Which curse is expressed by famine in the same

¹⁹ 'In all languages *black* signifies any thing that is sad, dismal, cruel, and unfortunate.' Daubuz in loc.

' prophet ch. v. 16, and ch. xiv. 13²⁰.' ' Grotius and others have,' says bp. Newton, observed on this seal, ' that a *chænix* of corn, the measure here mentioned, was a man's daily allowance, as a *penny*²¹ was his daily wages; so that if his daily labour could earn no more than his daily bread, without other provisions for himself or his family, corn must needs bear a **VERY HIGH PRICE**²².' To the same purpose speaks Mr. Lowman

" Very many agree in this,' says Vitringa, ' that this seal is emblematic of famine and a scarcity of provisions.' That the third seal is prophetic of a great scarcity of provisions is observed, among other commentators, by Goodwin, Lightfoot, and Daubuz.

²¹ That is, a Roman *Denarius*.

²² Notwithstanding this observation of the prelate, he seems unaccountably to regard the third seal as predictive of a period rather of plenty than of want; and declares, that it refers to the two and forty years, which elapsed from the accession of Septimius Severus to the death of Alexander Severus. The prophecy has, also, in the opinion of bp. Newton, a particular reference to the conduct of those two emperors, as well as to the state of the Roman empire at that time. What that conduct, and that state of things, was, the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* will inform us. Whenever Septimius Severus ' deviated from the strict line of equity, it was generally in favour of the poor and oppressed.—The calm of peace and prosperity was once more experienced in the provinces; and many cities, restored by the munificence of Severus, assumed the title of his colonies, and attested by public monuments their gratitude and felicity.—And he boasted with a just pride, that, having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it established in profound, universal, and honourable peace.' Of this prince it is related, though the account cannot but be regarded as exaggerated, that ' he left in the public granaries a provision of corn for seven years, at the rate of 75,000 *modii*, or about 2500 quarters a day.' In the reign of Alexander Severus, the provinces ' flourished in peace and prosperity, under the administration of magistrates, who were convinced by experience, that to deserve the love of the subjects, was their best and only method of obtaining the favour of their sovereign. While some gentle restraints were imposed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of provisions, and the interest of money, were reduced, by the paternal care of Alexander.' Vol. I. p. 197, 198, 246. Whether the events of this period do, or do not correspond, to the emblems of the third seal, cannot, I think, be a question of very difficult decision.

in his paraphrase. ‘ In the times of this prophecy, the price of a measure of wheat shall be a penny, and three measures of barley shall cost the same price; the whole wages of a man’s labour for a day, shall only purchase so much corn, as is an usual daily allowance; so that all he can get must be laid out on the very necessaries of life, without any provision of other conveniences for himself or family, and a scarcity of oil and wine²³ will make exactness in their measures very necessary also.’

Both the period of the third seal being ascertained, and the import of the prophetic symbols discovered, it will not, I apprehend, be very difficult to point to those great events, which constitute its accomplishment. It announces, that the Roman empire, which is the theatre

²³ Wine, oil, and corn, together make, says Daubuz (in loc.), ‘ the whole product of the fruits of the earth necessary for human life.’ That oil should be ranked as one of the necessaries of life, and classed among those things, the want of which would be most severely felt, may perhaps be a ground of wonder to the mere English reader. But such was the fact. Accordingly we find, that in different writers united mention is often made of wine, oil, and corn. Thus in his account of a scarcity of provisions Julius Capitolinus (In Antonin. Pio, c. 8) has this expression, *vini, olei, et tritici penuria*; and the following are the words of Mr. Gibbon (vol. VIII. p. 151), when speaking of the Lombards, ‘ the business of agriculture, in the cultivation of corn, vines, and olives, was exercised with degenerate skill and industry.’ ‘ When the luxurious citizens of Antioch complained of the high price of poultry and fish, Julian,’ as the English historian relates (vol. IV. p. 147), ‘ publicly declared, that a frugal city ought to be satisfied with a regular supply of wine, oil, and bread;’ and Mr. Gibbon elsewhere says (vol. V. p. 281), ‘ in the manners of antiquity the use of oil was indispensable for the lamp, as well as for the bath; and the annual tax, which was imposed on Africa for the benefit of Rome, amounted to the weight of three millions of pounds, to the measure, perhaps, of three hundred thousand gallons.’ ‘ Oil,’ says the president Goguet (*Origin of Arts and Sciences*, vol. I. p. 112), ‘ is at least as necessary to man as wine, and other liquors of that kind.— There are few arts which do not require the use of oil.’ The ancients consumed vast quantities of it, and put it to many more uses than we do at present.’

of the events foretold in the seven seals, shall, during the predicted period, a period of about 300 years, be the scene of mighty conquests: it declares, that the political horizon shall be clouded by calamity, and that the inhabitants of the Roman empire shall be especially afflicted by an unaccustomed scarcity of provisions: and it refers to that mighty revolution produced by the successive inundations and numerous victories of the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns, and the other Barbarians of the North and the East; who dismembered the Roman empire, who served as a scourge in the hands of God to chastize the vices and superstitions of the Christian world, and who, by destroying a very large part of the inhabitants of civilized Europe by means of famine and the sword, and by embracing a religion of mildness and mercy, which they little understood, and were little disposed to practise, prepared the way for a more complete corruption of the religion of Jesus, for the conquests of the Saracens and the Turks, and for the consequent extinction of the Christian faith in Mahometan countries.

Having advanced an interpretation of the third seal altogether different from any before alleged, it is incumbent on me to bring forward historic attestations in support of it. They are taken from *the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a work of incredible diligence, and displaying uncommon vigour of mind, but no part of which, we are certain, was intended by its unbelieving author to attest the truth, or to illustrate the meaning, of prophecy. As the period, characterized by the emblems of the third seal, extends over three centuries, I cannot do justice to my subject, without transcribing a long chain of testimonies relating to the different parts of that period. But I certainly should not have ventured to have transcribed them, were

not the subversion and dismemberment of the Roman empire, the consequent diminution of mankind, and the memorable relapse of the civilized world into ignorance and barbarism, events, in themselves, of the first magnitude and importance. I should, however, have been content to have referred the reader to Mr. Gibbon's History, were not the facts, illustrative of the third seal, scattered over many hundred pages of that work.

It is proper to premise, that the evils resulting from the devastation of armies and the dearth of provisions, cannot all at once ascend to any very considerable height, but must be gradual in their progress; and it may be remarked, that, as the ravages of famine often spread in secrecy and silence, as the complaints of the poor are frequently stifled by the arts of policy and the arm of power, and as occurrences of this kind are totally destitute of that variety and splendour, which characterize the operations of war and the revolutions of government, they are commonly passed over by the historian unexplained and unrecorded.

As early as the year 331, and when Constantine filled the throne of the Roman world, the Goths ‘passed the Danube, and spread terror and devastation through the province of Mæsia. To oppose the inroad of this destroying host, the aged emperor took the field in person; but on this occasion either his conduct or his fortune betrayed the glory which he had acquired in so many foreign and domestic wars.’ About the middle of the fourth century, ‘the Barbarians of the land and sea, the Scots, the Piets, and the Saxons, spread themselves, with rapid and irresistible fury, from the wall of Antoninus to the shores of Kent.’ And the Illyrian provinces, in the year 357, and in the reign of Constantius, the son of Constantine, were exposed, ‘almost without defence, to the light cavalry of the

‘Barba-

‘ Barbarians ; and particularly to the inroads of the Quadi, a fierce and powerful nation.’ But there were other provinces, in the reign of the son of Constantine, still more oppressed by the depredations of the Barbarians. ‘ In the blind fury of civil discord, Constantius had abandoned to the Barbarians of Germany the countries of Gaul, which still acknowledged the authority of his rival. A numerous swarm of Franks and Alemanni were invited to cross the Rhine by presents and promises, by the hopes of spoil, and by a perpetual grant of all the territories which they should be able to subdue. But the emperor, who for a temporary service had thus imprudently provoked the rapacious spirit of the Barbarians, soon discovered and lamented the difficulty of dismising these formidable allies, after they had tasted the richness of the Roman soil. Regardless of the nice distinction of loyalty and rebellion, these undisciplined robbers treated as their natural enemies all the subjects of the empire, who possessed any property which they were desirous of acquiring. Forty-five flourishing cities, Tongres, Cologne, Treves, Worms, Spires, Strasburgh, &c. besides a far greater number of towns and villages, were pillaged, and for the most part reduced to ashes.—Fixing their independent habitations on the banks of rivers, the Rhine, the Moselle, and the Meuse, they secured themselves against the danger of a surprize, by a rude and hasty fortification of large trees.—The Alemanni were established in the modern countries of Alsace and Lorraine ; the Franks occupied the island of the Batavians, together with an extensive district of Brabant.—From the sources, to the mouth, of the Rhine, the conquests of the Germans extended above forty miles to the West of that river ;—and the scene of their devastations was three times more extensive than that of their

' their conquests. At a still greater distance the open towns of Gaul were deserted, and the inhabitants of the fortified cities, who trusted to their strength and vigilance, were obliged to content themselves with such supplies of corn, as they could raise on the vacant land within the inclosure of their walls. The diminished legions, destitute of pay and provisions, of arms and discipline, trembled at the approach, and even at the name, of the Barbarians.' In the year 362, it may be added, so considerable a scarcity of corn was felt in Antioch and the cities of Syria, as to generate public discontent.

Thirty thousand Visigoths, the subjects of Hermanric, who reigned from the Euxine to the Baltic, and over the greatest part of Germany and Scythia, passed the Danube in the year 366; 'and the provinces of Thrace groaned under the weight of the Barbarians.' Whilst the maritime provinces of Gaul and Britain, about the year 371, were harassed by the Saxons; the Quadi, and a body of Sarmatian cavalry, invaded Pannonia, in the year 374, and in the season of harvest; and unmercifully destroyed every object of plunder which they could not easily transport²⁴.

But every part of the reign of Constantine and his immediate successors may possibly be regarded by some persons, as too early for the commencement of the third seal; and indeed I know not, that there is any necessity for concluding, that the events foretold in the second seal should be *immediately* followed by those prefigured in the third. Prophecies, so concisely expressed as the seals are, cannot possibly describe all the considerable events of a long period, but only the principal characteristic events. Perhaps, then, the reign of Valens,

²⁴ Decl. and Fall of the Rom. Emp. vol. III. p. 123, 195, 213; vol. IV. p. 147, 286—329.

and the year 376, may form the true epoch, when the events of the third seal began to be accomplished. In this memorable year the Gothic nation, constituting nearly a million of persons, being driven from their ancient seats by an irresistible torrent of other Barbarians, the Huns and the Alani, were permitted by the emperor Valens to cross the Danube: but fatal were the consequences which attended that permission, for this immense body of Goths, exasperated by the ill treatment of the Roman officers, did, in this very year, rear the standard of revolt in the provinces of the empire, and defeat an army of Romans.

But on this important æra I shall quote *the words of Mr. Gibbon.* ‘In the disastrous period of the fall of the Roman empire, which may justly be dated from the reign of Valens, the happiness and security of each individual were personally attacked; and the arts and labours of ages were rudely defaced by the Barbarians of Scythia and Germany. The invasion of the Huns precipitated on the provinces of the West the Gothic nation, which advanced, in less than forty years, from the Danube to the Atlantic, and opened a way, by the success of their arms, to the inroads of so many hostile tribes, more savage than themselves.’

It was in the year 376, that the Roman legions, under the command of Lupicinus, one of the governors of Thrace, were completely defeated by the Goths. ‘As they had been deprived, by the ministers of the emperor, of the common benefits of nature, and the fair intercourse of social life, they retaliated the injustice on the subjects of the empire; and the crimes of Lupicinus were expiated by the ruin of the peaceful husbandmen of Thrace, the conflagration of their villages, and the massacre, or captivity, of their innocent families.’ The hardy workmen, who laboured in the gold mines

‘of

‘of Thrace, for the emolument, and under the lash, of
 ‘an unfeeling master,’ having joined the Goths, con-
 ducted them, ‘through the secret paths, to the most se-
 ‘questered places, which had been chosen to secure the
 ‘inhabitants, the cattle, and the magazines of corn.—
 ‘The imprudence of Valens and his ministers had intro-
 ‘duced into the heart of the empire a nation of enemies;
 ‘but the Visigoths might even yet have been reconciled,
 ‘by the manly confession of past errors, and the sincere
 ‘performance of former engagements. These healing
 ‘and temperate measures seemed to concur with the timo-
 ‘rous disposition of the sovereign of the East; but, on
 ‘this occasion alone, Valens was brave; and his unfea-
 ‘sonable bravery was fatal to himself and to his subjects.’

Only two years after the admission of the Goths into
 the Roman empire happened ‘the battle of Hadrianople,
 ‘which equalled, in the actual loss, and far surpassed, in
 ‘the fatal consequences, the misfortune which Rome had
 ‘formerly sustained in the fields of Cannæ.—Above
 ‘two-thirds of the Roman army²⁵ were destroyed;’ and
 the emperor Valens, who commanded it in person, him-
 self perished near the field of battle. ‘The tide of the
 ‘Gothic inundation rolled from the walls of Hadria-
 ‘nople to the suburbs of Constantinople;—and the Bar-
 ‘barians, who had no longer any resistance to apprehend
 ‘from the scattered and vanquished troops of the East,
 ‘spread themselves over the face of a fertile and culti-
 ‘vated country, as far as the confines of Italy, and the
 ‘Hadriatic sea. Their mischievous disposition was shewn
 ‘in the destruction of every object, which they wanted
 ‘strength to remove, or taste to enjoy; and they often
 ‘consumed, with improvident rage, the harvests, or the
 ‘granaries, which soon afterwards became necessary for

²⁵ About 40,000 Romans fell.

‘their

'their own subsistence.' It may be added, 'that the
'Goths, after the defeat of Valens, *never* abandoned the
'Roman territory.'

Their devastations had a double operation. The consumption of harvests, the conflagration of farms, and the massacre of husbandmen, constituted only part of the evil. 'The uncertain condition of their property dis-
couraged the subjects of Theodosius,' the successor of Valens, 'from engaging in those useful and laborious
undertakings, which require an immediate expence,
and promise a slow and distant advantage. The fre-
quent examples of ruin and desolation tempted them
not to spare the remains of a patrimony, which might,
every hour, become the prey of the rapacious Goth.
And the mad prodigality, which prevails in the confu-
sion of a shipwreck or a siege, may serve to explain the
progress of luxury amidst the misfortunes and terrors
of a sinking nation'²⁶.'

What mighty calamities were inflicted on the Roman empire, during the joint reigns of Arcadius and Honori-
us, the sons and successors of Theodosius, every man is apprized, who is acquainted with the history of its de-
cline and its subversion. On this point there can be no dispute. To the great events, which happened during their administration, it will, therefore, be sufficient very concisely to refer. During the reigns of the feeble sons of Theodosius, Greece was ravaged and over-run by the Goths; Spain and Gaul were invaded and occupied by various tribes of fierce Barbarians; and Italy and Rome were plundered by Alaric, the commander of the Gothic armies. From the long account²⁷ of these varied devasta-
tions, I shall cite only two short extracts. 'The banks

²⁶ Vol. IV. p. 340—443; vol. V. p. 88.

²⁷ It extends in vol. V. from p. 176 to p. 362.

‘ of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tyber,
‘ with elegant houses and well cultivated farms.—This
‘ scene of peace and plenty was *suddenly* changed into a
‘ desert; and the prospect of the smoking ruins could
‘ alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desola-
‘ tion of man²⁸.’ The following account of the misfor-
tunes of Spain is in the language of its most eloquent
historian, Mariana. “ The irruption of these nations
“ was followed by the most dreadful calamities: as the
“ Barbarians exercised their indiscriminate cruelty on
“ the fortunes of the Romans and the Spaniards; and
“ ravaged with equal fury the cities and the open
“ country. The progress of famine reduced the miser-
“ able inhabitants to feed on the flesh of their fellow-
“ creatures,—Pestilence soon appeared, the inseparable
“ companion of famine;” and “ a large proportion of the
“ people was swept away.²⁹. ”

Seven years after the death of Honorius, Africa became the theatre of the most terrible devastations. ‘ The long and narrow tract of the African coast was filled with frequent monuments of Roman art and magnificence.—A simple reflection will impress every thinking mind with the clearest idea of fertility and cultivation: the country was extremely populous; the inhabitants reserved a liberal subsistence for their own use; and the annual exportation, particularly of wheat, was so regular and plentiful, that Africa deserved the name of the common granary of Rome and of mankind. On a sudden, the seven fruitful provinces, from Tangier to Tripoli, were overwhelmed by the invasion of the Vandals.—The Vandals, where they found resistance, seldom gave quarter; and the deaths of their valiant countrymen were expiated by the ruin of the cities

²⁸ Vol. V. p. 225.

²⁹ Gibbon, vol. V. p. 352.

'under whose walls they had fallen.' About the year 442, 'the whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above 500 miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of Barbarians whom Attila led into the field.—The words, the most expressive of total extirpation and erasure, are applied to the calamities which they inflicted on seventy cities of the Eastern empire.' And, in a short time, the situation of Italy itself became equally deplorable with that of the provinces. 'Since the age of Tiberius, the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy; and it was a just subject of complaint, that the life of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and waves. In the division and the decline of the empire, the tributary provinces of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, famine, and pestilence. St. Ambrose has deplored the ruin of a populous district, which had been once adorned with the flourishing cities of Bologna, Modena, Regium, and Placentia. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer; and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in Æmilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated³⁰.'

'While the kingdoms of the Franks and Visigoths were established in Gaul and Spain, the Saxons achieved the conquest of Britain.' But it maintained, alone and unaided, 'a long, a vigorous, though an unsuccessful struggle, against the formidable pirates, who, almost at the same instant, assaulted the Northern, the Eastern, and the Southern coasts.' And 'after a war

³⁰ Vol. VI. p. 20, 52, 53, 234



CHAPTER XXII.

ON A MEMORABLE PREDICTION DELIVERED
BY CHRIST.

THERE is a passage, leading to the same conclusions with the prophecies, which have been alleged in chapters xviii. and xx. from Daniel and from John, which is sanctioned by a yet higher name. It is the prediction of CHRIST himself. Certainly therefore it claims more than ordinary attention: and, in order that it may be examined fairly, I must entreat the reader to divest himself, as much as possible, of any preconceived notions respecting the meaning of the expressions that occur in it; and to ask himself, whether these notions are the result of enquiry, or whether they have been taken up, hastily and inconsiderately, either from a deference to the authority of commentators, or from an attention to the mere sound of the words. In the observations to be made upon this prophecy, I shall in many points follow JOSEPH MEDE. And what is his character? He is introduced to the reader by bp. Hurd (to the scholar indeed he could be no stranger), as ‘a sublime genius,—solely devoted to the love of truth, and to the investigation of it. His learning,’ declares the prelate, ‘was vast, but well chosen and well digested; and his understanding, in no common degree, strong and capacious’.¹

The predictions of the xxivth ch. of Matthew, says Dr. Jortin, ‘may perhaps prefigure the destruction of

¹ Vol. II. p. 122.

' antichristian Tyranny², and the manifestation of Christ, ' that is, of his power and spirit; and then may com- ' mence a better and happier æra, and such a renova- ' tion, as may be called *New Heavens* and *a New Earth*, ' wherein dwelleth righteousness³.' But the reader will, I hope, in the course of the work, see reason to believe, not only that they are *prefigured*, but that they are *expressly and primarily foretold*; and will assent to the opinion of Daubuz and of Dr. Lancaster with respect to these predictions. The former in his Commentary, and the latter in his Symbolical Dictionary, observe (and I am sorry that their incidental introduction of the passage permitted them not to be more copious on the subject), that when Jesus said (Mat. xxiv. 29), that ' *the Powers of the Heavens shall be shaken*', it is easy to conceive that ' he meant, that **THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD SHOULD BE OVERTHROWN TO SUBMIT TO HIS KINGDOM**⁴.'

Our Lord's words are these: *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken*⁵. ' Certainly our Saviour,' says Joseph Mede, here ' useth a prophetical expression.' It cannot, as he shews, be literally understood. ' Whither,' he asks, ' shall the stars fall from heaven, which are either as big, or many times bigger, than the globe of the earth? ' Where shall there be room for them⁶? '

² In like manner, Dr. Wells says, that Mat. xxiv. 29 may *secondarily* be understood of the final destruction of the antichristian state.

³ Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. I. p. 225.

⁴ Daubuz, p. 161. ⁵ Mat. xxiv. 29.

⁶ P. 761. One of Mede's most illustrious contemporaries, Hugo Grotius, omits not to observe, that to the expressions of this verse a symbolic meaning *must* be annexed.

This point then being taken for granted, it next remains to enquire, what is the established acceptation of the sublime symbols which our Lord has employed. There are two ways of ascertaining their meaning. *First*, by consulting parallel passages; *secondly*, by seeking the interpretation as given by writers of acknowledged eminence.

I begin with a parallel passage. In the viith ch. of the book of Revelation it is said: *and the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened.* I now transcribe the words of Mr. Pyle's paraphrase. 'The fourth angel sounded the complete fall of this apostate Western empire, and an end of the very name and title of the Roman Cæsars. This was represented to me by a darkness spread over the sun, moon, and stars; that is to say, the ruin of its monarchy; of its prince, nobles, subordinate magistrates and powers. And thus it was fulfilled, in this Empire of Europe, styled the third part of the then known world.' That the fourth trumpet predicts 'the abolishing of the whole Roman majesty, in their senate, consuls, and presidents; the sun and moon in those parts having no light remaining,' is the declaration of Mede⁷. 'There is no longer,' says Dr. H. More, 'any king of Rome, denoted by the sun, nor consular power, nor senatorian, nor the power of other known ancient magistrates of Rome, denoted by the moon and stars.' 'This fourth trumpet,' says Mr. Whiston, 'eclipses the European sun, moon, and stars, i. e. it extinguishes the Western emperor and his subordinate governors⁸.' From the

⁷ P. 738.⁸ P. 166.

general harmony of the commentators on this subject, a crowd of similar passages might be produced.

I am next to enquire, what is the interpretation given to our Lord's symbols by writers of acknowledged eminence. After remarking, that it is admitted on all hands, that our Lord did certainly sometimes employ the word *heaven* in a symbolic sense⁹; I shall, on the import of that expression, extract an observation from Dr. Lancaster, though indeed his opinion respecting it has been slightly referred to in a note, which was introduced in ch. ix. According to the extent of the subject, 'Heaven' signifies, symbolically, the Ruling Power or Government; that is, the whole assembly of the ruling powers, 'which, in respect of the subjects or earth, are a political heaven, being over and ruling the subjects, as the natural heaven stands over and rules the earth.' 'Mighty changes and revolutions,' bp. Newton more briefly observes, 'according to the prophetic style, are expressed by great commotions in the earth and in the heavens¹⁰.' 'In the prophetic language,' says Dr. Sykes, 'the heavens are put for the higher powers, and those who enjoy great dignities and honours¹¹.' In like manner Joseph Mede, in the paragraph which follows his citation of our Lord's prophecy, declares, that, in the diction of scripture, the political world is sometimes spoken of as having *an earth* and *a heaven*, with a figurative host of 'kings, princes, peers'¹². Mr. Townson, speaking of the verse under consideration, says, 'this is the symbolical language of prophecy to signify the ruin of great personages and kingdoms¹³'; Brenius asserts, that the symbols employed in it are every where

⁹ As in his prediction about the fate of Capernaum. Luke x. 15.

¹⁰ Vol. III. p. 56.

¹¹ P. 761.

" On Heb. xii. 26.

¹³ On the Gospels, 4to. p. 99.

used to denote the overthrow of kingdoms and a mighty revolution in human affairs; and it is declared by Dr. Wall, that ‘by these names of *sun, moon, stars*, falling, ‘are so constantly meant temporal powers, kings, ‘princes, governments, that we *must* understand’ them so here¹⁴. Sir Isaac Newton indeed lays it down as a matter to be taken for granted, that ‘in sacred prophecy, ‘which regards not single persons, THE SUN IS PUT ‘FOR THE WHOLE SPECIES AND RACE OF ‘KINGS, in the kingdom or kingdoms of the world ‘politic, shining with regal power and glory¹⁵.’ ‘*The sun*,’ says Vitringa, ‘in the prophetic diction signifies ‘kings shining with great majesty¹⁶.’ ‘Kings and ‘princes,’ observes Mr. Lowth, are ‘expressed in the pro-‘phetical style by the name of *sun, moon and stars*¹⁷.’ The learned Dr. John Owen, who was dean of Christ’s Church and vice-chancellor of Oxford, says, ‘you may ‘take it for a rule, that in the denunciations of the judg-‘ments of God, through all the prophets, *heavens, sun, moon, stars*—are taken for governments, governors, ‘dominions in political states¹⁸.’ ‘The holy prophets,’ says bp. Warburton, ‘call kings and empires by the ‘names of the heavenly luminaries;’ and a little farther he adds, ‘*stars falling* from the firmament are employed ‘to denote the destruction of the nobility¹⁹.’ In like manner Sir I. Newton says, ‘*the stars* are put for subor-‘dinate princes and great men.’ This long list of testi-‘monies I shall conclude by stating the opinion of an

¹⁴ *Crit. Notes on the New Test.* 1730, p. 31. Dr. Wall would interpret Mat. xxiv. 29, of the overthrow of the Jewish princes and priests, or of the fall of the Roman empire.

¹⁵ P. 17.

¹⁶ In Apoc. xvi. 8.

¹⁷ On Isa. xxiv. 21.

¹⁸ *A Complete Col.* of his Serm. fol. 1721. p. 322.

¹⁹ *Divine Legat.* of Moses, vol. II. p. 152.

illustrious Jew of the 12th century. Moses Maimonides, in commenting on those words of Isaiah (xxxiv. 4), *the host of heaven shall be dissolved*, and in observing that *stars*, in the symbolic diction of prophecy, signify men of rank and dignity, declares it to be so clear and evident, that he should not have thought it necessary to have said a single word on the import of these expressions, had not some very improperly annexed to them a literal interpretation²⁰.

I may add, that, in the symbolic language of antiquity, *the sun* always stood for a monarch or for monarchy; whilst *the moon* and *the stars* represented persons of inferior but elevated rank in the state²¹. In proof of this I shall translate, as doctors More and Lancaster have done, from the Greek²² of Achmet. ‘According to ‘the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians, *the sun* is inva-‘riably interpreted of the person of the king, and *the ‘moon* of him who is next in power to him: Venus re-‘fers to the queen, and the other stars of largest magni-‘tude to those who are greatest with the sovereign²³.’ Again in the next chapter, speaking of the mode of interpretation established in Persia and in Egypt, he says,

²⁰ *More Nevochim*, a Buxtorfio, Bas. 1629, p. 267. It is of this celebrated Jew, who lived in Egypt as physician to the Soldan, that Casaubon, after declaring him to have been ‘a man of great abilities and of sound learning,’ says (*Exercit. contra Baron.* xvi. 77), that ‘he was the first of his tribe who ceased to be a trifler.’ His profound knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures admits not of dispute.

²¹ ‘In hieroglyphic writing *the sun*, *moon*, and *stars* were used to represent states and empires, kings, queens, and nobility.’ Warburton’s *Div. Legat. of Moses*, vol. II. p. 152.

²² By saying this, I mean not to decide on the question, whether the treatise of Achmet was originally written in the language of Greece or of Arabia. Most probably it is a translation from the Arabic.

²³ *Achmetis Oneirocritica*, cap. 167.

' the multitude of the other greatest stars are to be referred to the men of nobility and opulence, and those who in every place live nearest to the king.'

After what has been said, the mode of interpreting the alleged prophecy of Christ appears pointed out to us with abundant clearness. Since it is not only agreed, that St. John's prediction of a third part of the sun, moon, and stars being darkened, over the meaning of which a light has been thrown by its fulfilment, signifies the overthrow of the established government in a third part of the known world ; but it is also on all hands admitted, that these symbols have ever been regarded as the established representatives of monarchy and nobility ; when our Lord solemnly declares, that *the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven* ; we are justly authorised to conclude, according to all the rules of consistent criticism and legitimate interpretation, that the holy founder of our religion has foretold the complete destruction of all the established systems of oppression, which kings and nobles may anywhere uphold. The expression is manifestly prophetical. It is general ; not being limited to any country in particular ; nor restricted, as in the foregoing citation from St. John, to a third part of the sun and the stars.

Of Campegius Vitringa I have before had occasion to speak in the highest terms. In truth, the depth of his knowledge, and the extent of his celebrity, as an interpreter of prophetic scripture, are not surpassed by any commentator of any age or any country²⁴. I am, therefore, particularly happy in finding, that his decided opinion respecting the time when this prophecy is to be

²⁴ *Longe doctissimus interpres*, is the honourable epithet by which bishop Lowth distinguishes the name of Vitringa. *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones*. Oxon. 1763, p. 272.

fulfilled, and the *nature* of the events which it points out, is in perfect agreement with the ideas which I myself had formed. This part of our Lord's prophecy does, he declares, refer to the destruction of the anti-christian princes in the war of Armageddon, and to the great events foretold by St. John under the emblems of the harvest, the vintage, and the sixth seal²⁵.

But I shall be asked, does this most illustrious of the prophets himself *specify* any *time*; and, if specified, does it correspond with what has before been gathered from Daniel and from John? I answer, that it perfectly does. *The sun shall be darkened*, says our Lord, *immediately after the tribulation of those days*. Now what are those days, and when do they terminate? The incomparable Mr. Mede (I use the epithet of bishops Hurd and Hallifax), in speaking of the Jews and of this passage, says, 'This great tribulation, such as never nation suffered, is not to be confined to their calamity at the destruction of Jerusalem, but extends to the whole time of their captivity and dispersion from that time unto this present not yet ended'²⁶. To the same purpose speaks that eminent Dutch divine, Episcopius, in his commentary on Matthew: and in like manner archbishop Tillotson has observed, that the prophecy of Jesus respecting the sufferings of his countrymen ' comprehends from the destruction of Jerusalem all the time of the captivity of the Jews among the Gentiles, which we see is not yet expired; and that when it is said *the sun shall be darkened*, &c. after the tribulation of those days,

²⁵ See Vitrina in *Apoc.* p. 279; and in *Jesai*, vol. II. p. 276, 277. Elsewhere also, Vitrina declares (in *Jesai*, vol. II. p. 23), that *the sun, moon, and stars* are to be understood, in this passage of Matthew, of political and ecclesiastical governors.

²⁶ P. 920.

the meaning is, this shall happen, ‘when God hath made an end of punishing the nation of the Jews²⁷.’

It has also been thought, that these words relate not to the descendants of Abraham alone. The expression, ‘*the tribulation of those days*, includes,’ says Mat. Henry, ‘not only the destruction of Jerusalem²⁸, but all the other tribulations which *the church* must pass through;’ and thus it is to be extended as well to the Christians as to the Jews. That it is to be applied to the sufferings of the Christian church was the decided opinion of Vitringa²⁹. Such likewise was the sentiment of Theophylact³⁰ and of Chrysostom. I now cite the words of the latter. ‘*Of the tribulation of what days is he speaking? That of Antichrist and of false teachers³¹.*’ And there are not wanting reasons for believing, that when our Lord said, two or three verses before (v. 24), that *there shall arise false Christs and false teachers³²*, he alluded to that long period of antichristian superstition, which has darkened Christendom for so many centuries; and that this is the period respecting which he speaks from the beginning of v. 23 to the end of v. 28. ‘*Many learned interpreters of our times,*’ says Vitringa, ‘with whose opinion my sentiments coincide, think that our Lord summarily relates here, not only the extirpation of Judaism, but likewise the more eminent events of his church, even to the close of the *αιών*³³.’

²⁷ Serm. 183.

²⁸ ‘Some interpreters,’ says Calvin, ‘rashly understand *the tribulation of those days* as relating to the destruction of Jerusalem alone.’

²⁹ In Apoc. p. 279.

³⁰ Vid. in loc. et in Mark, c. xiii.

³¹ Homil. in loc.

³² In the very valuable translation of Mr. Wakefield, *teachers* is the word employed. *Prophets* is the word admitted into the common version.

³³ In Apoc. p. 230. After the reader shall have perused the xxvith chapter of the present work, he will discern the reason, why Vitringa has incorporated into the sentence quoted above the Greek expression, τὸν οὐτερέαν τὸν αἰώνιον.

But,

But, in order to make Christ's prediction more plain, I shall, from Matthew, again cite his words, together with a part of the parallel place in Luke. I begin with Matthew. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.—And they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven³⁴ with power and great glory.* From the xxist ch. of Luke we learn, that *the tribulation of those days* has a very extensive meaning, and that it especially signifies the treading down of Jerusalem and Judea by the Gentiles, which shall not terminate till the times of the Gentiles are accomplished; for such is the import of his words. *This people, i. e. the Jews, shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.* In the next and two following verses the evangelist adds, that *the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.* From a comparison of these two passages in Matthew and in Luke, it appears evident, that *the tribulation of those days*, mentioned by the former of these apostolic writers, reaches to the whole period, during which *Jerusalem shall be trodden of the Gentiles*. Now bp. Newton observes in one of his Dissertations on our Lord's prophecy, that *the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled, when the times of the four great kingdoms of the Gen-*

³⁴ Mat. xxiv. 29, 30. That *the coming of the son of man in the clouds of heaven* needs not to be literally understood, and that it has no reference to the end of the world, will be shewn in ch. xxx.

'tiles according to Daniel's prophecies shall be expired³⁵.' At length then we are able to form some ideas of the time, when the prediction of Jesus is to be accomplished. We collect, from the comparison of the evangelists, that the events pointed out by him, under the symbols of the darkening of *the sun, the moon, and the stars*, whatever import these symbols may be supposed to have, are to happen when *the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*; that is to say, are contemporary with the demolition of the antichristian governments of the European world, as foretold by Daniel. But the meaning of these symbols has been satisfactorily ascertained; and hence it appears, that Daniel and Christ have presignified the same great catastrophe. And certainly it is no subject of surprise, that the downfal of all those monarchies and aristocracies, which oppreses the world, should have been predicted, since it was foreseen by the Divine Mind; not only that *some* of them would vehemently resist the first propagation of the religion of Jesus; but that *all* of them, during a long series of ages, and during the whole of their continuance in power, even though they professed to be converts to it, would in fact be altogether strangers to its spirit, and openly violating all its laws would be alike injurious to the practice and to the spread of Christianity.

But I hasten to conclude. If then it be evident, as well from a consultation of the prophetic scriptures themselves, as from the opinions of the most approved writers, that the sun, the moon, and the stars are, in the diction of prophecy, the known, established symbols either of a monarch and his nobles, or of monarchy and aristocracy in general; if what bp. Hurd affirms be in any degree well founded, that 'there is, in truth, no

'more difficulty' in fixing the import of the prophetic style, than of any other language or technical phraseology whatever³⁶ : surely I shall not be charged, even by the advocate of tyranny, with having annexed this sense to the words of our Saviour on grounds, which are altogether light and doubtful and destitute of authority.

If the reason be asked, whence this passage has not been oftner viewed in the same light, and whence it has happened, that NOT ONE of the many English commentators on the Evangelists has thus interpreted it; I reply, without assigning any motives of policy as having communicated to the minds of any among them a secret bias, that those of them who have most successfully illustrated the Evangelists, and have been followed by the tribe of inferior expositors, have rarely paid any marked attention to *the symbols of the prophets*, and therefore it is not to be wondered, that, when they have incidentally met with them, they have not turned out of their usual track, and have in consequence misinterpreted them, as if they were expressions not *prophetic* but *literal*³⁷. That this is a true solution of the difficulty, the reader will see solid grounds for believing, when he recollects, that the alleged interpretation of our Lord's words has received the unanimous suffrage of Daubuz, of Lancaster, and of Vitrunga³⁸; who are perhaps the three men, who of all others

³⁶ Vol. II. p. 98. See similar assertions in More (On the Apoc. p. 304) and Lancaster (p. 19). 'Each symbol,' says the latest of all the commentators on the apocalypse, 'has as determinate and distinct a meaning, as each word in other languages hath.' Johnston of Holywood, vol. I. p. 41.

³⁷ If Grotius and Gilbert Wakefield be excepted, I know not a single commentator on the Evangelists, who appears to have been at all acquainted with the important works of Achmet and Artemidorus.

³⁸ I add not the name of Mede, on account of the doubts he entertained, and

others best understood the symbolic language of prophecy, and had most diligently compared together the predictions of different prophets.

and because he delivered no positive opinion on the subject. Mede's ideas on the xxivth ch. of Matthew I shall have farther occasion to state in the xxviith and xxviiith chapters of the work.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXII.

THE whole of the present work was written, and a considerable part of it printed, previously to my meeting with the quotation that follows. The principal motives for my now introducing it are, because many of the thoughts which it contains are similar to those that predominate in the preceding pages; and because it proceeds from the pen of a courtier and a dignitary of the church, whose mind will not be suspected to have yielded admission to any ideas of the probability of a Revolution in the circumstances of mankind, from a restless temper or a fondness for innovation, from the influence of prejudices favourable to freedom, or from a dissatisfaction at the existing state of affairs. It is from a charge³⁹ delivered by bishop Porteus.

'The present times,' says the prelate, 'and the present scene of things, in almost every part of the civilized world, are the most interesting and the most awful that were ever before presented to the inhabitants of the earth; and such as must necessarily excite the most

³⁹ A Charge, delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London, at the Visitation of that Diocese in the year 1794, by Beilby, Lord Bishop of London.

serious reflections in every thinking mind. Perhaps all those singular events to which we have been witnesses, unparalleled as they undoubtedly are in the page of history, may be only the *beginning* of things, may be only the first leading steps to a train of events still more extraordinary ; to the accomplishment possibly of some new and unexpected, and at present unfathomable, designs hitherto reserved and hid in the counsels of the Almighty. Some we know there are who think that certain prophecies, both in the New Testament and the Old, are now fulfilling ; that *the signs of the times* are portentous and alarming ; and that the sudden extinction of a great monarchy, and of all the splendid ranks and orders of men that supported it, is only the completion in part of that prediction in the gospel, that *the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven*, before the second appearance of the Messiah, to judge the earth ; all which expressions are well known to be only figurative emblems of the great powers and rulers of the world, whose destruction, it is said, is to precede that great event. As to myself I pretend not to decide on these arduous points ; I pretend not either to prophesy or to interpret prophecy : nor shall I take upon myself to pronounce, whether we are now approaching (as some think) to the Millennium, or to the Day of Judgment, or to any other great and tremendous and universal change predicted in the sacred writings. But this I am sure of, that the present unexampled state of the Christian world is a loud and powerful call upon all men, but upon us above all men, to take peculiar heed to our ways, and to prepare ourselves,—for every thing that may befall us, be it ever so novel, ever so calamitous⁴⁰.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON THE SIX FIRST SEALS, AND PARTICULARLY
THE THIRD AND THE SIXTH.

THERE are two passages in the two sublimest of the scriptural prophets, one in John, and one in Isaiah, which are justly observed by Pyle¹, Brenius², and Vitrina³, to be parallel places with the memorable prediction of our Saviour, which was illustrated in the preceding chapter. They are too important to be omitted. As the prophecy of Jesus has, however, been so largely investigated, the symbolic language in which they are written will not very long detain our attention.

Of these passages, the first which I shall transcribe and explain, is the prediction of THE SIXTH SEAL: and, in order that a just conception of it may be formed, it will be necessary to introduce some account of the five preceding seals. The extract that follows is from bp. Newton. ‘ Future events are supposed by St. John, as well as by Daniel and other prophets, in a beautiful figure, to be registered in a book, for the greater certainty of them. This book (ver. 1)⁴ is in the right hand of God, to denote that as he alone directs the affairs of futurity, so he alone is able to reveal them. — It was also sealed, to signify that the decrees of God are inscrutable, and sealed with seven seals, referring to so many signal periods of prophecy. In short we should conceive of this book, that it was such an

¹ P. 48.

² In Mat. xxiv. 29.

³ In Apoc. p. 281; and in Jesai, vol. II. p. 23.

⁴ Ch. v.

‘ one

' one as the ancients used, a volume or roll of a book,
 ' or more properly a volume consisting of seven volumes,
 ' so that the opening of one seal laid open the contents
 ' only of one volume⁵. '

Since this sealed book is described as not being opened till after great preparation⁶; since Christ is represented in the prophetic vision as selected to perform this important task; and innumerable multitudes of angels, and the representatives of the whole Christian church, are introduced as raising acclamations of joy on the disclosure of its contents⁷; it may reasonably be expected to foretell events, which should be highly interesting to the Christian world, and WHICH, DURING THE REVOLUTION OF FUTURE AGES, SHOULD HAVE A SIGNAL INFLUENCE, EITHER FAVOURABLE OR UNFAVOURABLE, UPON THE PROGRESS AND UPON THE PURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. But such is the interpretation of the seven seals, which is adopted by bishop Newton and many other commentators, as altogether to disappoint these expectations. *The first seal*, or period, says the bishop of Bristol, denoted the conquests of Vespasian and Titus; and *the second* those slaughters which occurred in the time of Trajan and his immediate successors; *the third* was predictive of the measures adopted by the two emperors of the name of Severus; and *the fourth* of that mortality and those various devastations, which distinguished the reigns of Maximin and the princes who succeeded. According to this explication, these prophecies, each of which Christ is represented as opening to view, had no nearer relation to the Christian than to the Pagan subjects of the Roman empire. But to entertain a supposition like this, to represent that

⁵ Vol. III. p. 35.

⁶ Ch. v. v. 1—7.

⁷ V. 8—14.

' of an hundred years, the independent Britons still
' occupied the whole extent of the Western coast, from
' the wall of Antoninus to the extreme promontory of
' Cornwall.—Resistance, if it cannot avert, must increase,
' the miseries of conquest; and conquest has never ap-
' peared more dreadful and destructive than in the hands
' of the Saxons.' Such, indeed, was the destruction of
the natives, that ' the Saxon kingdoms displayed the face
' of recent discovery and cultivation: the towns were
' small, the villages were distant; the husbandry was lan-
' guid and unskilful; four sheep were equivalent to an
' acre of the best land;' and ' an ample space of wood
' and morass was resigned to the vague dominion of
' nature³¹. '

In another part of the globe the Bulgarians displayed an equal degree of ferocity. ' The hopes or fears of the Barbarians; their intestine union or discord; the accident of a frozen or shallow stream; the prospect of harvest or vintage; the prosperity or distress of the Romans, were the causes which produced the uniform repetition of annual visits, tedious in the narrative and destructive in the event.' The year 539 ' was marked by an invasion of the Huns or Bulgarians, so dreadful, that it almost effaced the memory of their past inroads. They spread from the suburbs of Constantinople to the Ionian gulph, destroyed 32 cities or castles,—and repassed the Danube, dragging at their horses heels 120,000 of the subjects of Justinian. In a subsequent inroad they pierced the wall of the Thracian Chersonesus, extirpated the habitations and the inhabitants,—and returned to their companions, laden with the spoils of Asia.' And Procopius has confidently affirmed, that, in a reign of 32 years, each an-

* Vol. VI. p. 379, 386, 388, 392, 395.

'nual inroad of the Barbarians consumed 200,000 of
 'the inhabitants of the Roman empire. The entire po-
 'pulation of Turkish Europe, which nearly corresponds
 'with the provinces of Justinian, would perhaps be
 'incapable of supplying six millions of persons, the
 'result of this incredible estimate³².'

Justinian recovered Italy from the Goths, and Africa from the Vandals; but the recovery of lost provinces was sometimes as destructive to agriculture and to mankind, as the original irruptions of the Barbarians. 'From his new acquisitions, Justinian expected that his av-
 'arie, as well as pride, should be richly gratified.' In consequence the most dreadful rebellions agitated Africa. 'For the troubles of Africa, I neither have nor desire another guide than Procopius, whose eye contemplated the image, and whose ear collected the reports, of the memorable events of his own times.' He 'has confi-
 'dently affirmed, that five millions of Africans were
 'consumed by the wars and government of the emperor
 'Justinian. The series of the African history attests
 'this melancholy truth³³.' After the recovery of Italy,
 'Justinian might dictate benevolent edicts, and Narses
 'might second his wishes by the restoration of cities.—
 'But the power of kings is most effectual to destroy:
 'and the twenty years of the Gothic war had consum-
 'mated the distress and depopulation of Italy. As early
 'as the fourth campaign, under the discipline of Belisa-
 'rius himself, 50,000 labourers died of hunger in the
 'narrow region of Misenum. A still greater number
 'was consumed by famine in the southern provinces,
 'without the Ionian gulph. Acorns were used in the
 'place of bread. Procopius had seen a deserted orphan

³² Vol. VII. p. 282, 284.

³³ Vol. VII. p. 346, 347, 353. Africa was invaded by the army of Justinian in the year 533.

‘ suckled by a she-goat. Seventeen passengers were
‘ lodged, murdered, and eaten, by two women, who
‘ were detected and slain by the eighteenth.—A strict ex-
‘ amination of the evidence of Procopius would swell
‘ the loss of Italy above the total sum of her present
‘ inhabitants³⁴.’

In the year 542 a terrible plague arose, which raged with such fury, ‘ that many cities of the East were left
‘ vacant, and in several districts of Italy the harvest and
‘ the vintage withered on the ground. The triple
‘ scourge of war, pestilence, and famine, afflicted the
‘ subjects of Justinian, and his reign is disgraced by a
‘ visible decrease of the human species, which has never
‘ been repaired in some of the fairest countries of the
‘ globe’³⁵.

Such was the reign of Justinian. Whether husbandry was likely to revive, and plenty to return, during the administration of his feebler successor, the following passage respecting that prince will ascertain. ‘ The annals
‘ of the second Justin are marked with disgrace abroad
‘ and misery at home. In the West, the Roman empire
‘ was afflicted by the loss of Italy, the desolation of
‘ Africa, and the conquests of the Persians. Injustice
‘ prevailed both in the capital and the provinces; the
‘ rich trembled for their property, the poor for their
‘ safety.’ Italy, however, omitted not to apply to the emperors for relief. From this country, indeed, they
‘ were incessantly tormented by tales of misery and de-
‘ mands of succour;’ and the language of Rome was,
“ If you are incapable of delivering us from the sword
“ of the Lombards, save us at least from the calamity of
“ famine.” Though the depopulation of the capital of
Italy was constant and visible, ‘ yet the number of citi-

³⁴ Vol. VII. p. 400.

³⁵ Vol. VII. p. 423.

'zens still exceeded the measure of subsistence: their
' precarious food was supplied from the harvests of
' Sicily or Egypt; and the frequent repetition of famine
' betrays the inattention of the emperor to a distant
' province³⁶.'

The new circumstances of degradation and depression, into which a considerable part of mankind were thrown, gave a severe check to the ardour of industry. Hence the operations of agriculture became more languid; its produce more scanty and uncertain. ' According to the
' maxims of ancient war, the conqueror became the law-
' ful master of the enemy whom he had subdued and
' spared: and the fruitful cause of personal slavery,
' which had been almost suppressed by the peaceful
' sovereignty of Rome, was again revived and multiplied
' by the perpetual hostilities of the independent Barba-
' rians. The Goth, the Burgundian, or the Frank, who-
' returned from a successful expedition, dragged after
' him a long train of sheep, of oxen, and of human cap-
' tives, whom he treated with the same brutal con-
' tempt³⁷. '

Whether the expeditions of the Barbarians succeeded or miscarried, they were almost equally ruinous to the peaceful labours of the husbandman. To illustrate their nature and effects, a short account shall be given of the invasion of Languedoc in the year 586 by the army of the king of Burgundy. ' The troops of Burgundy,
' Berry, Auvergne, and the adjacent territories, were ex-
' cited by the hopes of spoil. They marched, without
' discipline, under the banners of German, or Gallic,
' counts; their attack was feeble and unsuccessful; but
' the friendly and hostile provinces were desolated with
' indiscriminate rage. The corn-fields, the villages, the

³⁶ Vol. VIII. p. 133, 142, 159.

³⁷ Vol. VI. p. 359.

churches

' churches themselves, were consumed by fire; the inhabitants were massacred or dragged into captivity; and, in the disorderly retreat, 5000 of these inhuman savages were destroyed by hunger or intestine discord.³⁸'

Often exposed to a siege or to a blockade, cities frequently became the theatres of the most dreadful famines. Some facts attendant on some of the sieges of Rome will illustrate the assertion. When environed by the army of Alaric, it experienced 'the horrid calamities of famine,' at a time when it may fairly be supposed to have contained twelve hundred thousand inhabitants. The daily allowance of three pounds of bread was reduced to one-half, to one-third, to nothing; and the price of corn still continued to rise in a rapid and extravagant proportion.—The food the most repugnant to sense and imagination, the aliments the most unwholesome and pernicious to the constitution, were eagerly devoured, and fiercely disputed, by the rage of hunger.—Even mothers are said to have tasted the flesh of their slaughtered infants. Many thousands of the inhabitants of Rome expired in their houses, or in the streets, for want of sustenance.—And the miseries of famine were succeeded and aggravated by a pestilential disease. This was in the year 408. In the year 472, the principal part of Rome, which lay on the Tuscan side of the Tyber, was besieged by Ricimer; and the public distress was prolonged 'by a resistance of three months, which produced the concomitant evils of famine and pestilence.' In the year 537, the metropolis of the Western empire was besieged by 150,000 Goths; and, as the siege continued more than a year, the people, notwithstanding the harvests of Campania and Tuscany

³⁸ Vol. VI. p. 374.

had been ‘forcibly swept for the use of the city,—was exposed to the miseries of scarcity, unwholesome food, and contagious disorders.’ But ‘if any credit be due to an intelligent spectator, one third at least of’ the Gothic ‘host was destroyed, in frequent and bloody combats under the walls of the city. The bad fame and pernicious qualities of the summer air might already be imputed to the decay of agriculture and population; and the evils of famine and pestilence were aggravated by their own licentiousness, and the unfriendly disposition of the country.’ Only nine years after this, Rome was again besieged by the Goths, under the command of Totila, and was destined to sustain still severer sufferings. ‘The *medimnus*, or fifth part of the quarter of wheat, was exchanged for 7 pieces of gold; 50 pieces were given for an ox, a rare and accidental prize;’ and ‘the progress of famine enhanced this exorbitant value.—A tasteless and unwholesome mixture, in which the bran thrice exceeded the quantity of flour, appeased the hunger of the poor; they were gradually reduced to feed on dead horses, dogs, cats, and mice, and eagerly to snatch the grafts, and even the nettles, which grew among the ruins of the city³⁹.’

That the scarcity of corn, wine, and oil, as well as of other provisions, must have been great, must have been general, must have been permanent in the Roman empire, at a period when the devastations of the Northern nations were thus violent, thus extensive, and thus frequently repeated, can be doubted by no man, who is acquainted with the nature and operations of agriculture, or with the circumstances that encourage a freedom of commercial intercourse, or who is accustomed to trace the connexion between cause and effect.

³⁹ Vol. V. p. 291; vol. VI. p. 217; vol. VII. p. 235, 237, 243, 263.

After having so long detained the reader in the contemplation of history, I shall dismiss the observations on the third seal by noticing an objection, which may not improbably be urged against the alleged interpretation of it. Though probably it will be readily admitted, that the countries constituting the Roman empire were, between the reign of Constantine and the commencement of the seventh century, in a peculiar degree the theatres of conquests and devastations, and that no other period of history, of the same length, can by any means be found, in which this was equally the case; yet it may be objected, that a scarcity of provisions is a circumstance of too general a nature, to be regarded as characteristic of any particular period. In reply to this, I observe, that though there have undoubtedly been other æras, when an alarming deficiency of the necessaries of life has been experienced, and that through a great extent of country; yet there are solid grounds for concluding, that, from the earliest annals of history to the present time, there never was *any period*, in which the inhabitants of the countries, comprehended under the Roman empire, sustained so frequent or so general a want of provisions, as in that time, which is supposed to be referred to by the symbols of the third seal. The numerous extracts, which I have been tempted to introduce from Mr. Gibbon, will go far to prove this assertion; but, in order to furnish more *complete* evidence of it, it will be necessary briefly to allege some facts and reasons, relative both to the centuries which *preceded*, and those which *followed*, the period which the prophet is thought to describe.

Whilst the Roman empire remained entire; whilst its frontiers were guarded by the strength of its fortifications and the valour of its legionaries; the labours of agriculture pursued their tranquil and accustomed course; the rivers, the seas, and the excellent roads that ran

through the provinces of the empire, united to secure a constant, and generally a sufficient, supply of provisions for all its various inhabitants; the rich harvests of Egypt and Africa yielded an abundance; greatly superior to their domestic wants; and, to use the words of Mr. Gibbon⁴⁰, ‘the accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours⁴¹.’ It may be added, that, antecedently to the accession of Constantine, the dominions of Rome had not been regularly divided into the empires of the East and the West. Consequently the husbandman and the farmer were not weighed down by so intolerable a pressure of taxes: and, *as but one court existed*, that host of idlers and prodigals, who constitute or surround a court, were far less numerous: and those who were drawn aside from the plough, the forge, and the loom, to supply the luxuries, and to minister to the amusements, of the prince and his dependents, occupied a narrower space in the ranks of society.

To evince that those who inhabited the countries of the Roman empire were not afflicted by so severe a scarcity of corn and food, *subsequent* to the æra of the third seal, one decisive fact may be alleged. In the 8th, the 9th, and the 10th centuries, they certainly amounted not to one half, and probably not to one third, of the number of those, who lived when the mighty fabric of Roman greatness was unshaken, and consequently a much smaller

⁴⁰ Vol. I. p. 86. During the reign of Gallienus, it is true, an extreme scarcity of provisions was felt throughout the Roman empire. But it was comparatively of short continuance; and the indolent Gallienus was succeeded by a series of great princes, under whom order prevailed, and agriculture flourished.

⁴¹ ‘In an extensive corn-country, between all the different parts of which there is a free commerce and communication, the scarcity occasioned by the most unfavourable seasons can never be so great as to produce a famine.’ Smith’s Wealth of Nations, 7th ed. vol. II. p. 295.

quantity of provisions was sufficient for their subsistence. And there are obvious reasons, why, for a number of past centuries, no general and permanent scarcity of provisions has been felt. The establishment of laws, and the stability of governments, have given protection to property, and confidence to industry. Nations have been far less exposed to the ravages of foreign conquest; and, during the prosecution of war, its horrors have been alleviated by the superior mildness of modern times. Vast woods have been felled, and immense tracks of waste land cultivated. Agriculture has received a long succession of improvements; and commerce has opened a way for the interchange of its produce between the most distant countries of the globe.

The account of the two next seals, as well as that of the two first, is taken from Vitringa. *The fourth seal* predicts the conquests and devastations of the Saracens and the Turks⁴², by whose instrumentality Divine Providence severely punished the corrupt morals and abject superstitions of the degenerate Christians of that time, and particularly those of the East⁴³; and by whose progress the Deity permitted, not only that a large portion of the globe should be involved in wretchedness, and be in a great degree depopulated; but that it should also cease to profess the belief, and to enjoy the benefits, of Christianity⁴⁴, though it had been long planted there and firmly established.

⁴² I know not, that this opinion has been adopted by a single English commentator. It is, however, common on the continent. ‘ *Sigillum Quartum*,’ says Wolfius (*Curae Philologicae*, in loc.), ‘ de Saracenis et Turcis MULTI accipiunt.’

⁴³ Superstitions as was the worship which prevailed in the West, that of the Eastern Christians was, says Vitringa, at this time far more corrupt. In Apoc. p. 418.

⁴⁴ Not only was Christianity once established in Macedonia and Greece, in Syria, Armenia, and Asia Minor, in Lybia, Egypt and Abyssinia; but it

established. Those barbarous persecutions, which have been kindled by the antichristian church, *the fifth seal* represents: it plainly announces that those who should stand forward in defence of Evangelic truth should be exposed to them for a very long duration of time; and, including the Albigenses and Waldenses, the Bohemian Brethren and French Protestants, as well as a crowd of contemporary sufferers that might be enumerated, it comprehends the far greater number of those who have ever perished in the cause of religion. It embraces the period which runs from the 13th century to the fall of the anti-christian empire. As this great catastrophe is yet future, we appear to be now living under the fifth seal, though near the close of it, and when the fury of religious zeal has almost spent its force.

The next of these prophecies, which is to be a more particular object of enquiry, is thus sublimely expressed: *and I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great Earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth,*

it had at one time made a considerable progress in the islands of Socotra and Ceylon, in Iberia and Thrace, in Arabia and Persia, in Tartary, China, and Hindostan. But at present, among the natives of all these countries, the knowledge of Christianity is either completely obliterated, or it is obscurely professed by a scanty portion of illiterate believers. The religion of Mahomet, on the contrary, in almost every one of these countries, either bears an undisputed sway, or has acquired very numerous proselytes. See Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical Hist.* (vol. I. p. 199, 274, 275; vol. II. p. 2, 43, 179), and the *Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp.* (vol. VIII. p. 339—347). Early in the 5th century, there were, says Sir I. Newton, in Africa alone about 700 bishoprics. *Obs. on Dan.* p. 298.

and

and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day⁴⁵ of his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand⁴⁶ ?

The expressions of this seal, says Dr. Wall, ‘ are all ways the emblems of kings, emperors, governments, falling.’ Not only does a part of this striking passage bear, on the very face of it, a strong resemblance to the prediction of Jesus ; but it may be regarded as representing the very same events in a more expanded form. What is said here, *that there was a Great Earthquake*, signifies, says Vitringa, ‘ that there would be a mighty Revolution, which would happen in some great empire, or rather in the world, or some eminent part of it, which is treated of in this prophecy.’ Now this part of the world, he observes, is Europe. ‘ Under the emblem of *the heaven being rolled together* is signified a thorough change or abolition of the whole system both political and ecclesiastical.—For in the prophetic style, as I just now observed, the whole body of those who have rule and authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, are included under the name of *heaven*.’ And, in another place, Vitringa says, this seal foretells, ‘ that Great Commotions would suddenly arise, both in the empire of Papal Rome, and in the other kingdoms and republics of Europe, God being about to raise up by his providence avengers, who would undertake the cause of the afflicted.’ Nothing, says this judicious commentator, can

⁴⁵ On the expression, *the Great Day of God*, see the observations from Lowth, Daubuz, and Mede, in p. 294.

⁴⁶ VI. 12—17.

be more evident than this explication of the sixth seal, if we have compared it with the seventh vial, which, in almost the same words, foretells the destruction of the antichristian empire.

The sixth seal has, however, been applied by bp. Newton and by various other commentators to the successive defeats of Maxentius and Licinius, to the destruction of the pagan temples, and to the various alterations accomplished by Constantine⁴⁷. But, besides observing, that, according to the ideas I entertain of the former seals, these events belong to a period far remote from that of the sixth seal, and therefore that this interpretation cannot possibly be the true one; I appeal to the good sense of the unprejudiced reader, whether these occurrences, though of acknowledged importance, are adequate to the grandeur or to the import of the prophetic images. ‘In divine writings,’ says Dr. Aphor, ‘this rule is indispensable, that a profusion of the higher figures be not employed on a disproportioned subject, or to impress ideas too vast for the event⁴⁸.’ Besides is it not said, that *the kings of the earth—hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains*; and is it not admitted without dispute, in other places, that *the kings of the earth* are the modern monarchs of the European world? Whence then is it applied to a period of time, when these kings had no existence? That the period referred to should not be passed over in silence, Vitringa thinks it reasonable to expect; and he accordingly is of opinion, that ‘the times of Constantine are painted in vivid colours through the greatest part of the xijith chapter⁴⁹.’

⁴⁷ Should any person, notwithstanding all the force of the objections against it, apprehend, that the sixth seal has an aspect to these inferior and less important events, yet he will probably acquiesce in an observation of Mr. Waple, that it ‘has also a relation to the final judgments upon Anti-christ.’

⁴⁸ Vol. I. p. 86.

⁴⁹ P. 239.

An interpreter of the apocalypse 'must,' says Daubuz, 'enlarge his thoughts, and embrace at once the whole extent and duration of the Christian religion or church.' It is evident that the whole church is concerned in the events described, 'so that when large and noble events or revolutions fit the symbols exactly, it is unworthy of the Holy Ghost, to think they are applicable' to such as are less considerable and less important⁵⁰.

That the symbols of the sixth seal are of too august a kind to be applied to the occurrences which happened in the time of Constantine, is a circumstance on which Vitringa has not omitted to lay proper stress. But this is not all. The civil government was NOT overturned. It is true, says Vitringa, that some emperors were divested of their power. But 'in this there was nothing new or singular.' The same rank and the same title, which Constantine had wrested from his rivals, he himself continued to retain. 'The imagery of the sixth seal exhibits to us the change and subversion of the state of some empire, which should be accomplished with a sudden shaking and the most violent commotion.' But the alterations introduced by Constantine were, says this learned divine, executed in *a period of profound peace*; and there was nothing in them that corresponded to the figures of the prophet. In the subversion of paganism, the Christian emperor did, says Vitringa, proceed with moderation and with caution. Many of its temples and its shrines continued untouched; the art of divination was still publicly practised⁵¹; their estates, their SALA-

RIES,

⁵⁰ Preliminary Discourse, p. 42.

⁵¹ 'There is a law of Constantine, which shews that himself was not altogether free from pagan superstition, in which he orders the haruspices to be consulted, if any public edifice was struck with lightning.—We may

RIES, their PRIVILEGES still remained in the hands of the vestals and the priests and the hierophants ; in the greater cities, and especially at Rome, where an altar stood to the honour of the Goddess Victory, public sacrifices were permitted ; and a large proportion of the Roman senate, many years after the time of Constantine, continued in the belief, and persevered in the patronage, of the heathen superstitions. ‘ Do these, and other things which I omit, answer to the imagery of the sixth seal ? Whilst men, addicted to the idolatry of paganism, were every where promoted to the highest dignities of the state, at a time when Christian emperors held the reins of government ; had they any necessity to say to the mountains and to the rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb ? Was paganism subverted with violence and a mighty commotion, when, long after the time of Constantine, it subsisted and flourished in the principal cities of the empire⁵² ? ’

Of

‘ may add to this, that a temple of the Goddess Concord, being decayed by length of time, was repaired or rebuilt by Constantine, if we may trust to an inscription in Lilius Giraldus.’ Jortin on E. H. vol. II. p. 305.

⁵² P. 235. There is an original epistle remaining, ‘ which Constantine addressed to the followers of the ancient religion ; at a time when he no longer disguised his conversion, nor dreaded the rivals of his throne. He invites and exhorts, in the most pressing terms, the subjects of the Roman empire to imitate the example of their master ; but he declares, that those who still refuse to open their eyes to the celestial light may freely enjoy their temples, and their fancied Gods. A report, that the ceremonies of paganism was suppressed, is formally contradicted by the emperor himself, who wisely assigns, as the principle of his moderation, the invincible force of habit, of prejudice, and of superstition.—The evidence of facts, and the monuments which are still extant of brass and marble, continue to prove the public exercise of the pagan worship during the whole reign of the sons of Constantine. In the East, as well as in the West, in cities, as well as in the country, a great number of temples were refected, or at least were spared ; and the devout multitude still enjoyed the luxury of sacrifices, of festivals, and of processions.—The title, the ensigns

Of a part of the symbols of the sixth seal, and it will only be necessary with respect to a part, I shall give a detailed account. *There was a great earthquake, i. e. a mighty revolution; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the antichristian monarchies of the European world were completely darkened; the moon became as blood, the power of those who stood in the next rank to royalty was obliterated; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth⁵³,* the nobility were brought down to a level with the mass of mankind, and stripped of all their exclusive privileges. *The heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together,* the old governments, which had been so conspicuous and extensive⁵⁴, disappeared; *and every mountain, i.e. government⁵⁵, and island, i.e. European country, were moved out of their places.* They were not merely shaken with the greatness of the changes, but were placed in a situation altogether different from that which they had previously occupied. That ‘the prophetic writers called the European countries, to which the Jews traded by sea, by the name of *isles and islands of the sea*⁵⁶,’ Mr. Pyle observes, at the same

‘ensigns, the prerogatives of Sovereign Pontiff, which had been instituted by Numā, and assumed by Augustus, were accepted, without hesitation, by seven Christian emperors.—Gratian was the first who refused the pontifical robe;’ and ‘the fourth dissertation of M. de la Bastie, *sur le Souvenir Pontifical des Empereurs Romains*,’ which ‘is a very learned and judicious performance,—proves the toleration of paganism from Constantine to Gratian.’ Decl. and Fall of the R. E. vol. III. p. 405, 408, 409.

⁵³ On the word *earth* look back to p. 88 and 388.

⁵⁴ Like the books of the ancients, which, when spread out, were capable of covering a large space.

⁵⁵ That ‘a mountain is the symbol of a kingdom,’ is the statement of Dr. Lancaster; that it may signify any species of government, he likewise observes; and it is the remark of Vitringa upon this verse, that not only the Monarchies, but what are called Republics and Free States, would, in this general Revolution, undergo the greatest changes.

⁵⁶ See the same observation in Sir I. Newton (*on Dan.* p. 277), and in Dr.

same time remarking, that ‘as earthquakes are seen to swallow up whole *islands* in the sea, and to overturn mountains, so will the several states and great kingdoms of this Western world be all quite changed in their religion, and the powers of Antichrist be swallowed up⁵⁷.’

Agreeably to the practice of the prophets, St. John, in the next verse, represents that literally, which he had before expressed under the cover of symbols. He foretells, that the princes and the great men of the earth, together with all their partisans, will, from the violence of their fears, *hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks*, i. e. says Mr. Waple, in ‘the most secret and inaccessible places.’ ‘The rest of the prophecy being to proceed with the like metaphors, of plagues upon *the sun, moon, stars, earth, trees, &c.*’ the prophet, says Dr. Goodwin, ‘here gives one literal explanation of them in this, which is his first mention of such, which one may serve for all; that so by the analogy of the Holy Ghost’s own exposition here, the rest might be interpreted: who makes kings to be as *the sun*, and nobles as *the stars*⁵⁸.’

With respect to the sixth seal, I shall only add, that the interpretation of it, which Vitringa has so largely defended, and demonstrated as I conceive with great strength of evidence, is no novel explication, but on the contrary of the highest antiquity. That it predicted the great events which were to happen at the destruction of Antichrist, was the opinion of Victorinus, of Andrew,

Dr. Lancaster. To account for this use of the word *islands* another reason may also be assigned. ‘*Islands*,’ says Mr. Lowth (on Isa. xi. 11), ‘in the prophetic style, seem particularly to denote the *Western* parts of the world, or the European nations: the *West* being often called the *sea* in the scripture language.’

⁵⁷ On Rev. xvi. 20.

⁵⁸ In loc. p. 43.

and of Arethas, whose commentaries on the Revelation are still extant. The first of these filled the episcopal see of Pestaw in Austria, and suffered martyrdom under Dioclesian ; the second, about the close of the fifth century, was bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia ; and the last is supposed to have been bishop of the same see in the succeeding century⁵⁹.

The arguments, alleged in the present work to prove that the antichristian monarchies of Europe will be demolished, are deduced from prophecy. Those who are desirous of seeing the powerful arguments that lead to the same conclusion, which are drawn from a quarter altogether different, I mean, from the deductions of reason, from the nature of things, and from the existing state of the European world, should peruse the able pamphlet of M. Millet du Pan, entitled *the Dangers which menace Europe*⁶⁰. In the apprehension of this celebrated abbe, the overthrow of the despotic monarchies which he so much dreads, would be one of the most fatal of all possible events ; an event, as he affects to believe, subversive of religion, and happiness, and social order. But, I am convinced, that far different would be its effects. I am convinced, that it would accelerate the general practice, as well as the universal diffusion of Christianity ; and would cause mankind to attain to such a pitch of prosperity and of improvement, as the world has never seen, and can but faintly conceive.

⁵⁹ On the age and authority of these early commentators, see Lardner.

⁶⁰ Dr. Hartley, independently of any reference to prophecy, long ago stated some of the more important causes, which threaten dissolution to the present European governments. *On Man*, vol. II. p. 449—454.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON SOME PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, PRINCIPALLY IN ISAIAH, FORETELLING GREAT CHANGES IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

AT the entrance of the last chapter it was observed, that in Isaiah a passage occurs parallel to the memorable prophecy of our Lord; and it shall be my present object to prepare the reader for giving a favourable reception to the interpretation of it which I have embraced.

' It is,' says Mr. Lowth, ' usual with the prophets, ' when they foretell some extraordinary event in, or ' near their own times, to carry their views on farther, ' and point at some greater deliverance, which God shall ' vouchsafe to his people in the latter ages of the ' world'. ' There are ' innumerable instances,' says bp. Hurd, in the Jewish prophets, wherein their predictions have a double accomplishment; and accordingly we find, ' that the writers of the New Testament give to ' many of the old prophecies an interpretation, very dif- ' ferent and remote from that which may be reasonably ' thought the primary and immediate view of the pro- ' phets themselves'. ' And the more distant events which they prefigure are generally far the most important; ' the

¹ On Isa. x. 20.

² Vol. I. p. 61, 127. The double sense of prophecy, says bp. Lowth, ' the sacred writers of the New Testament clearly suppose, and according to' it ' they frequently frame their interpretation of passages of the Old Testament.' On Isa. xi. 1.

‘ Style of the prophet so adapting itself to this double prospect, as to paint the near and subordinate event in terms, that emphatically represent the distant and more considerable³.’

The following instance of an expression of a double import is given by Warburton. ‘ On Peter’s refusing ‘ to eat of clean and unclean meats promiscuously, in ‘ the vision presented to him, the Holy Spirit says, *What ‘ God hath cleansed that call not thou common*⁴. The single proposition is, that which God hath cleansed is not common or impure; but no one who reads this story can doubt of its having this double sense: 1. *That ‘ the distinction between clean and unclean meats was to be ‘ abolished.* 2. *And that the Gentiles were to be called ‘ into the church of Christ.* Here, then, the true sense of these passages is not *one*, but *two*: and yet the intention or meaning is not, on this account, the least obscured or lost, or rendered doubtful or unintelligible⁵.

That there are various prophecies of a double sense is very generally admitted, and by theologues of the correctest judgment, as by Limborch and Grotius, by Ludovicus Capellus and Campegius Vitrunga, by Dr. Jortin and Dr. Samuel Clarke. So strong are the reasons for concluding, that some predictions are of this description, that *extremely few* are the writers, minutely conversant in the prophetic scriptures, who have denied their existence.

‘ Since from the express prophecies before cited of the Messiah’s everlasting kingdom of righteousness, it appears,’ says Dr. Clarke, ‘ that God had *in fact* a view to that, as the *great and general end* of all the dispensations of providence towards his true worship-

³ Vol. I. p. 65, 68.

⁴ Acts x. 15.

⁵ Div. Leg. of Moses, 1765, vol. V, p. 314.

pers from the beginning; and *no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation*⁶, (that is, the meaning of the prophecies is not what perhaps the prophet himself might imagine in his private judgment of the state of things then present,)—but *holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*: there may, therefore, very possibly and very reasonably be supposed to be many prophecies, which, though they may have a prior and immediate reference to some *nearer event*, yet by the Spirit of God (whom those prophecies that are express show to have had a *farther view*,) may have been directed to be uttered in such words, as may even more properly and more justly be applied to the *great event* which Providence had in view, than to the *intermediate event* which God designed as only a pledge or earnest of the other.⁷ In agreement with this bp. Hurd says, ‘it does not appear, that the later prophets always understood the drift of the more ancient; or, that either of them clearly apprehended the whole scope and purpose of their own predictions⁸.’

In order to prove the existence of a double sense in prophecy, Mr. Lowth says, ‘there are several prophecies, in which some of the most remarkable passages were never fulfilled in the persons of those, concerning whom they were first spoken: as those passages in David’s Psalms, *they pierced my hands and my feet, they parted my garments, and cast lots upon my vesture*⁹; *they gave me gall to eat, and vinegar to*

⁶ 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

⁷ Evi. of Nat. and Rev. Rel. p. 409.

⁸ Vol. I. p. 135.

⁹ By St. Matthew this is referred to as a prediction of Christ (xxvii. 35).

‘drink;

' drink¹⁰; were never, that we can find, literally true of David, though it is likely both those psalms were at first penned by him with regard to his own circumstances. In short, let any man compare the literal sense of the prophecies relating to Christ, as it is explained by Grotius, (who has took more pains to clear this matter than any other expositor) with the secondary and more important sense, ' and he will find, that generally speaking the primary or literal sense does not come up to the full import and meaning of the words: but looks narrow and forced in many places, in comparison of the other¹¹. ' David,' says Dr. Jortin, seems to speak concerning himself when he says, *thou shalt not leave my soul in hell¹², nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption¹³.* He intended perhaps no more than this, thou shalt not suffer me to come to an untimely end, to be killed by mine enemies and cast into the grave: but then the divine impulse, which was upon him, made him use words which should suit exactly to Christ, and to himself only in a loose and figurative sense. Of this the prophet himself might be sensible, and might know that his words had another import, and that they should be fulfilled twice, both in the sense which he intended, and in the sublimer sense of the holy spirit. By these means a shade was cast over the prophecy, and the sense of the Spirit was concealed till the event unfolded it and made it con-

¹⁰ Ps. xxii. 16, 18; Ixix. 21.

¹¹ Vindic. of the Div. Auth. and Insp. of the Old and New Test. p. 153.

¹² That is, *thou wilt not leave my life in the grave.* That this is the true and literal signification of the words, Dr. Whitby has proved at length (on the Acts, ii. 27).

¹³ Ps. xvi. 10.

'spicuous¹⁴.' These words of David, the apostles, Peter and Paul, speak of in such terms, as if they concluded them to be an undoubted prediction of Christ's resurrection from the dead¹⁵; and certainly the Christian, who is persuaded that there are predictions, relative to the holy founder of our religion, interspersed in the pages of the Jewish prophets, cannot but think, that this was a circumstance eminently worthy of being foretold.

One reason, says Mr. Lowth, why the prophecies should have a secondary sense, as well as a primary and literal one, may 'be taken from the nature and use of prophecy in general, which makes it requisite, that prophecies should be delivered with some degree of obscurity.—I deny not but there are some plain prophecies in scripture, but as much the greater part of them have something of obscurity, so I doubt not but to make it appear, that the obscurity of the prophecies is so far from being an objection against them, as some pretend, that on the contrary it is absolutely requisite, that most prophecies should be obscure, or else they would not answer the designs for which they were given, nor be accomplished in a way agreeable to the methods of providence¹⁶.'

Without allowing a double sense in prophecy, 'we shall,' says Mr. Lowth, 'make great confusion and disorder in the prophetical writings, if we suppose them to break off abruptly from the matter in hand, and without any visible transition go to a quite different subject. And this is, to speak more particularly, very unreasonable to suppose in the prophet Isaiah, who as he is most eminent for the clearness of his prophecies concerning the Messiah, so he is as remarkable for the

¹⁴ Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. I. p. 129.

¹⁵ Acts ii. 27; xiii. 36.

¹⁶ Vindic. &c. p. 162.

' regular order and contexture of his prophecies, and
 ' their coherence one with another. And the historical
 ' relations, which he intersperses in his writings, serve
 ' as a key to open the primary and literal intention of
 ' his whole prophecy. But the beauty of it taken all
 ' together will be quite spoiled, except we suppose him
 ' in most cases to have some regard to the subject he is
 ' upon, and rather to take hints from thence to discourse
 ' concerning the state of the gospel, than to fly out into
 ' a foreign subject without any respect to order or
 ' coherence'.¹⁷

That the doctrine of the double sense of prophecy has frequently been recurred to for the explication of predictions, where no secondary signification is to be found, cannot be doubted. Hence some have been ready to conclude, because it has been falsely ascribed to some prophecies, that it therefore belongs to none. But certainly, whether the doctrine be or be not well-founded, the arguments drawn from the abuse of it constitute no very logical proof of its non-existence. From the same cause, however, both prophecy and Christianity have, in the eyes of some, fallen into disrepute; and the reality of the one has been questioned, and the truth of the other has been controverted¹⁸.

My

¹⁷ P. 147.

¹⁸ After the paragraph above in the text was written, I met with the following passage in Warburton. If, says the prelate, it be asked, what it is which hath prejudiced some persons against typical and secondary sensess? 'I answer, the folly of fanatics, who have abused it in support of the most abominable nonsense. But how unreasonable is this prejudice! Was there ever any thing rational or excellent amongst men, that hath not been thus abused? Is it any disparagement to the method of geometers, that some conceited writers on morality and religion have of late taken it up, to give an air of weight and demonstration to the whimsies of pedantic importance? Is there no truth of nature, or reasonable-

My next citations I shall introduce with the less scruple, because they proceed from the pen of a writer, whose discourses on prophecy, on account of the importance of the matter, and the elegance of the style, will long continue to be perused with pleasure.

When the Jews ‘were selected from the other nations, to answer many wise ends of providence, it pleased God,’ says bp. Hurd, ‘to institute a form of government for them, which could not subsist without his frequent interposition; manifested in such a way as might convince them, that they were under the actual and immediate conduct of their divine sovereign. Hence it became a part of this singular œconomy, to be administered in the way of prophecy; by which it would be seen, that the hand of God was upon them in all their more important concerns. Upon this basis of an extraordinary providence the Jewish government stood; and we are now to see in what manner the prophetic spirit, so essential to that polity, was employed.’

‘First, we may observe, that, by means of this provision for their civil regimen, an apt and commodious way was opened for carrying on the divine councils in regard to Jesus; in whom, indeed, the Law itself was to be fulfilled.—The general theme of the prophet was some temporal success or calamity of the Jewish state; the secret purpose of the inspirer was, occasionally at

‘senses of art, in grammatical construction, because cabalistic dunces have in every age abused it to pervert all human meaning? We might as well say, that the ancient Egyptians did not write in hieroglyphics, because Kircher, who endeavoured to explain them, hath given us nothing but his own visions, as that the ancient Jews had not types and secondary senses, because modern enthusiasts have allegorized their whole story.’
Div. Leg. of Moses, 1765, vol. V. p. 353.

least,

' least, and when he saw fit, to predict the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah'¹⁹.

Secondly, to excite attention to these remoter prophecies, ' care was taken to secure the authority of the prophet by the completion of his civil predictions in events distinctly described, and near at hand. Thus, Moses might be believed by the Jews in what he said, of a prophet to be raised up, in a future age, like to himself²⁰; when they saw his prophetic blessings and curses upon them, according to their deserts in the land of Canaan,' so speedily and so punctually executed. Thus, too, their prophet, Isaiah, might reasonably expect to find credit with them for the glorious things predicted by him of the great deliverer, the Messiah; when their deliverance from the Babylonish captivity was seen so certainly to verify his prediction of that event. The prophet himself exults in this argument, as decisive and unanswerable. Behold, says he, the former things are come to pass, i. e. the prophecies, I have delivered to you concerning your redemption from the Assyrian bondage, will soon be so exactly completed, that I regard them as things past; and therefore new things do I declare; hence I claim your belief of other prophecies, concerning a much greater redemption, to take place hereafter, though there be no appearance, as yet, of any causes tending to produce it; for before they spring forth, I tell you of them²¹.

Thirdly, ' with these new things, these spiritual prophecies concerning the first coming of the Messiah, were likewise intermixed other prophecies, which ran

¹⁹ ' This use and intent of prophecy was seen, and admirably expressed, by the great M. Paschal. Pensées, p. 112.'

²⁰ Deut. xviii. 15.

²¹ Is. xlvi. 9.

' out

' out beyond that term, and prefigured THE GREAT
 ' EVENTS OF HIS SECOND COMING: and the war-
 ' rant for admitting *these* would be the completion of
 ' those other prophecies in the person and sufferings of
 ' Christ. That there are such prophecies in the Old
 ' Testament, will be shewn hereafter. In the mean time,
 ' it will not be thought incredible, that, if Jesus be
 ' indeed the end of the prophetic scheme, the revolu-
 ' tions of his government should be foretold, as well as
 ' the circumstances of his personal appearance: in other
 ' words, that the consummation of that design, which
 ' providence was carrying on, would not be overlooked,
 ' when the steps and gradations of it were so distinctly
 ' noted. For, in any reasonable design whatsoever, the
 ' end is first and principally in view, though the *means*
 ' engage, and may seem to engross, the attention of its
 ' author²².

Prophecies of a double sense may, says Jortin, ' have
 ' meanings as determinate and fixed, as if they had only
 ' one sense. The same is true of allegorical writings.' As an exemplification of this, the 14th of the 1st book of Horace's odes may be specified. This ' ode has a double
 ' sense. The poet addresses himself to a real ship, and
 ' yet intended, under that image or emblem, to dissuade
 ' the Romans from exposing themselves again to a civil

²² Vol. I. p. 126, 131, 133. To the same purpose bp. Hurd elsewhere speaks. Having laid it down as a fundamental principle, a principle, which is especially grounded on Rev. xix. 10, ' that prophecy in general (that is, all the prophecies of the Old and New Testament) hath its ultimate accomplishment in the history and dispensation of Jesus;' the bp. of Worcester asks, ' and where is the wonder, that, if prophecy was given to attest the coming of Jesus, and the dispensation to be erected by him, it should occasionally in every stage of it respect its main purpose; and, though the immediate object be some other, it should never lose sight of that, in which it was ultimately to find its repose and end?' Vol. I. p. 41, 62.

‘ war²³.’ To the same purpose speaks bp. Warburton.
 ‘ Horace,’ says the prelate, ‘ thus addresses a crazy ship
 ‘ in which his friends embarked for the Ægean sea :

‘ O navis, referent in mare te novi
 ‘ Fluctus! O quid agis? Fortiter occupa
 ‘ Portum: nonne vides ut
 ‘ Nudum remigio latus, &c.

‘ In the first and *primary* sense he describes the dangers
 ‘ of his friends in a weak unmanned vessel, and in a
 ‘ tempestuous sea; in the *secondary*, the dangers of the
 ‘ republic in entering into a new civil war, after all the
 ‘ losses and disasters of the old. As to the secondary
 ‘ sense,—we have the testimony of early antiquity deliv-
 ‘ ered by Quintilian: as to the primary sense, the fol-
 ‘ lowing will not suffer us to doubt of it.

‘ Nuper sollicitum quæ milhi tædium,
 ‘ Nunc desiderium, curaque non levis,
 ‘ Intersusa nitentes
 ‘ Vites æquora Cycladas.’

Had the ode ‘ been purely historical, nothing had been
 ‘ more cold or trifling; had it been purely allegorical,
 ‘ nothing less natural or gracious, on account of the
 ‘ enormous length into which it is drawn.—But suppose
 ‘ the ode to be both historical and allegorical, and that,
 ‘ under his immediate concern for his friends, he con-
 ‘ veyed his more distant apprehensions for the republic,
 ‘ and then there appears so much ease, and art, and
 ‘ dignity in every period, as to make us justly esteem
 ‘ it the most finished composition of antiquity²⁴.’

But though there are predictions which have a double
 aspect, the advocates of that opinion need not hesitate
 to admit, with Dr. Jortin, that the direct prophecies,

²³ Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. I. p. 128.

²⁴ Div. Leg. of Moses, 1765, vol. V. p. 316.

which are taken only in one sense, are those, on which we ought principally to insist, when we would prove the truth of our religion from the predictions of the Old Testament²⁵.'

To interpret many of the predictions in the Hebrew prophets, as having an express and ultimate reference to the fortunes of Christ's kingdom, is the method which Vitrunga decidedly approves, and every where illustrates. 'This,' says he, 'was the mode of interpretation followed by the ancients; by those who, after the ancient models, commented on the scriptures in the middle ages; and by the most eminent leaders of the Reformation, Luther, Brentius, Pellicanus, Bibliander, Bungenhagius, Snoius; and, in the last age, by Cocceius and Altingius²⁶.' And I know not, whether any scholar will be justified in totally disclaiming the double sense in prophecy, until he has perused some of the many observations on this subject, which are scattered over the works of Vitrunga²⁷.

Of this nature is thought to be the xiith chapter of Isaiah, which, all the commentators agree, did, in its primary sense, foretell the destruction of the Babylonian monarchy and aristocracy.

With respect to the style of Isaiah, it 'has,' says Mr. Gray, 'been universally admired as the most perfect model of the sublime; it is distinguished for all the magnificence, and for all the sweetness of the Hebrew

²⁵ Rem. on Ecel. Hist. vol. I. p. 121. On the double sense of prophecy see also the xith of bp. Lowth's Lect. on Hebrew Poetry.

²⁶ Vitrunga *de Canonibus Verbi Propheetici recte exponendi*, cap. ii. can. xii.

²⁷ 'That the ancient prophets had a real eye to the corruptions and downfall of the antichristian Babylon, &c. in their prophecies concerning the political cities and governments of old, the reader may,' says Mr. Pyle, 'be satisfied from that learned and laborious commentator Vitrunga on Isai. xxiii. *ad finem cap.* and in many other parts of that excellent work.' Pyle on the Rev. p. 155.

language. The variety of his images, and the animated warmth of his expressions, characterize him as unequalled in point of eloquence; and if we were desirous of producing a specimen of the dignity and beauties of the scripture-language, we should immediately think of having recourse to Isaiah²⁸. With respect to the period in which he flourished, we are informed in the 1st chapter and the 1st verse of his writings, that he prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Now Uzziah ascended the throne of Judah in the year 761 before the Christian æra²⁹. 'The prophecies of Isaiah,' says bp. Hurd, 'it is well known, are CHIEFLY taken up in predicting the future glories of Christ's kingdom³⁰.'

Without adducing any farther preliminary observations, I proceed to the citation of the words, which gave rise to them. *Behold, the day of the Lord cometh³¹, cruel both with war and fierce anger, to lay the land³² desolate:*

²⁸ Key to the Old Test. p. 369. Those who feel a desire of carefully examining the beauties of Isaiah should read, together with the masterly commentary of Vitringa, the elegant Praelectiones of Lowth.

²⁹ Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. IV. p. 150.

³⁰ Serm. preached at Lincoln's Inn, vol. I. p. 276.

³¹ 'As the prophets often speak of things future, as if they were already effected; so they speak often of things to be brought about in process of time, as if they were to succeed immediately; past, present, and to come being all alike known to an infinite mind, and the intermediate time not revealed perhaps to the minds of the prophets.' Bp. Newton, vol. I, p. 293.

³² Had the passage above been of so extensive a signification as is represented, the word *land*, it may be objected, would not have been employed. The fact is, the word in the original might have been translated the *earth*, as the same word in the Hebrew is translated four verses farther. Accordingly what is rendered the *land* in our version in the Septuagint is

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 : the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine³³. And I will punish the world for their evil³⁴ ; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.—Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall move out of her place, in the day of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger³⁵.

Surely language like this appears to point at somewhat more than the victory of one arbitrary prince over a brother-monarch, and the removal of one set of rapacious nobles in order to make way for another. On the last of these verses, Vitringa says, ‘to no man, who is skilled in the diction of prophecy, is this figurative language obscure. It signifies, that the greatest commotions would arise in the world ; and that, in the political government of it, stupendous changes would be effected (together with the clearest demonstration of

After writing the preceding note, I met with the following corroborative observation of Mr. Lowth in his notes on the xxivth ch. of Isaiah. ‘The Hebrew word haärets is promiscuously rendered in this chapter by our interpreters either *earth* or *land* : and may be taken in a larger or narrower sense, as the context inclines us to understand it.’ It may be added, that the two first verses of the first ch. of Genesis, where haärets is used, prove beyond all contradiction, that this is a word of the most comprehensive import: It is there said, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void.*

³³ Maimonides speaks of this and of v. 13, as having beyond all doubt a political and symbolic signification. *More Nevochim*, p. 265.

³⁴ In bp. Lowth’s more correct Version it is : *I will visit the world for its evil.* The Hebrew word, translated *world*, is of the most extensive import, and could not have been otherwise rendered. How this expression can be exclusively applied to the empire of the king of Babylon, it does not seem easy to conceive.

• XIII. 9, 10, 11, 13.

'of the Divine justice and severity), not otherwise than
'if the heavens were to fall, and the earth were to move
'out of its place.'

This sagacious commentator, speaking of this part of Isaiah, says, one object of this prophecy is to teach, 'that the fate of the figurative Babylon, and of all the kingdoms of the world, which should oppose themselves to the kingdom of the Son of God, would resemble the fate of the real Babylon³⁶.' And he adds a little farther, that pious men may, from this prophecy, anticipate the destruction of the enemies of Christ's kingdom, and of all power which is hostile to it. One or two remarks, from the argument of Mr. Lowth on the xiith ch. of Isaiah, shall also be cited. 'After the description of those glorious times, which should come to pass in the latter days, the prophet foretells the destruction of God's enemies, and begins with Babylon, whither God's people were to be carried captive, and therefore was a type or figure of Antichrist, the great oppressor of God's church in after-times. See Rev. xvii. 5. And whoever carefully considers several particulars in this and the next chapter —will easily find, that these prophecies have an aspect beyond the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, inasmuch as the prophets describe this judgment as a decisive stroke, that should thoroughly vindicate the cause of oppressed truth and innocence.' But this cause cannot, I apprehend, be completely vindicated, till all the oppressive governments, not only of Europe, but of the world, shall be overthrown, and every remnant of aristocratic usurpation shall be swept away; when those, who glitter in their elevated stations in the political world, like the sun, the moon, and the stars in the natural, shall be perfectly

³⁶ In Jesai. vol. I. p. 377.

darkened, and, in the expressive language of the prophet, *the arrogancy of the proud shall cease, and the haughtiness of the terrible shall be laid low.*

It is in the name of Almighty God, that the prophet says, *I will shake the heavens*, i. e. the governments of the world, *and the earth shall remove out of her place.* That the earth is a symbol of the great body of the people has before been remarked; and accordingly its removal out of its place appears here to signify, that they shall be raised from their present oppressed and degraded state, and shall assume their proper rank in society. Though contenting myself with the concisest mention of this passage of Isaiah, I yet cannot but entertain the expectation, that, after all which has been said in this and the two preceding chapters, it will be thought, by many of my readers, pointedly to foretell the future accomplishment of these happy events, and perfectly to harmonize with the memorable predictions of Daniel, of John, and of our Lord himself.

A parallel passage shall with brevity be referred to, for the explanation of which there is certainly no occasion to have recurrence to that double sense, which, as there is reason to think, is sometimes found in prophecy. In the 2d and 4th verses of the iid ch. of Isaiah, that prophet says, *It shall come to pass in the last days³⁷, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks;* a prediction manifestly descriptive, in its proper and primary sense, of the millennium. ‘Our writers,’ says the learned Brenius, ‘every where

³⁷ In the Improved Translations of bp. Lowth and Mr. Dodson it is, in the latter days.

' apply the expression of *the last days or times* to the
' times of the Messiah, which run from that period, in
' which he obtained in heaven the kingdom even unto
' that time, in which he shall again deliver the kingdom
' to the Father. He says then *in the last days*, that is, in
' the time of the Messiah, *the mountain of the Lord's*
' *house*, that is, the kingdom of the people of God is
' about to be exalted upon all the kingdoms of the world.
By Daniel the same is predicted under the image of a
' stone, cut out of a mountain, and become a mountain,
' which fills the whole earth.—But although this does
' not yet appear, as the monarchies of the world are still
' standing, which are first to be destroyed; yet when
' the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, and the full-
' ness of them shall have entered in, and the end of the
' monarchies exhibited to Daniel in his vision shall be
' arrived, then at length this prophecy shall with all
' completeness be accomplished. *Mountain* we often
' see employed in the prophetic scriptures for a kingdom
' or king³⁸.

After this striking prediction of what is to take place at the commencement, and during the progress, of the millennium, Isaiah, a few verses farther, enters more particularly into the events which shall distinguish the first æra of that memorable period. *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.—And upon ALL the high mountains, and upon ALL the hills³⁹ that are lifted up.—And they shall go*

³⁸ Numerous are the passages to which Brenius refers, for the purpose of proving this.

³⁹ i. e. Upon the greater and the lesser kingdoms, for Dr. Lancaster has observed, as analogy would lead us to expect, that a hill, as well as a mountain, is the symbol of a kingdom.

unto the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth⁴⁰, for fear of the Lord, and for⁴¹ the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. This prophecy, which resembles that of the sixth seal, and appears in no small degree to countenance the glorious doctrine of Equality of Rights, is classed by Mr. Whiston⁴² among those, which relate to the destruction at Armageddon, and to the downfal of Antichrist. The shaking of the earth, says Mr. Macculloch, a clergyman of Scotland, here⁴³ intimates, that, at the period referred to, the nations of the world should be violently agitated, and terrible commotions excited⁴⁴.

The prediction, to which I shall next concisely refer, forms a principal part of the concluding prophecy of Haggai; and I am the rather induced to mention it, short as it is, because it furnishes an undoubted specimen of symbolic diction being immediately afterwards interpreted by words of a plain and obvious import⁴⁵. In the name of that great Being, who decrees and superintends the revolutions of the world, the prophet in the 21st and 22d verses of the iid chapter says, *I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen.* That the latter part of this passage is a literal explication of the figurative language of the former part, is observed by Mr. Collyer⁴⁶ and by bp. Chandler⁴⁷. To the same purpose speaks Mr.

⁴⁰ That this is a very proper and familiar image to express terror, and drawn from actual observation and experience, bp. Lowth has shewn at length (*in loc.*)

⁴¹ Or rather, as it is in the Translations of bp. Lowth and Mr. Dodson, *from the fear of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty.*

⁴² See his *Efl. on the Rev.* p. 361.

⁴³ *Leff. on Isaiah.* 1793.

⁴⁴ Look back to p. 291.

⁴⁵ *The Sacred Interpreter*, by David Collyer, late vicar of Coxwell, Berks, Carlisle, 1790, vol. I. p. 321.

⁴⁶ *Def. of Chr.* p. 205.

Thomas Jeffery. ‘The *shaking of the earth* is explained by the prophet himself, by *shaking the nations and kingdoms* of the earth; and then *shaking the heavens* may very naturally refer to the altering the government in them⁴⁷.’ The prophecy contained in the 21st and 22d verses of the iid ch. of Haggai ‘plainly relates,’ says Mr. Lowth, ‘to the second coming of Christ, or to that illustrious appearance of his kingdom, which shall put a period to the kingdoms of the earth.—See Dan. ii. 44.’

Any prophecy of superior authority to that of our Saviour it is impossible to cite. On this subject I can, however, refer the reader to one of much higher antiquity. It is in the second Psalm. This psalm, which is applied to Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles, ‘contains,’ says bishop Patrick, ‘a most illustrious prophecy of the kingdom of Christ;’ and accordingly Simeon De Muis, a much esteemed commentator on the Psalms, informs us, that it was regarded by celebrated writers of antiquity among the Jews as prophetic of the Messiah⁴⁸.

‘If we compare this poem with the events of the life and reign of David, illustrious as they were; we find,’ says Dr. Aphorp, ‘the ideas and expressions too disportioned to the subject, to admit of a literal application. For neither were his enemies so powerful, nor their submission so complete, nor the reign of David so prosperous and extensive, as to verify the amplitude of the style and composition⁴⁹.’ ‘If,’ says Vitringa, ‘the predicates of any subject can be understood, in their just emphasis, of none but Christ; and if applied to any other subject give a feeble and uninteresting meaning: as in Isai. xi. why should we pursue a flying and

⁴⁷ Christianity the Perfection of all Religion, Nat. and Rev. p. 343.

⁴⁸ Those celebrated rabbis, Aben Ezra and Kimchi, are specified by bp. Chandler, as maintaining this opinion. Def. of Chr. p. 212.

⁴⁹ Vol. II. p. 86.

' fallacious shadow, and not seize at once the solid substance of the prophecy? Especially when the New Testament is our guide⁵⁰.'

The opposition, which princes and men in power were to carry on both against the propagation and against the progress of the gospel, the iid Psalm appears to point out in general terms. In the 2d verse, David says, *the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed.* Now such were Pilate and Herod, and, as Mr. Sam. Clark observes on this verse, 'other wicked kings in all ages;' and he pertinently refers to that parallel verse in the Rev. (xvii. 14), where it is said, that *the Ten Kings—shall make war with the Lamb.* But, says the psalmist in the 4th and 5th verses, *he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision: Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.* 'When they have spit their venom,' says the same commentator, 'and spun their thread to its full length, and are ripe for destruction, he will manifest his fury against them, by the punishments he inflicts upon them.' The inspired writer adds in the 6th verse, *yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion⁵¹*; and in the eighth, *I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* 'These words,' says Poole, 'declare the great amplitude of the kingdom of the Messiah.' How this is to be effected we are told in the next verse, where the Deity is represented as solemnly addressing Christ in these tremendous words:

⁵⁰ Vitringa, in confirmation of what he here urges, specifies various passages of the New Testament. *De Canonibus Verbi Prophetici recte exponendi*, cap. ii. can. xii.

⁵¹ This expression, as Poole remarks (in loc.) is sometimes put 'for the Christian Church.'

thou shalt break them with a rod of iron⁵², thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel⁵³; that is, that description of persons, who had been previously mentioned, *the Kings and the Rulers of the earth*, who *set themselves against the Lord's anointed*, and breathe hostility against the true spirit of his religion. The Hebrew word, here translated *set* themselves, Maimonides observes on this verse, denotes firmness and perpetuity⁵⁴; and, with respect to the obstruction made to the progress of the Messiah's kingdom, the monarchs of the world have certainly acted a very decided and uniform part.

Returning to the Evangelical prophet⁵⁵ (for that is the title which the general suffrage of Christians has conferred on Isaiah), I shall cite from the xxivth chapter of his prophecies a remarkable passage, which is thought to have a particular reference to the war of Armageddon, to the fate of the princes who are engaged in it, and to the signal revolution which will be consequent to their overthrow. That this chapter relates to the latter ages of the world is observed by Dr. Wells in his commentary upon it. The images, which the prophet chiefly employs in this xxivth chapter are such, says bishop Lowth, as denote great revolutions; 'revolutions, involving all 'orders and degrees of men, changing entirely the face 'of things, and destroying the whole polity both reli- 'gious and civil.' After declaring that the earth shall be in a distressed and a desolated state, Isaiah supposes a great and favourable change to take place, and accord-

⁵² That is, says Simeon De Muis, with the sword, as rabbies Ezra and Rasi interpret it.

⁵³ The reader of this verse Mr. Sam. Clark pertinently refers to a parallel place in Daniel (ii. 41), where it is said, *the God of heaven—shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms.*

⁵⁴ More Neochim, p. 18.

⁵⁵ He is so styled, says Mr. Lowth (in Pref.), 'because he foretold the Coming and Kingdom of the Messiah with greater clearness than any of the rest.'

ingly says in v. 15 and 16, *glorify ye the Lord—in the isles of the sea. From the uttermost parts of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.* Praise ye the Lord throughout the nations of Europe;⁵⁶ and it is not thence only, but from the remotest parts of the world, that the voice of joy is heard, and the praises of the just and the upright are now to be resounded. After declaring in v. 19 and 20, that *the earth* (i. e. the symbolic earth) *is moved exceedingly*, and that *the earth shall move to and fro*, the prophet foretells in the two following verses, that *it shall come to pass in that Day⁵⁷*, that *the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.* And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit⁵⁸, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. To the war of Armageddon this passage is referred by Mr. Whiston⁵⁹; and Mr. Lowth says, ‘ I cannot find any explication of this verse so agreeable to the natural sense of the words, as that of a late learned writer upon the Revelation, c. xix. 6, who explains it of the kings of the earth, who made war with Christ and his saints at Armageddon, Rev. xvi. 16.’ If Mr. Lowth supposed, that all, engaged in the war of Armageddon against the kings of the earth, were to be men of an holy character, he was, I apprehend, in an error. When large bodies of men are united in accomplishing the very best designs, not a few among them will necessarily be of very exceptionable morals.

⁵⁶ Look back to p. 431 and 432, where the expression, *the isles of the sea*, is explained.

⁵⁷ ‘ In that Day. This phrase often denotes in Isaiah—an extraordinary season, remarkable for some signal events of providence, called elsewhere, by way of excellence, the *Day of the Lord.*’ Mr. Lowth on Isa. iv. 21. See this latter expression explained in p. 294.

⁵⁸ ‘ Or dungeon,’ Mr. Lowth.

⁵⁹ See his *Eff* on the Rev. p. 362.

With respect to *the kings of the earth being visited after many days*, it may signify, says Matthew Henry, that ‘they shall be *visited in wrath*⁶⁰; it is the same word in another form that is used, v. 21, *the Lord shall punish them*: they shall be reserved to the day of execution as condemned criminals are.’ To the same purpose speaks Dr. Wells, ‘*They shall be visited*, i. e. ‘brought forth to public punishment.’ That the word *visited* in this passage is to be explained of punishment is observed by Glassius⁶¹, by Brenius, and by Vitringa; and the last of these truly learned men declares it to be extremely clear, that this prophecy in its figurative sense is to be explained of the very period, yet to come, which St. John treats of in the sixth seal, and of the great events which he has there foretold. That I appeal to so many unaccomplished predictions in the Hebrew scriptures needs not to awaken in the reader any degree of surprise; for Sir I. Newton does not hesitate to declare, that ‘there is scarce a prophecy in the Old Testament concerning Christ, which doth not, in something or other, relate to his *second coming*⁶².’

Having quoted several passages from Isaiah, I shall here take the opportunity of inserting another, as it is a striking one, though with the subject of the chapter it has only an indirect connexion.

‘This prophet,’ says Mr. Lowth, ‘seems to have been favoured with an entire view of the Gospel-state, from the very birth of the Messias, to that glorious period, when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ⁶³.’ In correspon-

“ ‘Thus this very phrase, *after many days thou shalt be visited*, is used, Ezek. xxxviii. 8.’ Mr. Lowth in loc. And in this sense of punishment it is understood by a crowd of Jewish rabbis, who have commented on this verse.

⁶¹ Philologia Sacra, 1711. p. 561.

⁶² P. 132.

⁶³ Pref. p. 4.

dence with this, Dr. Aphorop observes, that the three last verses of ch. lvi. refer to ‘the corruptions of Anti-christ;’ and the completion of this prophecy must, he declares, be sought in the conduct of the ‘bishops and ‘more eminent pastors and the whole ecclesiastical order⁶⁴.’ To a large proportion of the priests, belonging to all the countries of Christendom, it does, indeed, seem justly applicable: but there appears to be no solid reason, why Dr. Aphorop should have restricted it, as he has done, to the clergy of the middle ages.

The verses are expressed with the plainness of primitive times, and speak the language of censure without reserve. After foretelling in the preceding verse, in the diction of symbols, that *the beasts of the forest* would come to devour; the prophet says: *His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber⁶⁵.* *Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough⁶⁶, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain⁶⁷ from the highest to the lowest⁶⁸.* *Come ye, say*

⁶⁴ Vol. II. p. 186, 189.

⁶⁵ ‘The image in this place is taken from the temple-service; in which there was appointed a constant watch, day and night.—The watches in the East, even to this day, are performed by a loud cry from time to time of the watchmen, to mark the time, and that very frequently, and in order to shew that they themselves are constantly attentive to their duty. Hence—the greatest reproach to them is, that they are dumb dogs; they cannot bark.’ Bp. Lowth on c. lxii. 6.

⁶⁶ In the Versions of bp. Lowth and Mr. Dodson, the clause is thus rendered: *Yea, these dogs are of untamed appetite: they know not to be satisfied.* Upon this passage Vitringa pertinently cites our Lord’s precaution (Mat. vii. 15). *Beware of false teachers, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

⁶⁷ ‘They feed not the flock, but fleece it. They are every one looking to his own way, minding his own private interests.’ M. Henry.

⁶⁸ *From the highest to the lowest* is the amended translation of bp. Lowth and of Mr. Dodson.

they,⁶⁹, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. Now, says Mr. Lowth, ‘the word *shepherd* signifies civil governors, as well as ecclesiastical guides,—whom the prophet compares to ‘dumb dogs, that give no warning of approaching thieves ‘or enemies, but give themselves up to sleep and idle-‘ness.’ That the word *watchmen* also is here applicable as well to civil as to ecclesiastical rulers, is observed by different commentators⁷⁰. It may, however, be proper to add, that, in the opinion of Vitringa, this prophecy has a reference only to the ecclesiastics of the Christian world.

This prophetic accusation, if it may be so styled, resolves itself into the distinct charges of indolence or inattention to the duty of their stations—treachery—rapacity—and immoderate luxury. What proportion of those, who have occupied a gradation of ranks in the hierarchies, and in the governments, of modern Europe, must plead guilty to these weighty imputations, on the awful day of judgment and retribution, it is not for man to decide. But the present state of the world offers, alas! to the least discerning of human kind, too ample proofs of the melancholy effects, which have originated from their misconduct and their usurpations.

⁶⁹ That is, ‘unto their brethren, by office, and in iniquity.’ Poole in loc. If it be enquired, what description of persons have with *most frequency* attended at the banquet, and shared all the luxuries of the table, those who belong to corrupt governments and corrupt hierarchies will, I believe, without hesitation be fixed on. This part of the prophecy must then be admitted to be pertinently applied.

⁷⁰ It is observed in the commentaries of Calvin, of Marlorat, a learned protestant of the 16th century, and of Dr. Wells, and in the Annotations of the Assembly of Divines, printed in the year 1657.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE SIXTH VIAL; AND SOME PROPHECIES IN
THE OLD TESTAMENT RELATING TO THE TURKS,
THE ARABS, AND THE EGYPTIANS.

ON the fourth and the fifth vials many observations have been adduced. Of the two that are subsequent some account also shall be given.

Since, says an ingenious French commentator, ‘the apocalypse is nothing but a continuation of the prophetic history of Daniel, concerning the fourth monarchy, which is the Roman empire,’ and since Mahometanism has overspread the eastern part of the Roman empire; ‘ thence we may conclude, that both the vials and the trumpets have in part for their object the Turkish empire and the Mahometan religion¹. ’ As it is, indeed, agreed on all hands, that the book of revelation contains a prediction, descriptive of the conquests of the Turks, this circumstance certainly affords a presumption, that in the same sacred book some specific notice should occur of the downfall of their empire.

I now cite the words of St. John. *And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.* The river Euphrates, says Mr. Cradock, signifies ‘ the people inhabiting thereabout,’ and ‘ these are the Turks that possess that part of the world,—so that this vial relates plainly to the sixth trumpet.’ To the same purpose speaks that early

¹ New Syst. of the Apoc. See the Defence of it, &c. p. 9, 10.

Scotch commentator, Mr. Durham. ‘ By *waters* ordinarily in scripture are understood much people, and by *Euphrates* in particular, those people that dwelt about it, as Isa. viii. 7, the king of Assyria and his army are called *the waters of the river*, that is, of Euphrates, because they dwelt about it. By the same reason, then, *Euphrates* here must be understood of the people for the time inhabiting there: and because not only in verity of the thing, the Turks now possess that part of the world, but also (chap. ix. 14, &c. of this book) these same people were marked as bound about that river; and the loosing of them noted, as it were, the overflowing of that people’s dominion like a flood from these parts. So there is no people that can be so reasonably understood here as Turks, who were also understood there, ch. ix. 14. And this sixth vial, mentioning that river, hath a special relation to the sixth trumpet, where it was mentioned before.’ I next quote from Mr. Fleming. ‘ The sixth vial—will be poured out upon the Mahometan Antichrist, as the former on the Papacy. And seeing the sixth trumpet brought the Turks from beyond Euphrates, from crossing which river they date their rise; this sixth vial dries up their waves, and exhausts their power, as the means and way to prepare and dispose the Eastern kings and kingdoms to renounce their Heathenish and Mahometan errors, in order to their receiving and embracing Christianity. For I think this is the native import of the text, and not that the Jews are to be understood under this denomination of *the kings of the East*: which is such an odd straining of it to serve a turn, as I cannot admit of.²’

* P. 77. This unnatural mode of interpreting the expression (for I agree with Mr. Fleming that it is so) has received the suffrages of various annotators.

By Vitrina also it is observed, that this vial *may reasonably be regarded as predicting the ruin of the Ottoman empire.* Whilst, says he, this empire may be denoted by the *Euphrates*, the *kings of the East* may be the princes of Tartary and Persia. He had before remarked, that ‘nothing is more certain and better known, than that by *rivers*, in the language of the sacred writings, brave and numerous nations are to be understood.’ The author of the *New System of the Apocalypse*, after asserting, that ‘the sixth vial destroyeth the empire of the Turks and their religion; which the sixth trumpet had advanced to the highest pitch of its grandeur;’ and that ‘the river *Euphrates* does undoubtedly signify the people of that part of the world; as its being dried up denoteth the end of their empire;’ remarks, ‘that it is the prosperity of Mahometanism and Popery,’ that ‘hath kept back the Jews from the Christian religion, which those two religions have so much disfigured.’ But when these two false religions, which are grafted upon Christianity, shall be extirpated and destroyed, he concludes, that the descendants of Abraham ‘will open their eyes and be converted³.’

Does the great river *Euphrates* denote the Turkish empire, then, says Mr. King, we do, at this very time, ‘see this great emblematical river drying up. We see this empire fading away, and growing exceeding weak. It has already been in great danger from Russia; and has yielded up much⁴.’ One ‘great event,’ says Dr. Priestley, ‘which I begin to flatter myself we may be looking forwards to, is the fall of the Turkish empire, when an end will be put to a system of government, the most unfriendly to human happiness, and to improvements of all kinds, that the world has ever groaned

³ P. 258.

⁴ *Morsels of Criticism*, p. 447.

‘under.

'under⁵.' Such a revolution all the friends of freedom cannot, indeed, but anticipate with pleasure; and that it may be *immediate*, has been generally wished.

Very ample is the power, very numerous are the armies, of the tyrant of Constantinople; but the despots of Vienna⁶ and of Petersburg are yet more formidable. It is from these sovereigns of the North⁷, who enforce the strictest rules of modern discipline, and rule over extensive portions of the globe, inhabited by men at once fierce, submissive, and unenlightened, that the victorious cause of freedom may be expected to meet the

⁵ A Discourse delivered in 1791 before the Supporters of the New College, Hackney, p. 28. That the sixth vial denotes the destruction of the Turkish empire, Dr. Priestley thinks probable. See his Institutes of Nat. and Rev. Rel. 2d. ed. vol. II. p. 424.

⁶ Great, however, as is the power of the emperor and the house of Austria, there are circumstances which seem to promise, that its demolition will not be postponed to any very distant time. Such are the immensity of the Austrian debt, the unwieldy structure of the Germanic system, and the interfering interests of the princes who support it, the hostile dispositions and formidable forces of the French republic, her actual conquest of the Austrian Netherlands, the well-founded discontents which prevail in various parts of Germany, and the wide diffusion of literature throughout many of its provinces. On the last of these circumstances a curious fact shall be noticed. Dr. Wendeborn, in his *View of England*, published in 1791, speaking of 'the number of books which are annually printed in Germany, compared with those that appear in the same space of time in England,' says, 'It is calculated with some certainty, that they amount on an average to 5000. I have, for six following years, calculated those, which in English Reviews are announced annually, and the number of them, small pamphlets and single sermons excepted, is, on an average, not much above 600. Consequently, the proportion between books annually published in England and in Germany, is almost as one to nine.' vol. II. p. 13. A speedy peace with the republic of France may perhaps delay the downfall of the house of Austria.

⁷ The despots of the South, I mean those of Naples and Turin, of Lisbon and Madrid, are not wanting in malevolence or disposition; but happily there is no equality between the extent of their wishes and the extent of their power.

greatest pertinacity of opposition. Fearing, therefore, lest the Turkish empire, were it now to fall to pieces, might perhaps, by the intervention of these confederated potentates, be moulded into more permanent despotisms on the European model, and thus impart new vigour to the declining cause of tyranny ; I scarcely know how to entertain the wish, that the sovereignty of the Ottomans should be overturned, antecedently to the introduction of some degree of light and liberty into the territories of the two Imperial courts. But perhaps these fears are vain : and it certainly must be admitted, that he, who has reflected on the depopulating spirit of the Turkish government, and contemplated the picture drawn by modern travellers of the wretched state of its provinces, can hardly conceive it possible, that any change could occur, which could place their inhabitants in a situation more truly afflicting and abject.

After a recital of the sixth vial, another prophecy, which occurs in the six last verses of the xith chapter of Daniel, and is thought to refer to the Turks under the name of *the king of the North*, may be pertinently alleged. *At the time of the end shall the king of the South push at him*, i. e. at the Roman empire, and particularly the Eastern division of it, and *the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships* ; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. *He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown* : but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. *He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries* : and the land of Egypt shall not escape. *But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt* : and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall

shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the East and out of the North shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

That the *king of the North* signifies the Turkish power or empire, and the *king of the South*, that of the Saracens, is the general opinion of modern commentators; of Mede and Brightman, of Dr. More and Dr. Wells, of bp. Newton and Sir I. Newton, of Mr. Lowth, Mr. Wintle, and Mr. Samuel Clark.

'At the time of the end,' says bp Newton⁸, 'that is (as Mr Mede rightly expounds it⁹) in the latter days of the Roman empire, shall the king of the South push at him: that is the Saracens, who were of the Arabians, and came from the South; and under the conduct of the false prophet Mohammed and his successors, made a religious or rather irreligious war upon the emperor Heraclius, and deprived him of Egypt and many of his finest provinces. They were only to push at, and sorely wound the Greek empire, but they were not to subvert and destroy it. And the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind with chariots and with horsemen, and with many ships, and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over: that is the Turks, who were originally of the Scythians, and came from the North; and after the Saracens seized on Syria, and assaulted with great violence the remains of the Greek empire, and in time rendered themselves absolute masters of the whole. The Saracens dismembered and weakened the Greek empire, but the Turks totally ruined and destroyed it: and for this reason, we

⁸ Vol. II. p. 170.

⁹ P. 1001.

' may

' may presume, so much more is said of the Turks than of the Saracens. Their *chariots* and their *horsemen* are particularly mentioned; because their armies consisted chiefly of horse, especially before the institution of the Janizaries ;' and it is this circumstance, says Mr. Lowth, ' which makes them carry an Horse-tail before their chief officers, as an ensign of honour.' ' Their ships too,' observes bp. Newton, ' are said to be many ; and indeed without many ships they could never have gotten possession of so many islands and maritime countries, nor have so frequently vanquished the Venetians, who were at that time the greatest naval power in Europe. What fleets, what armies were employed in the besieging and taking of Constantinople, of Negropont, or Eubœa, of Rhodes, of Cyprus, and lastly of Candy or Crete ?' ' The prophet,' observes Mr. Wintle, ' has several times in this narrative expressed the progress and havock of war by the ravages of an inundation, and we find the like allusion at the end of this verse.' The words, *shall enter into the countries, and overflow, and pass over,* ' give us,' says the bp. of Bristol, ' an exact idea of their overflowing the western parts of Asia, and then passing over into Europe, and fixing the seat of their empire at Constantinople, as they did under their seventh emperor Mohammed the second.'

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown. ' The same expression of ' the glorious land,' says bp. Newton, ' was used before (ver. 6) ; and in both places it is rendered by the Syriac translator *the land of Israel.* Now nothing is better known, than that the Turks took possession of the Holy Land, and remain masters of it to this day.' *But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.* ' Edom and Moab and the Ammonites,' says Mr. Wintle, ' are thus

thus joined, Jer. xxv. 21. ‘ and we meet with them again together, Isa. xi. 14. ‘ They were all to the east or south-east of the Dead Sea, and now make a part of the extensive range of the wild Arabs.’ Sultan Selim, observes bishop Newton, ‘ was the conqueror of the neighbouring countries, and annexed them to the Othman empire; but he cou’d not make a complete conquest of the Arabians.—Ever since his time, the Othman emperors have paid them an annual pension of forty thousand crowns of gold, for the safe passage of the caravans and pilgrims going to Mecca: and for their farther security the Sultan commonly orders the Basha of Dainascus to attend them with soldiers and water-bearers, and to take care that their numbers never fall short of 14,000.’ The Arabians, notwithstanding these precautions, have sometimes plundered the caravans; and though armies have marched against them, they have remained unsubdued. ‘ These free-booters have commonly been too cunning for their enemies: and when it was thought they were well nigh surrounded and taken, they have still escaped out of their hands. So well doth this particular prediction, relating to some of the tribes of the Arabians, agree with that general one concerning the main body of the nation,’ which is recorded in the xvith chapter of Genesis.

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries. ‘ This,’ says the bishop of Bristol, ‘ implies, that his dominions should be of large extent; and he hath stretched forth his hand upon many, not only Asian and European, but likewise African countries. Egypt in particular was destined to submit to his yoke: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.—And the conquest of Egypt with the neighbouring countries follows next in order after the conquest of Judea, with the neighbouring countries, as in the prophecy, so likewise in history.

' The Ottoman emperor Selim, having routed and slain
 ' Gauri sultan of Egypt in a battle near Aleppo, became
 ' master of all Syria and Judea. He then marched into
 ' Egypt against' the new sultan, whom he defeated, cap-
 tured, and put to death; and so put an end to the govern-
 ment of the Mamalukes, and established that of the Turks,
 in Egypt. ' The prophecy says particularly, that *he*
should have power over the treasures of gold and of silver,
and over all the precious things of Egypt: and history
 ' informs us, that when Cairo was taken,' " the Turks
 " rifled the houses of the Egyptians, as well friends as
 " foes, and suffered nothing to be locked up or kept pri-
 " vate from them: and Selim caused 500 of the chiefest
 " families of the Egyptians to be transported to Constan-
 " tinople, as likewise a great number of the Mamalukes
 " wives and children, besides the sultan's treasure and
 " other vast riches¹⁰." ' And since that time it is impos-
 sible to say what immense treasures have been drained
 ' out of this rich and fertile, but oppressed and wretched
 ' country.' Edward King Esq. in his *Morsels of Cri-*
cism, gives a somewhat different turn to the passage
 under review. ' It seems,' says he, ' not a little remarkable,
 ' that the expression is not *should possess them*, but *should*
have dominion over them, so the Turks have really had
 ' the command of Egypt, and of its treasures and desirable
 ' things, without availing themselves hardly at all of the
 ' benefit of those riches¹¹.'

And the Lybians and Ethiopians shall be at his steps.
 ' And we read in history,' says bishop Newton, ' that after
 ' the conquest of Egypt " the terror of Selim's many vic-
 " tories now spreading wide, the kings of Afric, border-
 " ing upon Cyrenaica, sent their ambassadors with prof-
 " fers to become his tributaries. Other more remote na-

¹⁰ Savage's Abridgment of Knolles and Rycart. p. 246.

¹¹ P. 510.

" tions

"tions also towards Ethiopia were easily induced to join
"in amity with the Turks"¹²." At this present time also
many places in Africa besides Egypt, as Algiers, Tunis,
&c. are under the dominion of the Turks. One thing
more is observable with regard to the fate of Egypt, that
the particular prophecy coincides exactly with the ge-
neral one, as it did before in the instance of Arabia. It
was foretold by Ezekiel, that Egypt should always be a
base kingdom, and subject to *strangers*; and here it is
foretold, that in the latter times it should be made a pro-
vince to the Turks.'

The two next verses, in the opinion of the several commentators whom I have enumerated, remain to be fulfilled.
But tidings out of the East and out of the North shall trouble him; therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. With respect to the *tidings out of the East*, these, says Dr. More, 'may very well contemporize with the sixth vial, which is poured out upon the river Euphrates, whereby its waters are dried up, and a way to the kings of the East prepared'¹³, which shews some great mutation of affairs and jeopardy, that the Turkish empire in those Eastern parts will seem to be in.'

'The Persians,' says bishop Newton, 'are seated to the East of the Othman dominions, and the Russians to the North. Persia hath, indeed, of late years, been miserably torn and distracted by intestine divisions; but when it shall unite again in a settled government under one sovereign, it may become again, as it hath frequently been, a dangerous rival and enemy to the Othman emperor. The power of Russia is growing daily; and the Porte is at all times jealous of the junction of the two

¹² Savage, *ibid*, p. 248.

¹³ That this prophecy of Daniel, and the sixth vial are contemporaneous, is thought probable also by Dr. Priestley. *Institutes of Nat. and Rev. Rel.* vol. II. p. 424.

' powers of Persia and Russia, and exerts all its policy to prevent it.' ' It is,' says Mr. King, an ' astonishing coincidence of circumstances; that as the whole Russian dominions lie North of the Turkish dominions; so the exertions of Russia have been not only in the North; but in a most remarkable manner in the *East*; where vast advantages of commerce, and of extent of dominion, have been obtained by the Russians towards China¹⁴.'

And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come¹⁴ to his end, and none shall help him. The glorious holy mountain between the Seas, in the opinion of bp. Newton, must signify ' some mountain in the Holy Land, which lieth between the seas, the Dead Sea on the East and the Mediterranean on the West.—There the Turk shall incamp with all his power, yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him, shall help him effectually, or deliver him.'

As there has been incidental mention in the present chapter of two ancient predictions, the one relating to the Arabs, and the other to Egypt; and as both of them are remarkable, and they are both at this time fulfilling, I shall transcribe them, and endeavour to elucidate their completion by a mixture of remarks and quotations. The remarks necessary to explain them, from the nature of the subjects, and the situation of the countries, perfectly accord with, and may naturally accompany, the observations which have occupied the preceding part of the chapter. Both these prophecies have been commented upon at considerable length by bp. Newton¹⁵ and Dr. Worthington¹⁶; but they certainly have not precluded all additional remark.

¹⁴ Morsels of Criticism, p. 511.

¹⁵ In his 11th and 11th Dissertations, p. 37—63; p. 378—398.

¹⁶ In the ixth, xith, and xiith of his Discourses, p. 346—375; 419—494.

It is in the xvith ch. of Genesis, that a prophetic delineation of the character of Ishmael and his posterity occurs. Now Ishmael settled in Arabia¹⁷; and his posterity have never been dispossessed of that country; and it may be observed, that there is scarcely a country in the world, where so small a portion of foreign blood has been mixed with that of the natives. *And the angel of the Lord said unto Hagar, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction¹⁸.* And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren¹⁹. And in the following chapter it is said, *I will make him a great nation*; a declaration, which was communicated by the most High to Abraham,

¹⁷ See Genesis, ch. xxi. 21, and xxv. 13—18, with the geographical observations of the commentators; and Josephus (Antiq. l. i. c. 13). That the posterity of Ishmael lived in Arabia, is observed by all the Oriental writers, according to bishop Patrick (on Gen. xxi. 21). In the xxvth ch. of Genesis, where the twelve sons of Ishmael are enumerated, it is observed, that Nebaioth was the eldest. ‘As,’ saith bp. Patrick (in loc.), ‘he was the first-born of Ishmael, so his posterity gave the denomination to the whole country of Arabia Petræa, which Pliny, Strabo, and Ptolemy call Nabatæa; and sometimes other authors call Nabathis: as the inhabitants were called Nabatæi, who are mentioned also by Dionysius Periegetes, in his Description of the world, and by Plutarch in the life of Demetrius.’

¹⁸ Dr. Geddes translates, *whose name thou shalt call Ishmael [God attendeth], because the Lord hath attended to thy affliction.*

¹⁹ V. 10, 11, 12. Dr. Geddes translates, *and in the face of all his brethren he will pitch his tents.* That is, says this learned writer, he will bid them ‘all defiance, conformably to what is said of him before.’ My next quotation is from Calvin (in loc.), ‘It is in the first place to be desired that we should have peace with all men. Because this is denied to Ishmael, what is next in order is given to him, that he should not yield to his enemies, but should be brave, and powerful in repelling their attacks. But he does not speak of the person of the man, but of his whole progeny.’

the founder of those two celebrated nations, the Arabs and the Jews²⁰.

Ishmael was to be the parent of a great nation; and accordingly, though it is admitted, that he was not the sole founder of all the Arabian tribes, there is reason to believe, that the families of his twelve sons, penetrating a country which was before unoccupied, and gaining their subsistence by hunting, were widely scattered, and that his descendants rapidly multiplied and soon constituted a numerous people. ‘The descendants of Ishmael were,’ says Dr. Priestley, ‘a considerable nation in very early times.’ At present, ‘all the Northern coasts of Africa abound with Arabs; Palestine is now almost entirely occupied by them; they also still retain their ancient seats, and are as numerous there as ever²¹.’

Ishmael, it is predicted, *will be a wild man*. The Hebrew word ‘here joined with *man* signifies,’ says bp. Patrick, ‘*a wild ass*: and so is well translated by Bochart, *tam ferus quam onager*.’ ‘But what,’ asks bp. Newton, ‘is the nature of the creature, to which Ishmael is so particularly compared? It cannot’, says the prelate, ‘be described better than it is in the—book of Job (xxxix. 5, &c.), who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass. Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing. Ishmael therefore and his posterity were to be wild, fierce, savage, ranging in the deserts, and not easily softened and tamed to society: and who-

²⁰ It is observable, that the language of the Arabs ‘is derived from the same original stock with the Hebrew, Syriac, and the Chaldean tongues.’ Gibbon’s Decl. and Fall of the Rom. Emp. vol. IX. p. 239.

²¹ Institutes of Nat. and Rev. Rel. vol. I. p. 405.

‘ever

' ever hath read or known any thing of this people know-
 ' eth this to be their true and genuine character.' Like
 the wild ass they were also to be perfectly free, impatient
 of controul, and the sole directors of their own move-
 ments. ' The slaves of domestic tyranny,' says Mr.
 Gibbon, ' may vainly exult in their *national* indepen-
 ' dence; but the Arab is *personally* free²².'

Of Ishmael it is said, that *he dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer*²³; ' and the same,' says bp. New-
 ton, ' is no less true of his descendants than of himself;
 ' *He dwelt in the wilderness*; and his sons still inhabit the
 ' same wilderness, and many of them neither sow nor
 ' plant according to the best accounts ancient and mo-
 ' dern.' ' There is no such name,' says Dr. Shaw, as
 that of *wild Arabs*, ' peculiar to any one particular clan
 ' or body of them, they being *all the same, with the like
 ' inclinations*, when a proper opportunity or temptation
 ' offers itself²⁴.'

The *hand* of the Ishmaelite, it is predicted, *will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.*
 ' And it is well known,' says Dr. Priestley, ' that the
 ' Arabs, and, probably, *the Arabs only*, of all the nations
 ' of the world, have constantly lived in a state of hostility
 ' with all mankind²⁵.' ' David,' says Dr. Worthington,
 ' bemoans the hardship of his case, that he was constrain-

²² Vol. IX. p. 233. ' If,' says Gibbon, ' the Arabian princes abuse
 ' their power, they are quickly punished by the desertion of their subjects,
 ' who had been accustomed to a mild and parental jurisdiction. Their spi-
 ' rit is free, their steps are unconfined, the desert is open, and the tribes
 ' and families are held together by a mutual and voluntary compact.' In
 a tribe of Arabs, says Volney, ' nothing can be transacted without the
 ' consent of a majority; and if a chief were to kill an Arab, it would
 ' be almost impossible for him to escape punishment; the resentment of the
 ' offended party would pay no respect to his dignity.' Travels, vol. I.
 p. 402.

²³ Gen. xxi. 20.

²⁵ Ut supra, p. 406.

²⁴ Shaw's Travels, pref. p. 10.

‘ ed to dwell in the tents of Kedar, a tribe of the Arabs ;
 ‘ whether he was forced to flee for refuge from his ene-
 ‘ mies ; which was but exchanging one enemy for ano-
 ‘ ther, as he himself complains. *My soul hath long dwelt*
 ‘ *among them that are enemies to peace. I labour for*
 ‘ *peace : but when I speak unto them thereof, they make*
 ‘ *them ready for battle²⁶.*’ In speaking of the Arabian
 tribes, Mr. Gibbon says, ‘ the caravans that traverse the
 desert are ransomed or pillaged ; and their neighbours,
 since the remote times of Job and Sesostris²⁷, have been
 the victims of their rapacious spirit. If a Bedoween dis-
 covers from afar a solitary traveller, he rides furiously
 against him, crying, with a loud voice, “ Undress thy-
 self, thy aunt (*my wife*) is without a garment.” A ready
 submission entitles him to mercy ; resistance will pro-
 voke the aggressor, and his own blood must expiate the
 blood, which he presumes to shed in legitimate de-
 fence²⁸.’

The year 1757 afforded a remarkable instance of the plundering spirit of the wanderers of Arabia²⁹. Assembled in immense numbers, and irritated on account of not having received a tribute they had claimed of the Turks, they attacked and pillaged the caravan of Mecca, conducted by the Pacha of Damascus; and of the 60,000 pilgrims and travellers of which it was composed, 20,000

²⁶ Pl. cxx. 5, 6, 7.

²⁷ ‘ Observe the first chapter of Job, and the long wall of 1500 stadia,
 ‘ which Sesostris built from Pelusium to Heliopolis (Diodor. Sicul. tom. I.
 ‘ l. i. p. 67).’ Gibbon.

²⁸ Gibbon, vol. IX. p. 236.

²⁹ ‘ It is a singular proof of the predatory spirit of the Arabs, that al-
 ‘ though all their independent tribes are zealous Mahomedans, yet they
 ‘ make no scruple of plundering the caravans of pilgrims, while engaged
 ‘ in performing one of the most indispensable duties of their religion.’
 Dr. Robertson’s Hist. Disq. on India, 8vo, p. 401.

are said to have been destroyed by hunger, by thirst, and by the sword of the Arabs³⁰.

As the hand of the Arab was to be raised up against every man, so every man's hand was to be lifted up against him. Accordingly the most powerful neighbours of the Arabs, the Persians and the Turks, are, at this very time, accustomed to carry on frequent hostilities against them. When the Arabs, says Mr. Hanway, 'plunder caravans travelling through their territories, they consider it as reprisals on the Turks and Persians, who often make incursions into their country, and carry away their corn and their flocks³¹.' The Turks, says Volney, 'never cease to wage secret or open war against them. The Pachas study every occasion to harass them. Sometimes they contest with them a territory which they had let to them, and at others demand a tribute which they never agreed to pay³²'.

Nor do the natives of Arabia carry on only foreign hostilities. Perpetually is the hand of Arab lifted up against Arab. 'The temper of a people, thus armed against mankind, was,' says Mr. Gibbon, 'doubly inflamed by the *domestic* licence of rapine, murder, and revenge. In the constitution of Europe, the right of peace and war is now confined to a small, and the ac-

³⁰ See Volney's Travels, vol. II. p. 103, 257, 273, 341; Gibbon's Decl. and Fall of the Roman Emp. vol. IX. p. 231; bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. II. p. 176; and Travels through Cyprus, Syria, &c. by the Abbé Mariti, vol. II. p. 117.

³¹ Hanway's Travels, 1753, 4to, vol. IV. p. 221.

³² Travels through Syria and Egypt, in the years 1783, 1784, and 1785, by M. C. F. Volney, translated from the French, 1787. Vol. I. p. 399. The 'accuracy' of Volney, says Dr. Robertson, 'is well known' (Hist. Disq. on India, 8vo, p. 402). Volney, says Mr. Gibbon, is 'the last and most judicious of our Syrian travellers;' and, speaking of Egypt, he says, 'we are amused by Savary, and instructed by Volney. I wish the latter could travel over the globe.' Vol. IX. p. 224, 448.

tual exercise to a much smaller, list of respectable potentates; but each Arab, with impunity and renown, might point his javelin against the life of his countryman.—Of the time of ignorance which preceded Mahomet, 1700 battles are recorded by tradition: hostility was embittered by the rancour of civil faction; and the recital, in prose or verse, of an obsolete feud was sufficient to rekindle the same passions among the descendants of the hostile tribes. In private life, every man, at least every family, was the judge and avenger of his own cause. The nice sensibility of honour, which weighs the insult rather than the injury, sheds its deadly venom on the quarrels of the Arabs: the honour of their women, and of their beards, is most easily wounded; an indecent action, a contemptuous word, can be expiated only by the blood of the offender; and such is their patient inveteracy, that they expect whole months and years the opportunity of revenge.—The refined malice of the Arabs refuses even the head of the murderer, substitutes an innocent to the guilty person, and transfers the penalty to the best and most considerable of the race by whom they have been injured. If he falls by their hands, they are exposed in their turn to the danger of reprisals, the interest and principal of the bloody debt are accumulated; the individuals of either family lead a life of malice and suspicion, and fifty years may sometimes elapse before the account of revenge be finally settled³³.

³³ Vol. IX. p. 237—239. To the statement of Mr. Gibbon it will be sufficient to add two short passages from two modern travellers. ‘The different tribes,’ says Mr. Hanway, ‘are often at war with each other.’ Ut supra, vol. IV. p. 222. They are not, says Dr. Shaw, ‘to be accused for plundering strangers only, or whomsoever they may find unarmed or defenceless; but for those many implacable and hereditary animosities, which continually subsist among themselves.’ Shaw’s Travels, 1757, 410, p. 238.

' That his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and yet that he should be able to dwell in the presence of all his brethren,' is, says bp. Newton, extraordinary. ' But extraordinary as it was, this also hath been fulfilled.' Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Persia are the countries that touch, and may be said to surround, Arabia; those countries have OFTEN been conquered; but the land inhabited by the descendants of Ishmael has NEVER been subdued³⁴.

' It cannot,' says bp. Newton, ' be pretended, that no probable attempts were ever made to conquer them; for the greatest conquerors in the world have almost all in their turns attempted it, and some of them have been very near effecting it. It cannot be pretended, that the dryness or inaccessibleness of their country hath been

³⁴ Arabia, or some particular districts of it, was attacked by the following generals and nations: by Sesostris, or Sescac, king of Egypt, according to Sir I. Newton in the year 1010, B. C.; in the sixth century before the Christian era by Cyrus, the founder of the Persian monarchy, and by his son Cambyses; in the year 311 by Athenaeus, the general of Antigonus, and by his son Demetrius; in the year 216 by Antiochus the great; about the year 187 by Hyrcanus; in the year 63 by the Romans under the command of Pompey; in the year 55 by the Roman general, Gabinius; in the year 32 by Herod, king of Judea and the ally of Marc Anthony; in the year 22 by Aelius Gallus, one of the generals of Augustus; about the year 106 A. C. by the emperor Trajan; about the year 193 by the emperor Severus; in the year 523 by Caled, king of Abyssinia; in the year 570 by Chosroes, or Nurshirvan, the sovereign of Persia and India; in the year 1173 by an army of Curds or Carduchians, under the orders of the great Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, and commanded by the brother of the Sultan; in the year 1538 by the lieutenant of Soliman the 1st, emperor of the Turks; and in 1568 by Selim the 11d. From the year 570 to 1173 a wide interval elapsed. The length of the period ought not, however, to surprize the reader, for long after the conquests of Mahomet and the Arabian caliphs, the power or the fame of Arabia was sufficient to guard that country from invasion. To have given particular authorities for all these facts and dates would have occupied too large a space. The greater part of them are stated, and supported by authorities, in the XXth vol. of the Ancient Universal History, where a Dissertation occurs on the Independency of the Arabs (p. 196—250).

'their preservation; for their country hath been often penetrated, though never entirely subdued.' 'I believe,' says Dr. Delany, 'it will be allowed, that an army, well provided, may very well be supposed capable of doing, what caravans are now known to do every day³⁵.'

By him who contemplates the map of Arabia, it will perhaps be urged, that notwithstanding the most powerful princes and the best disciplined armies have often spread their conquests to its frontiers; yet its having successfully resisted every attack is to be accounted for by the immense number of inhabitants, which a country so extensive must doubtless contain. But this is a statement which an enquiry into facts will completely invalidate. The inhabitants of Arabia, says Mr. Gibbon, 'might be out-numbered by the subjects of a fertile and industrious province³⁶.' But if the *populousness* of Arabia has not prevented its conquest, its *extent*, it may perhaps be urged, may have preserved its independence. Every one, however, who is moderately acquainted with the history of the revolutions of Asia, knows, that the size of Arabia is very inconsiderable, when it is compared with the extent of the regions which the conquerors of the East have been accustomed to subdue or to over-run³⁷.

In

³⁵ *Revelation examined with Candor*, 1732, vol. II. p. 130.

³⁶ Vol. IX. p. 223.

³⁷ In order to illustrate the assertion of the text, I shall introduce a concise narrative of the conquests of Attila, Zingis, and Tamerlane. Attila was king of the Huns in the 5th century. He united, says Mr. Gibbon, 'the two mighty kingdoms of Germany and Scythia; and those vague appellations, when they are applied to his reign, may be understood with an ample latitude.' Now 'from the mouth of the Danube to the sea of Japan the whole *longitude* of Scythia is about 110 degrees, which, in that parallel, are equal to more than 5000 miles.' With respect to the *latitude* of Scythia or Tartary, it reaches from the 40th degree, which touches the wall of China, above

In the nature of their country there are, it may be added, two circumstances, unfavourable to the independence of

above a thousand miles to the northward, to the frozen regions of Siberia. The kingdoms of Scandinavia, it may be added, were in the number of the provinces of Attila; his troops penetrated into the interior of Persia; he invaded, and for some time occupied, the East of Europe, for the space of 500 miles, from the Hadriatic to the Euxine, and from the Hellespont to the suburbs of Constantinople; the Burgundians of the Rhine were almost exterminated by one of his lieutenants; from the Rhine and the Moselle he advanced into the heart of Gaul as far as Orleans; and, on another occasion, he passed the Alps, and ravaged a considerable part of Italy. ‘When Attila collected his military force, he was able to bring into the field an army of five, or, according to another account, of seven hundred thousand Barbarians.’

Early in the 13th century, Zingis was khan of the Moguls. Although he originally ruled over only thirty or forty thousand families, he successively subdued the Tartar hordes, ‘who pitched their tents between the wall of China and the Volga; and the Mogul emperor became the monarch of the pastoral world.’ His troops accomplished the circuit of the Caspian sea, he reduced the countries which lie between that sea and the Indus, and the five northern provinces of China were added to his empire. When he invaded the Southern Asia, ‘seven hundred thousand Moguls and Tartars are said to have marched’ under his standard and that of his four sons. In a subsequent part of the 13th century, and in the reigns of his successors, the Moguls penetrated into Syria, carried their arms into Bulgaria and Thrace, overflowed with resistless violence the kingdoms of Armenia and Anatolia, and conquered the populous empires of Persia and China.

Of the celerity of their motions, and the extent of their conquests, some idea may be formed from Mr. Gibbon’s account of the victorious march of the troops of Batou. No sooner had Octai, the son and successor of Zingis, ‘subverted the northern empire of China, than he resolved to visit with his arms the most remote countries of the West. Fifteen hundred thousand Moguls and Tartars were inscribed on the military roll; of these the great khan selected a third, which he entrusted to the command of his nephew Batou.—After a festival of forty days,

‘Batou

of the Arabs : the heat of the climate, and the general character of Arabia, which abounds with vast plains. It is

' Batou set forwards on this great expedition ; and such was
 ' the speed and ardour of his innumerable squadrons, that in less
 ' than six years they had measured a line of ninety degrees of
 ' longitude, a fourth part of the circumference of the globe.
 ' The great rivers of Asia and Europe, the Volga and Kama,
 ' the Don and Borysthenes, the Vistula and Danube, they
 ' either swam with their horses, or passed on the ice, or traversed
 ' in leathern boats.—By the first victories of Batou, the remains
 ' of national freedom were eradicated in the immense plains of
 ' Turkestan and Kipzak. In his rapid progress, he over-ran the
 ' kingdoms, as they are now styled, of Astracan and Cazan ; and
 ' the troops, which he detached towards mount Caucasus, ex-
 ' plored the most secret recesses of Georgia and Circassia. The
 ' civil discord of the great dukes, or princes, of Russia, betrayed
 ' their country to the Tartars. They spread from Livonia to the
 ' Black Sea, and both Moscow and Kiow, the modern and the
 ' ancient capitals, were reduced to ashes.—From the permanent
 ' conquest of Russia, they made a deadly, though transient, inroad
 ' into the heart of Poland, and as far as the borders of Germany.
 ' The cities of Lublin and Cracow were obliterated : they ap-
 ' proached the shores of the Baltic ; and in the battle of Lignitz,
 ' they defeated the dukes of Silesia, the Polish palatines, and the
 ' great master of the Teutonic order.' They then ' turned aside
 ' to the invasion of Hungary ;—the whole country north of the
 ' Danube was lost in a day, and depopulated in a summer ;—
 ' and of all the cities and fortresses of Hungary, three alone sur-
 ' vived the Tartar invasion.—After wasting the adjacent king-
 ' doms of Servia, Bosnia, and Bulgaria, Batou slowly retreated
 ' from the Danube to the Volga to enjoy the rewards of victory
 ' in the city and palace of Serai.'

' Even the poor and frozen regions of the North attracted the
 ' arms of the Moguls,' and a detachment of them settled in the
 ' wilds of Siberia. ' In this shipwreck of nations, some surprise
 ' may be excited by the escape of the Roman empire, whose re-
 ' ligies, at the time of the Mogul invasion, were dismembered by
 ' the Greeks and Latins.' Indeed 'had the Tartars undertaken the
 ' siege, Constantinople must have yielded to the fate of Pekin,
 ' Samarcand, and Bagdad.'

is in the cold or temperate regions of the North, that the flame of personal liberty is accustomed to burn with the brightest

The conquests of Timour or Tamerlane were achieved towards the conclusion of the 14th, and at the beginning of the 15th, century. To describe ‘the lines of march, which he repeatedly traced over the continent of Asia,’ would be a task of extreme difficulty. His principal conquests it will be sufficient briefly to state. After having for some months led the life of a vagrant and an outlaw, he at length, at the age of 34, made himself master of his native country of Transoxiana, a fertile kingdom, 500 miles in length and breadth. But this satisfied not his ambition. ‘Timour aspired to the dominion of the world.’ The Mogul prince invaded and conquered Persia; and ‘the whole course of the Tigris and Euphrates, from the mouth to the sources of those rivers, was reduced to his obedience.’ Turkestan, or the eastern Tartary, was entered and subdued by him; and ‘his most distant camp was two months journey, or 480 leagues to the north-east of Samarcand, and his emirs, who traversed the rivers Irtish, engraved in the forests of Siberia a rude memorial of their exploits.’ Kipzak, or the western Tartary, he also invaded ‘with such mighty powers, that 13 miles were measured from his right to his left wing.’ After a march of five months in which ‘they rarely beheld the footsteps of man, and their daily subsistence was often trusted to the fortune of the chace,’ his forces encountered and defeated those of the powerful Khan, who ruled over the Mogul empire of the North, and who had recently entered the dominions of Timour at the head of 90,000 horse. ‘The pursuit of a flying enemy carried Timour into the tributary provinces of Russia,’ and ‘Moscow trembled at the approach of the Tartar.’ But ‘ambition and prudence recalled him to the south.’ After crossing the Indus and the Ganges, and fighting several battles with the princes of Hindostan, he made himself master of that rich and extensive country. Syria and Armenia were afterwards ravaged by him, and Anatolia and Georgia were subjugated by the arms of the Mogul. In the memorable battle of Angora he defeated an army of 400,000 horse and foot, commanded by the Turkish emperor, Bajazet. ‘Astracan, Carisine, Delhi, Ispahan, Bagdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Boursa, Smyrna, and a thousand others, were sacked,

brightest lustre. The heat of a southern sun is unfriendly to exertion, and has ever been found to facilitate the establishment of despotism³⁸. And it is observed by Volney, that ‘mountainous countries, alone, afford to liberty its great resources. It is there,’ says this judicious Frenchman, ‘that skill and address, favoured by situation, supply the deficiency of numbers.—In flat countries, on the contrary, the first tumult is suppressed, and the ignorant peasant, who does not even know how to throw up an entrenchment, has no other resource but in the clemency of his master, and a quiet submission to slavery. We shall therefore find that no general principle can be advanced more true than the following: *That plains are the habitation of indolence and of slavery, and mountains the country of energy and freedom*³⁹.’

‘Asia,’ says Colonel Dow, ‘the seat of the greatest empires, has been always the nurse of the most abject slaves. The mountains of Persia have not been able to stop the progress of the tide of despotism, neither has it

‘sacked, or burnt, or utterly destroyed, in his presence, and by his troops.—From the Irtish and Volga to the Persian gulf, and from the Ganges to Damascus and the Archipelago, Asia was in the hand of Timour; his armies were invincible, his ambition was boundless;’ and it was on his march towards China, at the head of 200,000 of his select and veteran troops, that the Mogul emperor expired, after having skilfully planned the invasion and conquest of that great empire. Gibbon, vol. IV. p. 358; VI. p. 4—53, 108, 122; XI. p. 408—429; XII. p. 4—45.

³⁸ ‘The cities of Mecca and Medina,’ says Mr. Gibbon, ‘present, in the heart of Asia, the form, or rather the substance, of a commonwealth.’ Vol. IX. p. 234. That the historian regarded this fact as an unusual phenomenon in the political world, the manner in which he notices it unequivocally shews.

³⁹ Travels, vol. I. p. 200. The Arabs are specified by Volney as an exception to this general principle.

been

' been frozen in its course through the plains of the Northern Tartary by the chill air of the North.' But the Arabs of the desert, he observes, ' remain unconquered by arms, by luxury, by corruption; they alter not their language, they adhere to their customs and manners, they retain their dress⁴⁰.'

There are trees, which, being unassisted by cultivation and the labours of man, retain, even after the lapse of many ages, their primeval shape and wildness, and strongly resemble those which first shed their blossoms on the virgin-soil. Thus although Ishmael and his sons, by whom a principal part of the land of Arabia was planted, lived in a period of the most remote antiquity, and in the very infancy of society; yet his modern descendants, inhabiting a country, that has never been subdued; or completely explored by the most intrepid conqueror, vary as little from their primitive manners, as the trees of an immense forest, which has never been cleared by rustic industry, and the recesses of which have never been penetrated by the most adventurous traveller, differ from those parent-trees, which first occupied the wilderness's wide expanse.

On the characteristic resemblance of the Arabs in general to their earliest ancestors, I might refer the reader to a crowd of ancient writers and of modern travellers; but it will be sufficient to cite the testimonies of two celebrated infidels, who are competent, and certainly impartial, evidences on a fact of this nature. ' The same life,' says Mr. Gibbon, ' is uniformly pursued by the roving tribes of the desert, and in the portrait of the modern Bedoweens, we may trace the features of their

⁴⁰ *Diss. on the Origin of Despotism in Hindostan*, p. 2, preface to the 111d vol. of the *History of Hindostan* by Alexander Dow, Esq.

' ancestors ; who, in the age of Moses or Mahomet, dwelt under similar tents, and conducted their horses, and camels, and sheep, to the same springs and the same pastures⁴¹.

' The vast deserts,' says Volney, ' which extend from the confines of Persia to Morocco,' are inhabited by the Bedowees. ' Though divided into independent communities, or tribes, not unfrequently hostile to each other, they may still be considered as forming one nation.' The resemblance of their language is a manifest token of this relationship. The only difference that exists between them is, that the African tribes are of a less ancient origin, being posterior to the conquest of these countries by the Califs, or successors of Mahomet ; while the tribes of the desert of Arabia, properly so called, have descended by an uninterrupted succession from the remotest ages ; and it is of these I mean more especially to treat.—To these the orientals are accustomed to appropriate the name of Arabs, as being the most ancient and the purest race. The term *Bedaoui* is added as a synonymous expression, signifying, as I have observed, inhabitant of the Desert ; and this term has the greater propriety, as the word *Arab*, in the ancient language of these countries, signifies a solitude or desert.' The Arabs of the desert, ' we may assert, have, in every respect, retained their primitive independence and simplicity. Every thing that ancient history has related of their customs, manners, language, and even their prejudices, is almost minutely true of them to this day ; and if we consider, besides, that this unity of character, preserved through such a number of ages, still subsists, even in the most distant situations, that is, that the tribes most remote from each other

⁴¹ Vol. IX. p. 224.

' preserve

‘ preserve an exact resemblance, it must be allowed, that
‘ the circumstances, which accompany so peculiar a
‘ moral state, are a subject of most curious enquiry⁴².’

Of the descendants of the Bedowees, who inhabit Egypt, some, says Volney, ‘ dispersed in families, inhabit the rocks, caverns, ruins, and sequestered places where there is water; others, united in tribes, encamp under low and smoky tents, and pass their lives in perpetual journeyings, sometimes in the desert, sometimes on the banks of the river; having no other attachment to the soil than what arises from their own safety, or the subsistence of their flocks. There are tribes of them, who arrive every year after the inundation, from the heart of Africa, to profit by the fertility of the country, and who in the spring retire into the depths of the desert; others are stationary in Egypt, where they farm lands, which they sow, and annually change. All of them observe among themselves stated limits, which they never pass, on pain of war. They all lead nearly the same kind of life, and have the same manners and customs. Ignorant and poor, the Bedowees preserve an original character distinct from surrounding nations. Pacific in their camp, they are every where else in an habitual state of war. The husbandmen, whom they pillage, hate them; the travellers, whom they despoil, speak ill of them; and the Turks, who dread them, endeavour to divide and corrupt them. It is calculated, that the different tribes of them in Egypt might form a body of 30,000 horsemen; but these are so dispersed and disunited, that they are only considered as robbers and vagabonds⁴³.’

The

⁴² Vol. I. p. 379, 380.

⁴³ Vol. I. p. 76. The following fact I borrow from another celebrated French infidel. The province of Anossi, in the island of Madagascar, is divided into a considerable number of governments, and these governments are all subject to the descendants of Arabs. ‘ These petty sovereigns

The striking resemblance of the Arabs to their remote progenitors has a strong claim to attention, as well because it is a fact unusual in the nations of the world, as on account of some peculiar circumstances, which have occurred in the history of this singular people. It cannot be said of the inhabitants of Arabia, that they have had scarcely any intercourse with mankind. It cannot be said, that they have discovered themselves to be destitute of genius and incapable of improvement; or, that they have had no opportunity of introducing into their country a new system of arts, of manners, and of opinion. It has been far otherwise. The Arabs or Saracens have been distinguished for their attainments in literature and their exploits in war. Animated by courage and by enthusiasm, they carried their victorious arms into most of the civilized nations of the world, and erected one of the most powerful empires, which the world has ever seen. Yet, says Mr. Gibbon, ‘the liberty of the Saracens survived their conquests. The first caliphs indulged the bold and familiar language of their subjects: they ascended the pulpit to persuade and edify the congregation: nor was it before the seat of empire was removed to the Tigris, that the Abbassides adopted the proud and pompous ceremonial of the Persian and Byzantine courts⁴⁴.’

The same determined enemy of prophecy and of Christianity, after alluding to the prediction which I have endeavoured to illustrate, and observing that *some parts* of Arabia have been subdued, a fact which needs not and ought not to be disputed, admits that ‘these exceptions are temporary or local.’ ‘The body of the nation,’ he acknowledges, ‘has escaped the yoke of the most power-

⁴⁴ ‘are continually at war with each other, but never fail to unite against the other princes of Madagascar.’ The Abbe Raynal’s Hist. of the Settlements in the East and West Indies, vol. II. p. 11.

‘ ful monarchies: the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never atchieve the conquest of Arabia; the present sovereign of the Turks may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people, whom it is dangerous to provoke, and *fruitless to attack*⁴⁵.’

That Arabia, a country, as Mr. Gibbon observes, ‘encompassed by the most civilized nations of the ancient world⁴⁶,’ should never have adopted foreign manners, nor have been subdued by a foreign power, as the prophecy leads us to expect, is surely an extraordinary fact; and which no human foresight could predict. But although we should not be authorized in denying, that any natural causes exist, which have operated in a manner highly favourable to the independence of the Arabs; it may at the same time be remarked, that if the Deity fore-saw, that their independence would upon the whole promote those schemes of benevolence, and those measures of government, which are best suited to this lower world, and this state of imperfection and discipline, and if he thought fit to predict that independence; it is by no means unreasonable to suppose, that, in order to prevent the subjugation of Arabia, he would, were the intervention necessary, arrest the arm of conquest, and baffle the best concerted schemes of policy.

The prediction relative to the Arabs, recorded in Genesis, plainly intimates the preservation of national independence. The prophecy on the fate of the neighbouring country of Egypt, which I am next to illustrate, announces a very different event. *Egypt*, says Ezekiel in ch. xxix⁴⁷, shall be a base kingdom. *It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any*

⁴⁵ Gibbon, vol. IX. p. 230.

⁴⁶ Vol. IX. p. 239.

⁴⁷ V. 14, 15.

more above the nations : for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations. And again in the following chapter, I will sell the land into the hands of the wicked : and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers ; — and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt⁴⁸. The language of the prediction is not dark and doubtful, but peremptory and explicit. To history, therefore, and not to verbal criticism, it is necessary to recur for its illustration.

This remarkable prophecy, according to Prideaux, was pronounced by Ezekiel in the year 587 B. C⁴⁹. It was in a great degree fulfilled in the year 571, when Egypt, at that time torn by intestine division and civil war, was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon ; and it approached still nearer to its complete accomplishment in the year 525, when the Egyptians were subdued by the arms of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus. But there is reason to think, that it was not intended to receive its perfect completion antecedently to the year 350⁵⁰, when Egypt was completely reduced by Ochus into a province of the Persian empire.

From this year to the present time, 2144 years have elapsed ; and certainly it is not a little extraordinary, that, notwithstanding the great length of this period, and the numerous revolutions which in the course of it have been accomplished in Egypt; not a single prince of Egyptian origin has ever been raised, even for a short interval, to

⁴⁸ V. 12, 13.

⁴⁹ Connell. of the Old and New Test. vol. I. fol. p. 67. According to the chronology of Blair, Ezekiel commenced his prophetic office in the year 593, B. C : according to Prideaux in the year 594.

⁵⁰ These three dates are taken from the chronological tables of Blair and archbishop Usher, who are in agreement with Prideaux, excepting that he places the invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar two years earlier.

the throne of the country. It surely was not to have been expected, that, amidst a crowd of political changes, and the greatest reverses of fortune, the natives of the country should never once have had the good fortune to succeed in establishing even a transient independence. Satisfactorily to account for the existence of this prophecy, and its corresponding fulfilment, on the supposition that it is a sally of enthusiasm, or an invention of imposture, is not a task of very easy accomplishment.

At the promulgation of this prophecy, Egypt had been governed, with little interruption, by its native princes; and the general tenor of the Egyptian annals evinced, that, in point of fertility, populousness, and power⁵¹, it deserved to be ranked among the most favoured as well as independent nations. Nature also had separated it from every other country; and it was by no means peculiarly exposed to insult and attack. On the contrary, its geographical boundaries, no less than its past history, seemed to promise a long continuance of national prosperity. Such was its situation that it was more than usually sheltered from invasion, and seemed naturally designed to constitute a great and independent nation. On no side was Egypt touched by any powerful empire. Being, indeed, surrounded by the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the deserts of Africa⁵², unlike other countries, it had scarcely

⁵¹ ‘As Egypt,’ says Mr. Bryant, ‘was one of the most ancient, so was it one of the most extensive kingdoms, that for many ages subsisted in the world.—Egypt seems to have been respectable from the beginning; and the most early accounts, that we can arrive at, bear witness of its eminence and power.’ And he mentions a number of circumstances, which, he says, ‘must raise in us a high idea of the affluence and power which this knowing people were possessed of.’ *Observations upon the Ancient History of the Egyptians*, 4to, 1767, p. 101.

⁵² ‘That impervious country’ is the expression by which Mr. Gibbon characterizes Egypt (vol. VIII, p. 222); and speaking of the difficulties which

scarcely any reason to guard against the approach of danger, excepting from a single point, namely from the isthmus of Suez, which joins Africa to Asia, and reaches from the Red Sea to the most Eastern mouth of the Nile⁵³. Egypt also, though no where of any great breadth,

was

the forces of the caliph Omar had to surmount in its conquest, he elsewhere says, ‘ the cities of Egypt were many and populous ; their architecture was strong and solid ;’ and the Nile, with its numerous branches, was alone an ‘ insuperable barrier’ (vol. IX. p. 428.).

After writing the observations in the text, I met with the following remarks of Bochart. Egypt was anciently called *the land of Mizraim*; and this word is the dual of *mäṣor*, which signifies *a fortified place*. ‘ Nor,’ says Bochart, ‘ is there any region more secure from its natural situation.’ ‘ From “ the fortified nature of the country it appears,” says Diodorus, “ greatly “ to surpass those tracts of territory which are marked out for sovereignty.”’ And in what follows he proves this by a long induction of particulars. ‘ Namely, on the west, it has an inaccessible desert ; on the south, the cataracts of the Nile and the mountains of Aethiopia ; on the east, also a desert, and the Serbonian bog, and sinking sands ; toward the north, a sea almost destitute of any port : for from Joppa in Phænicia even unto Parætonium in Lybia there is no port excepting Pharos. After Diodorus had stated these circumstances at large, he thus concludes : “ Egypt then is on all sides fenced in by natural fortifications.” Of these things he treats in the first book. And, in the xvth, speaking of Neætanebis, king of Egypt, ‘ at the time the Persians were approaching, he says, “ but he most of all considered in the fortified nature of the country, since Egypt is on all sides difficult of access.”’ Thus also Strabo, in his xvith book. ‘ Even from the beginning Egypt was extremely tranquil, because it had every thing it wanted within itself, and it was difficult of access to foreigners.’ And this he afterwards demonstrates by the same arguments by which Diodorus had proved it.’ *Phaleg*, lib. iv. cap. 24. Both Strabo and Diodorus Siculus had travelled into Egypt. Not very different is the statement of a modern traveller, though comprised in fewer words. ‘ Egypt,’ says Volney, ‘ is protected from a foreign enemy, on the land-side, by her deserts, and on that of the sea, by her dangerous coast.’ *Travels*, vol. II. p. 363.

53) Pelusium, which stood at the entrance into Egypt, and at one extremity of the isthmus of Suez, was situated, says Mr. Bryant, upon the extremity of Arabia ; ‘ from whence extended a vast desert, not fit for the march or encampment of an army,’ but which is destitute of water, and greatly infested by venomous reptiles. Strabo, ‘ mentioning the same part

was notwithstanding a country of very respectable size. Its whole extent ‘ from north to south was,’ says Mr. Bryant, ‘ computed to be about 600 miles⁵⁴.’

Knowledge, it has been observed, is power; and therefore the disciplined armies of civilized and enlightened nations, though comparatively inconsiderable in point of number, have often conquered countries of great extent, when inhabited by a people involved in barbarism. But it can never be urged, that Egypt was likely to be subdued on account of its marked inferiority to other countries in knowledge, or the discoveries of science, in maxims of policy and government, or the practice of the useful arts. Egypt, on the contrary, was greatly celebrated for its wisdom⁵⁵; and there was scarcely any part of it, which

did

* of Arabia from the Nile to the Red Sea, represents it as a sandy waste, ‘ that could scarcely be passed, except upon camels.—This desert, which began at Pelusium and the Nile, reached in the way to Palestine as far as Gaza, which was situated on the edge of it.’ Obs. on the Anc. Hist. of Egypt, p. 76—80.

⁵⁴ Obs. on the Anc. Hist. of Egypt, p. 105.

⁵⁵ The Egyptians, says Mr. Bryant, ‘ were esteemed a very wise and learned people; so that Moses is said to have been learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.’ Acts vii. 22. Obs. on the Anc. Hist. of Egypt, p. 101. ‘ Egypt,’ says Rollin, ‘ was ever considered by all the ancients as the most renowned school for wisdom and politics, and the source from whence most arts and sciences were derived. This kingdom bestowed its noblest labours and finest arts on the improving mankind; and Greece was so sensible of this, that its most illustrious men, as Homer, Pythagoras, Plato, even its great legislators, Lycurgus and Solon, with many more whom it is needless to mention, travelled into Egypt to complete their studies, and draw from that fountain whatever was most rare and valuable in every kind of learning.—The Egyptians were the first people who rightly understood the rules of government. A nation so grave and serious immediately perceived, that the true end of politics is to make life easy, and a people happy. The kingdom was hereditary; but, according to Diodorus, the Egyptian princes conducted themselves in a different manner from what is usually seen in other monarchies, where the prince acknowledges no other rule of his actions, but his arbitrary will and pleasure.

did not bear an unequivocal testimony to the skilful industry of its inhabitants, and which did not contain some work, distinguished by its utility, or the difficulty of its accomplishment.

But though Egypt could not be invaded but with difficulty, and with hazard; it will perhaps be urged, that its climate is unwholesome and extremely enervating; that its natives are naturally pusillanimous⁵⁶ and necessarily effeminate; and therefore that it is little wonderful, that a people of such a character, and such a climate, should have successively fallen a prey to every invader. But ideas of this kind, however prevalent they may have been, have not truth for their foundation.

'sure. But, here, kings were under greater restraint from the laws than their subjects.' They 'freely permitted, not only the quality and proportion of their eatables and liquids to be prescribed them (a thing customary in Egypt, the inhabitants of which were all sober, and whose air inspired frugality), but even that all their hours, and almost every action, should be under the regulation of the laws.—Thirty judges were selected out of the principal cities to form a body or assembly for judging the whole kingdom. The prince, in filling these vacancies, chose such as were most renowned for their honesty; and put at their head him who was most distinguished for his knowledge and love of the laws.— Honourably subsisted by the generosity of the prince, they administered justice gratuitously to the people.' But *'the most excellent circumstance in the laws of the Egyptians was, that every individual, from his fancy, was nurtured in the strictest observance of them.—The virtue in the highest esteem among the Egyptians was gratitude. The glory, which has been given them of being the most grateful of all men, shews, that they were the best formed of any nation for social life.'* *Anc. Hist. vol. I. 12mo. p. 22—27.* This account of Rollin, it must be acknowledged, is too favourably drawn. At the same time it must be admitted, that much which is recorded to their praise is here omitted; and that enough will remain, after a fair subtraction of what is exaggerated, to entitle the Egyptians to be honourably distinguished above almost every other nation of early antiquity. In proof of this, let the whole of the second book of Herodotus be perused.

⁵⁶ That the Egyptians are *'naturally a cowardly people'* is one of the statements of bp. Newton, vol. II. p. 367.

The climate of Egypt is doubtless not without its inconveniences. But it by no means deserves to be called unhealthy. ‘The Egyptians,’ says Herodotus, ‘after the Libyans are the most healthy of all men⁵⁷.’ That ‘Egypt is an earthly paradise,’ is the statement of Thevenot⁵⁸, who visited that country in the year 1657; and another Frenchman, the consul Maillet, who resided 20 years at Cairo, speaks of its climate in the most extravagant terms of commendation. ‘It is of this country, which ‘seems to have been regarded by nature with a favourable ‘eye, that the Gods have made a sort of terrestrial paradise. ‘The air there is more pure and excellent than in any ‘other part of the world. This goodness of the air com-‘municates itself to all things, living or inanimate, which ‘are placed in this fortunate region. As the men com-‘monly enjoy there perfect health, the trees and plants ‘never lose their verdure⁵⁹.’ To the ‘fertility and rich-‘ness of the productions of Egypt must,’ says the Baron de Tott, ‘be added a most salubrious air. We shall be ‘more particularly struck with this advantage, when we ‘consider that Rosetta, Damietta, and Mansoora, which ‘are encompassed with rice-grounds, are much celebra-‘ted for the healthiness of their neighbourhood; and that ‘Egypt is, perhaps, the only country in the world where ‘this kind of culture, which requires stagnant waters, is ‘not unwholesome.—The researches I have carefully ‘made concerning the plague, which I once believed to ‘originate in Egypt, have convinced me, that it would ‘not be so much as known there, were not the seeds of ‘it conveyed thither by the commercial intercourse be-‘tween Constantinople and Alexandria. It is in this

⁵⁷ Lib. ii. cap. 77.

⁵⁸ Livre Second de la Premiere Partie du Voyage de M. de Thevenot au Levant, Paris, 1689. P. 790.

⁵⁹ Description of Egypt, Let. I. p. 14.

‘ last city that it always begins to appear; it but rarely reaches Cairo, though no precaution is taken to prevent it; and when it does, it is presently extirpated by the heats, and prevented from arriving as far as the Saide. It is likewise well known, that the penetrating dews, which fall in Egypt about midsummer, destroy, even in Alexandria, all remains of this distemper⁶⁰.’ Of the general healthiness of the climate Savary also speaks in high terms.

‘ The climate’ of Egypt, says Volney, ‘ is by no means unhealthy. The Mamalukes are a proof of this, who, from wholesome diet, and a proper regimen, enjoy the most robust state of health.—We deceive ourselves when we represent the Egyptians as enervated by heat, or effeminate from debauchery. The inhabitants of the cities, and men of opulence, may indeed be a prey to that effeminacy which is common to them in every climate; but the poor despised peasants, denominated *fellahs*, support astonishing fatigues. I have seen them pass whole days in drawing water from the Nile, exposed naked to a sun which would kill us. Those who are valets to the Mamalukes continually follow their masters. In town, or in the country, and amid all the dangers of war, they accompany them every where, and always on foot; they will run before or after their horses for days together, and when they are fatigued, tie themselves to their tails rather than be left behind. The character of their minds is every way correspondent to the hardness of their bodies. The implacability displayed by these peasants in their hatreds, and their revenges; their obstinacy in the battles which frequently happen between different villages; their sense of honour in suffering the bastinado, without discover-

⁶⁰ Memoirs of the Baron de Tott, part iv. p. 69.

'ing a secret: and even the barbarity with which they
'punish the slightest deviation from chastity in their
'wives and daughters, all prove that their minds, when
'swayed by certain prejudices, are capable of great ener-
'gy, and that that energy only wants a proper direction,
'to become a formidable courage. The cruelties and
'seditions which have sometimes been the consequence of
'their exhausted patience, especially in the province of
'Sharkia, indicate a latent fire, which waits only for pro-
'per agents to put it in motion, and produce great and
'unexpected effects⁶¹.'

Bp. Newton, after giving a concise account of the Egyptian history, says, 'by this deduction it appears,
'that the truth of Ezekiel's prediction is fully attested by
'the whole series of the history of Egypt from that time
'to the present. And who could pretend to say upon
'human conjecture, that so great a kingdom, so rich and
'fertile a country, should ever afterwards become tribu-
'tary and subject to *strangers*? It is now a great deal
'above two thousand years, since this prophecy was first
'delivered; and what likelihood or appearance was there,
'that the Egyptians should for so many ages bow under
'a foreign yoke, and never in all that time be able to
'recover their liberties, and have a prince of their own
'to reign over them? But as is the prophecy, so is the
'event. For not long afterwards Egypt was conquered by
'the Babylonians, and after the Babylonians by the Per-
'sians; and after the Persians it became subject to the
'Macedonians, and after the Macedonians to the Ro-
'mans, and after the Romans to the Saracens, and then
'to the Mamalukes; and it is now a province of the Tur-
'kish empire.'

With respect to the degraded state of Egypt, the

language of an intelligent infidel is perfectly similar. Egypt, says Volney, ‘deprived three-and-twenty centuries ago of her natural proprietors, has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Georgians, and, at length, the race of Tartars, distinguished by the name of Ottoman Turks⁶².’

Ezekiel says of the Egyptians, in the name of the Supreme Being, *I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations*; and accordingly they are extremely diminished in point of number. Herodotus, who travelled into Egypt about a hundred years after the death of Amasis, relates, that, in the reign of that prince, there were 20,000 cities in Egypt⁶³. Though this account is greatly exaggerated, yet it cannot be doubted, that ancient Egypt was extremely populous. When a province of the Roman empire, ‘the inhabitants of Egypt, exclusive of Alexandria, amounted,’ says Mr. Gibbon⁶⁴, ‘to seven millions and a half (Joseph. de Bell. Jud. II. 16.).’ On the present population of Egypt I cite the calculation of Volney. ‘As it is known, that the number of towns and villages does not exceed 2300, and the number of inhabitants in each of them, one with another, including Cairo itself, is not more than a thousand, the total cannot be more than 2,300,000⁶⁵.’

The prophet moreover says, *I will sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste,*

⁶² Vol. I. p. 74.

⁶³ Lib. ii. cap. 177. Perhaps the word πόλεις, which in this passage is generally translated *cities*, had better be rendered *towns*.

⁶⁴ Vol. I. p. 81. Alexandria, according to Diodorus Siculus, contained 300,000 free inhabitants. Lib. xvii. Its slaves, Mr. Hume is inclined to think, might be estimated at an equal number. Ess. on the Popul. of Anc. Nat.

⁶⁵ Travels, vol. I. p. 238.

and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers; and Egypt shall be the basest of the kingdoms. Numerous as are the centuries which have elapsed since the publication of this prophecy, yet to describe the condition of Egypt at this very time, with equal brevity and superior accuracy, would scarcely be possible. Egypt, for centuries, has been governed not only by *strangers*, but by *slaves*; for it is now nearly 550 years since this country, to use an expression of Mr. Gibbon, first groaned under ‘the iron sceptre of the Mamalukes,’ and, during the whole of this period, the Mamalukes have continued to oppress its unfortunate inhabitants.

In order to shew, that Egypt is emphatically *the basest of kingdoms*, and to explain the singular fact of a fine country having so long been subject to the government of *slaves*, it will be necessary to introduce a short account of the Mamalukes. It is taken from Volney. Twelve thousand of them, being young slaves from Circassia and the adjoining parts of Asia, were first introduced by the Sultan of Egypt into that country about the year 1230. Early trained to military exercises, they shortly became a body of the bravest, the most handsome, and at the same time the most mutinous troops of Asia; and in the year 1250, rising in rebellion, they put to death the reigning Sultan, and in his place substituted one of their own chiefs. They continued *sole masters* of the country and government which they had usurped till the year 1517⁶⁶, when the Turkish emperor Selim defeated them, and annexed this new conquest to the Ottoman empire. But although he limited, he did not destroy, the power of

⁶⁶ Of the oppressions and prodigality of the Mamalukes, antecedently to the year 1517, some idea may be formed from some facts related in the Travels of M. Baumgarten, a German nobleman, who visited Egypt in the year 1507. See Churchill's Coll. of Voyages, 1752, vol. I. p. 328—332, 339, 345.

the Mamalukes. From this foreign soldiery the twenty-four governors, or beys, of provinces, were regularly chosen; and ‘to them,’ says Volney, ‘was entrusted ‘the care of restraining the Arabs, superintending the ‘collection of the tributes, and the whole civil government of the country.’ The orders of the Turkish divan, which was established in Egypt, they were, however, implicitly to obey. ‘But, for the last 50 years, ‘the Porte, having relaxed from its vigilance, innovations have taken place: the Mamalukes have increased, ‘become masters of all the riches and strength of the ‘country, and in short, gained such an ascendancy over ‘the Ottomans, that the power of the latter is reduced ‘almost to nothing. On seeing them subsisting in this ‘country for several centuries, we should be led to imagine their race is preserved by the ordinary means; ‘but if their first establishment was a singular event, their ‘continuance is not less extraordinary. During 550 ‘years that there have been Mamalukes in Egypt, not ‘one of them has left subsisting issue; there does not ‘exist one single family of them in the second generation; ‘all their children perish in the first or second descent. ‘Almost the same thing happens to the Turks; and it is ‘observed, that *they* can only secure the continuance of ‘their families, by marrying women who are natives, ‘which the Mamalukes have always disdained⁶⁷. The ‘means, therefore, by which they are perpetuated and ‘multiplied, are the same by which they were first established; that is to say, when they die, they are replaced ‘by slaves brought from their original country. From ‘the time of the Moguls, this commerce has been continued on the confines of the Cuban and the Phasis, in ‘the same manner as it is carried on in Africa, by the wars

⁶⁷ ‘The wives of the Mamalukes’ says Volney, ‘are, like them, slaves brought from Georgia, Mingrelia,’ &c.

‘among

among the numerous tribes, and by the misery of the inhabitants, who sell their own children for a subsistence. The young peasant, sold in Mingrelia or Georgia, no sooner arrives in Egypt, than his ideas undergo a total alteration. Though now a slave, he seems destined to become a master, and already assumes the spirit of his future condition.—As in such states money is the only motive, the chief attention of the master is to satisfy the avidity of his servants, in order to secure their attachment. Hence, that prodigality of the Beys, so ruinous to Egypt, which they pillage; that want of subordination in the Mamalukes, so fatal to the chiefs whom they despoil.' And 'no sooner is a slave enfranchised, than he aspires to the principal employments⁶⁸.'

Profligate and unprincipled as were many of the Ptolemaies and the Cæsars, their rule was wise and beneficent in comparison of that of the Mamalukes. *The land of Egypt, and all that is therein, it is foretold, will be made waste by the hand of strangers.* That this prediction is at present fulfilling with the utmost exactness, the following facts, as related by Volney, one of the most recent as well as most judicious travellers into that country, will be sufficient to evince.

The houses, the canals, the ports, and a large part of the cultivated lands, have been suffered to fall into ruin or decay. A few *particulars* will illustrate this assertion. In the neighbourhood of modern Alexandria, 'the earth is covered with the remains of lofty buildings destroyed; whole fronts crumbled down, roofs fallen in, battlements decayed, and the stones corroded and disfigured by saltpetre. The traveller passes over a vast plain surrounded with trenches, pierced with wells, divided by

⁶⁸ Volney, vol. I. p. 101—113, 181. See also Gibbon, vol. XI. p. 164.

' walls in ruins, covered over with ancient columns and
 ' modern tombs, amid palm-trees and nopal, and where
 ' no living creature is to be met with, but owls, bats,
 ' and jackalls.' The environs of Grand Cairo 'are full
 ' of hills of dust, formed by the rubbish, which is ac-
 ' cumulating every day.' The whole of the desert to
 the south of Rosetta, 'formerly intersected by large ca-
 ' nals, and filled with towns, presents nothing but hillocks
 ' of a yellowish sand, very fine, which the wind heaps up
 ' at the foot of every obstacle, and which frequently
 ' buries the palm-trees.' What is called the New Port at
 Alexandria, 'the only harbour for the Europeans, is
 ' clogged up with sand,' in consequence of which ships
 are frequently lost. ' It will perhaps be asked, in Eu-
 ' rope, why do they not repair the New Port? The an-
 ' swer is, that in Turkey, they destroy every thing and
 ' repair nothing.' The Old Port, into which none but
 the ships of Mahometans are admitted, will be destroyed
 also, 'as the ballast of vessels has been continually thrown
 ' into it for the last two hundred years. The spirit of the
 ' Turkish government is to ruin the labours of past ages,
 ' and destroy the hopes of future times, because the bar-
 ' bary of ignorant despotism never considers to-mor-
 ' row'.

' Every year,' says Savary, 'the limits of cultivated
 ' Egypt are encroached upon, and barren sands accumu-
 ' late from all parts. In 1517, the æra of the Turkish
 ' conquest, lake Mareotis was at no distance from the
 ' walls of Alexandria, and the canal which conveyed the
 ' waters into that city was still navigable. At this day
 ' the lake has disappeared; and the lands it watered, and
 ' which, according to historians, produced abundance of
 ' corn, wine, and various fruits, are changed into deserts,

⁶⁹ Volney, vol. I. p. 5, 7, 31, 234.

where

' where the sorrowful traveller finds neither shrub, nor
' plant, nor verdure. The canal itself, the work of Al-
' exander, necessary even to the subsistence of the inhab-
' itants of the city he built, is nearly choked up. It
' only receives the waters, when the inundation is at its
' highest point, and preserves them but for a short space
' of time.—The Pelusiac branch, which discharged itself
' into the eastern part of the lake of Tanis or Menzale, is
' totally destroyed. With it perished the beautiful pro-
' vince it fertilized'?

But in order to convey a tolerably adequate idea of the complete debasement of Egypt, and the extreme wretchedness of its inhabitants, it will be necessary that some other particulars should be specified. ' The greater part of the lands are,' says Volney, ' in the hands of the Beys, the Mamalukes, and the professors of the law; the number of the other proprietors is extremely small, and their property liable to a thousand impositions. The peasants are hired labourers, to whom no more is left than barely suffices to sustain life. The rice and corn they gather are carried to the table of their masters, and nothing is reserved for them but *dourra* or Indian Millet, of which they make a bread without leaven.' This bread, ' is, with water and raw onions, their only food throughout the year; and they esteem themselves happy, if they can sometimes procure a little honey, cheese, sour milk, and dates.—Their habitations are mud-walled huts, in which they are suffocated with heat and smoke, and frequently attacked by maladies arising from uncleanliness, humidity, and unwholesome food; and, to fill the measure of their wretchedness, to these physical evils are added continual alarms, the dread of the robberies of the Arabs, and the extortions of the Mama-

?^o Savary's Letters on Egypt. vol. II. p. 230.

' lukes, family feuds, and all the anxieties of a perpetual
 ' civil war. This is a just picture of all the villages, and
 ' equally resembles the towns. At Cairo itself, the
 ' stranger, on his arrival, is struck with the universal ap-
 ' pearance of wretchedness and misery. The crowds,
 ' which throng the streets, present to his sight nothing
 ' but hideous rags and disgusting nudities. It is true, he
 ' often meets with horsemen richly clad; but this display
 ' of luxury only renders the contrast of indigence the
 ' more shocking. Every thing he sees or hears reminds
 ' him he is in the country of slavery and tyranny.—There
 ' is no security for life or property. The blood of men is
 ' shed like that of the vilest animals.—The officer of the
 ' night in his rounds, and the officer of the day in his
 ' circuit, judge, condemn, and execute⁷¹ in the twinkling
 ' of an eye, without appeal. Executioners attend them,
 ' and, on the first signal, the head of the unhappy victim
 ' falls into the leatheren bag, in which it is received for
 ' fear of soiling the place.' In the year 1784 Egypt was
 afflicted by famine; and 'the streets and public places
 ' swarmed with meagre and dying skeletons, whose faul-
 ' tering voices implored, in vain, the pity of passengers.—
 ' These wretches expired, leaning against the houses of
 ' the Beys, which they knew were stored with rice and
 ' corn, and, not unfrequently, the Mamalukes, importuned
 ' by their cries, chased them away with blows. Every
 ' disgusting means of appeasing the rage of hunger was
 ' tried, every thing the most filthy devoured; nor, shall
 ' I ever forget, that, when I was returning from Syria to
 ' France, in March 1785, I saw under the walls of an-

⁷¹ Sir Henry Blount, who travelled into Egypt and the Levant in the year 1634 and 1635, observes, that in Egypt executions are more frequent, and attended with more circumstances of barbarity, than in any other part of Turkey. *Earl of Oxford's Coll. of Voyages*, 1745, fol. vol. I. p. 529.
 cient

‘cient Alexandria, two wretches sitting on the dead car-
case of a camel, and disputing its putrid fragments with
the dogs’?²²

Nor are there any circumstances, which promise the degenerate and degraded natives of Egypt, that the yoke which presses so heavily upon them shall be shaken off: from no quarter arises a probability of independence, which might dissipate that thick gloom which at present envelopes all their prospects, which might enlarge the scanty horizon of their hopes, or even shed upon their sorrows a feeble and fluctuating ray of consolation. In Egypt it is not in any particular family, but in a large body of men, that power is hereditary. Accordingly the military tyranny of the Mamalukes does not betray those symptoms of degeneracy and growing feebleness, which the Asiatic governments almost uniformly present. By their valour and personal expertness the Mamalukes are still distinguished. To destroy or to reform them, ‘a general league of the peasantry is,’ says Volney, ‘necessary; and this it is impossible to form. The system of oppression is methodical.—Each province, each district, has its governor, and each village its lieutenant, who watches the motions of the multitude.—This lieutenant transfers a portion of his authority to some individuals of the society he oppresses, and these become his supporters: jealous of each other, they strive who shall best merit his favour, and he employs them alternately to effect their mutual destruction. The same jealousies and inveterate hatreds pervade also and disunite the villages. But even supposing an union which is so difficult to take place, what could a crowd of barefooted and almost naked peasants, with only sticks, or even with muskets, effect against a body of disciplined and well-armed ca-

²² Volney, vol. I. p. 188—194.

valry. I am, above all, led to believe Egypt can never shake off this yoke, when I consider the nature of the country, which is but too advantageous for cavalry. If the best regulated infantry among us dread to encounter the horse in a plain, how formidable must they be to a people, who are wholly ignorant of the very first elements of tactics, and who can never possibly acquire a knowledge, which can only be the result of an experience their situation denies them⁷³.

But let it not be supposed, that I conjecture it to be a part of the plans of infinite wisdom and goodness, that Egypt should for ever remain the theatre of oppression, wretchedness, and guilt. The deductions of reason, and the study of prophecy, lead to a very different conclusion: and the predictions, relative to Egypt and Arabia, the fulfilment of which I have endeavoured to illustrate, ought to be explained in consistency with those other prophecies, which foretell the future improved state of mankind, and they are, I conceive, applicable only to the existing state of the world; and are by no means intended to be fulfilled after the commencement of that happy æra, denominated the millennium.

The following observations constitute a principal part of the conclusion of bp. Newton's dissertation on the prophecies relative to Egypt. After citing an unfavourable character of the Egyptians, he says, 'such men are evidently born not to command, but to serve and obey. They are altogether unworthy of liberty. Slavery is the fittest for them, as they are fittest for slavery.' I confess I admire not the spirit in which these remarks are written. The author of them forgot, that the vices of the Egyptians, which are a solid ground of regret, are the natural growth of the unfavourable situation in which

they are placed. It is against the detested government of their country, the source of all their evils, that he should have directed the plenitude of his indignation. The statement of a modern infidel upon the subject is more rational than that of the Christian prelate. But the sentiments which the bishop of Bristol has here discovered, and those which the genius of genuine Christianity inspires, are, I trust, dictated by a far different spirit. ‘If,’ says Volney, ‘we attentively examine the causes of the debasement of the Egyptians, we shall find, that this people, depressed by cruel circumstances, are more deserving of pity than contempt’⁷⁴.

Upon Egypt, as well as upon other countries, new and brighter scenes will assuredly dawn. The period, it may be expected, will at length arrive, when Egypt shall not only equal, but greatly surpass, the populousness and prosperity of ancient times; and when the descendants of Ishmael shall lay aside the ferocity of their ancient manners, lead a more sedentary and tranquil life, and cultivate the friendship of all the various tribes of mankind, who shall occasionally visit their country from motives of curiosity or commerce.

⁷⁴ Vol. I. p. 196.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HAVING briefly treated on the sixth vial, I now proceed to the seventh, which corresponds to the last period of the seventh trumpet. That the book of revelation comprises many contemporaneous predictions,

none who are conversant in it need to be informed. Such persons, therefore, will not be surprised, that an event of such magnitude; or, I should rather say, a series of events of such importance, as the fall of all antichristian dominion in Europe, should be pointed out in more than one place and in a different manner. In the representation of the last of the vials, St. John has interwoven the loftiest figures of prophetic diction; and, as the sublime is often destined to become obscure, in any degree to penetrate their latent meaning would be scarcely possible, did we not receive important aid from parallel passages. It is partly on this account, that the consideration of the seventh vial has been deferred to the present chapter.

It is in the conclusion of ch. xvi. immediately after the account of the defeat of the royal confederates at Armageddon¹, that the account of this vial occurs. *And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple, saying, it is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*

The seventh vial, says bp. Newton, will ‘ complete

¹ ‘Upon this great and last effort of the antichristian powers,’ says Mr. Lowman, ‘the seventh vial is poured out, ‘full of the wrath of God.’

‘the ruin of the kingdom of the beast².’ It points out, says Mr. Pyle, the total destruction of the antichristian empire. That the weight of it is to fall ‘on all the antichristian powers,’ is the observation of Mr. Lowman; and that ‘the seventh vial contains in it the last ruin of the beast and his party,’ is the declaration of Dr. Cresfener³. Since this, then, is the undoubted effect of the seventh vial, and it is elsewhere plainly foretold, that the suppression of all the antichristian monarchies is introductory to the millennial period; it seems probable, that the expression *it is done*, signifies, that, with respect to these monarchies, and all species of ecclesiastical tyranny, it is finished, it is concluded, and the sentence against them is carried into execution.

‘This vial is said to be poured upon the air, the seat and region of sounds, voices, thunders and lightnings, which are the emblems of the vast changes in the face of affairs now to be wrought. And the air, surrounding and comprehending the whole earth and sea, denotes these changes to be total.’ Thus far Mr. Pyle. But his observations, though not injudicious, are not perfectly satisfactory. Here then I recur to Vitringa. *The air*, he observes, signifies in this, as it frequently does in other places, *the heaven*; and accordingly the pouring of this vial upon the air, he declares, does without doubt allude to the darkening of the symbolic sun, and moon, and stars. *There were thunders and lightnings.* As thunders agitate the heavens, so symbolic thunders are those events which shake the political heavens or existing governments of the world, immediately previous to their fall; and says Daubuz, ‘as fire signifies destruction, so

* Vol. III. p. 267. At the pouring out of this vial, ‘the monarchies of this world,’ says an early annotator, ‘shall be broken and destroyed utterly.’ Apoc. Myst. By H. K. Part II. p. 35.

³ Judg. on the Rom. Ch. p. 216.

'the fire coming out of the lightning, implies the destruction of God's enemies, that oppose his laws'.⁴ *And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth.* This revolution was not to be partial, was not to be confined to this or that country; but was at length to effect, in Europe at least, a radical alteration in all the governments that were hitherto unreformed. It was to surpass, in extent and magnitude, all the changes which had ever been accomplished in the world.

And the great city was divided into three parts. The great city is the European part of the Roman empire; but what is signified by its division into three distinct parts, the accomplishment of the prophecy alone will explain⁵. *And the cities of the nations fell*⁶. They fell away from the different communions of corrupted religion, preparatory to their embracing of the religion of Jesus, in its purity and simplicity, as taught by the great founder of it. *And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the fierceness of his wrath.* This clause, which sounds somewhat harshly in our translation, is thus rendered by Mr. Wakefield: *and Babylon the great was remembered before God,*

⁴ P. 174.

⁵ The following is the conjecture of an early interpreter: 'the great city was divided into three parts, some are hardened in their ignorance, and some are drawn out of it, and a third part will stand neuter between both, to see which way the balance will turn.' Cotton on the Vials, 1645, p. 153.

⁶ Mr. Pyle, speaking of this text, and the antichristian empire, says, 'the cities of the nations shall fall off from its interests;' and adds, it is to be taken 'in the same sense as the Tenth Part is said to have fallen, chap. xi. 13.' An annotator of the last century would thus interpret the words. 'By the cities of the nations we may understand national churches. The great whore is called the great city; so the harlots, who are her daughters, chap. xvii. 5, are here called the cities of the nations.' Apoc. Myst. by H. K. Part ii. p. 32.

to have given her the cup of the bitter wine of his indignation. The antichristian church, which had so well deserved the epithet of great, from being established in so many different countries, the Deity will no longer suffer to exist. The fair countenance of religion it will no longer deform. The contagion of infidelity it will cease to diffuse. From under it will be taken those golden pillars, by which it had hitherto been supported. Its condemnatory creeds will be trampled under foot, and its priests despoiled of their usurped authority. *And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found⁷.* The governments of Europe, if antichristian, shall receive such a mighty shock, that they shall pass away, and be completely dissolved, *And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.* The words which immediately follow are from Mr. Waple. ‘*And there fell upon the wicked kings and men of the earth, who were gathered together against Christ’s kingdom, v. 14, 16, a great hail out of heaven.*’ Now, says Dr. Lancaster, ‘*hail, by all the oneirocritics, c. cxix, is interpreted of inroads of enemies killing and destroying,*’ and ‘*it is used to the very same purpose in the prophets⁸.*’ When, therefore, it is added, that *every stone, which fell upon them, was about the weight of a talent;* it seems necessary to understand, that all the profligate princes, and the whole tribe of those who oppose the commencement of the kingdom of Christ in Europe (for this is the part of the globe which the apostle John has here in view), shall not only be defeated in war, but that the calamities, resulting from the prosecution of it, will, previously to their utter discomfiture, be extraor-

⁷ On the two clauses of this sentence I refer the reader to p. 431 and p. 432.

⁸ This is shewn at length in the prophetic alphabet of Dr. More.

dinarily

dinarily heavy and severe. The figurative *hail* is to fall from the symbolic *heaven*; i. e. it is to descend from some of those governments, which are founded on the rights of man, and which are now become hostile to the tyrants who trample on them. For it is not to be supposed, that the Deity, benevolent as he is, will interpose, visibly and miraculously, to overturn the arbitrary monarchies of the world, which are so fatally subversive of human happiness. The agency of those natural causes, which he has appointed to operate, will, at length, be found fully adequate to the production of this great catastrophe.

The destruction of the antichristian empire, as Mr. Pyle remarks, ‘is not to be understood as effected in a single point of time and *all at once*; but *gradually* and by succeeding events of Providence one after another⁹. The prophet, also, it is observable, declares, that those who were chastised by the judgments of the last of the vials *blasphemed God*. It is plain then, that this class of persons, notwithstanding their sufferings, will not all at once repent; and it is probable, that this generation of them will *continue* to breathe sentiments adverse to the welfare of mankind. Hence too is the position evident, that there will be no supernatural interference of the Deity. Were this to happen, and did Christ appear in person, they would repent. The light of truth would be too powerful to be farther resisted.

With a reference to the seventh vial, and the prophecies of the Old and New Testament parallel to it, I shall quote the words of a celebrated prelate. ‘If a long series of prophecy is applicable to the present state of the church, and to the political situations of the kingdoms of the world, some thousand years after these prophecies were delivered, and a long series of prophecy delivered

before the coming of Christ is applicable to him; these things are in themselves a proof, that the prophetic history was intended of him, and of those events: in proportion as the general turn of it is capable of such application, and to the number and variety of particular prophecies capable of it¹⁰.

To elucidate what is said in the seventh vial respecting the symbolic Babylon, chapters xvii and xviii of the apocalypse should be consulted. From these chapters some passages have, indeed, already been quoted. But there are two, which are remarkable, and which have not been cited, which shall now be alleged. It is not improbable, that, to a careless observer, they may have appeared altogether irreconcileable.

St. John, after announcing the fall of Babylon, says, *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her¹¹, when they shall see the smoke of her burning; standing afar off for the fear of her torment¹², saying, alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come¹³.*

Apprized that their own interests and their own fate are intimately involved in her's, it is no wonder, that they sympathise in her sufferings, and, when they contemplate the progress of her overthrow, feel the most poignant

¹⁰ Butler's Analogy, 1750, p. 369.

¹¹ 'The Holy Ghost is not content to say, that they wept, or bewailed with tears, which is the signification of *κλαυστρι*, but they proceeded to the excess of grief practised among the Jews; which consisted in knocking their breasts, which is the signification of *κολοντραι*.' Daubuz in loc. Accordingly Mr. Wakefield's translation runs thus: *and the kings of the earth, who shared in her whoredoms and luxuries, will weep over her, and beat themselves in sorrow.*

¹² 'Standing afar off, for the fear of her torment, which,' says Mr. Waple, 'they know they have deserved, and must shortly feel.'

¹³ XVIII. 9, 10.

emotions of grief and disquietude. It is to be expected, with respect also to this prophecy, that it will not all at once be accomplished, but that it will have successive stages of fulfilment. Already has it begun to be verified. At the fall of that hierarchy, which belongs to *the Tenth Part of the city*, as well as at the subsequent abolition of other national churches, *the kings of the earth were to lament for her*, and to bewail her fate, when they perceive that her judgment is come, suddenly and unexpectedly. Since the first of these verses represents the antichristian kings of Europe as having not only committed fornication with that emblematic personage, the Babylonish woman, but as having also *lived deliciously with her*; does it not seem to point out, not merely their idolatries, but also that luxury and prodigality of expence, which have distinguished so many of the European courts, as well as that of the Roman pontiff, and many of the more opulent prelates, and which have had so fatal an influence in spreading the contagion of vice through all ranks of society?

The other passage, which I proposed to notice, is in ch. xvii, where the angel of the vision says, *and the ten horns, which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.* Since it is plain, that those who destroy the hierarchies of Europe cannot be those who lament their fall¹⁴; we are under

the

¹⁴ This difficulty is so palpable as to have been long felt. The following is a mode of removing it. Previously to my introduction of it, I observe, that the author of the *New System of the Apocalypse* supposes, erroneously as I conceive, that the proper and only signification of the destruction of Babylon by the ten horns, described in ch. xviii, is the destruction of the city of Rome. 'If,' says he (p. 103), 'it shall be objected, that this is contrary to what St. John saith of kings, namely, that upon the beholding the smoke of her burning, they shall mourn over her: I answer, that when

the necessity of concluding, that the ten horns, which are represented in this verse as overturning their respective ecclesiastical establishments, must, previously to this, have undergone some essential change. Those new governments, which shall be established, in the different countries of the Western Roman empire, on the ruins of the old ones, they accordingly appear to denote.

It has already been seen, that an *horn* is a symbol susceptible of some latitude of signification; since it is applied not only to proper monarchies, but also to the papacy. ‘An horn is an emblem of strength, so it comes to signify power and authority:—and from thence it is applied to denote sovereignty or dominion¹⁵.’ In agreement with this extensive meaning of the word, the commentators observe, and among others bp. Newton¹⁶, Daubuz¹⁷, and Vitrina, that a *horn* may denote a republic as well as a monarchy. Of itself it is not a symbol of bad import. But, Dr. Lancaster observes, ‘*horns upon a wild beast* are not only expressive of powers, but also of such powers as are tyrannical, ravenous, and at enmity with God.’ There is no need, then, to suppose, that the ten horns, which are to be the destroyers of *Babylon*, are the identical ten horns, which constituted the wild beast, pourtrayed by St. John in the xiith ch. and represented by him as principally carrying on his tyranny for the period of 1260 years. They are their immediate successors. In ch. xii the prophet makes men-

¹⁵ Rome comes to be besieged, fire from heaven will fall upon her, as it did upon Sodom; and that the kings who had besieged her will lament and mourn, to find that the immediate hand of God should ravish them of so fine a prey, and so rich a spoil, as that would have been. A writer, so well acquainted with the symbolic structure of the apocalypse, would not have embraced so improbable an explication, had it not been found convenient for obviating a perplexing difficulty.

¹⁶ Mr. Lowth on Dan. vii. 24.

¹⁷ Vol. II. p. 33.

¹⁷ P. 507.

tion of ten horns¹⁸, which were the *predecessors* of the ten-horned wild-beast, were then in a dependent state¹⁹, and constituted the dominions of another personage, the dragon, the representative of Pagan Rome. We have, therefore, the less reason to wonder, that, in the passage under consideration, other ten horns are spoken of as existing, *after* that the Beast described in ch. xiii was destroyed.

Daniel, speaking of the *little horn*, says (vii. 26), *but the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion; to consume and to destroy it unto the end.* An attentive inspection of this passage, and of the context, will serve to shew, that the papacy will not be demolished, and the church of Rome dissolved, by the sovereigns of Europe, but by the newly-erected governments. It is, indeed, plainly incredible, that the princes of the European world should be so blind to their interests, as to discard so powerful, so active, and so zealous an ally as the church; and should, notwithstanding the recollection of past, and the hope of future, services, meditate her ruin, and declare open war against her.

When St. John says, *the ten horns—shall eat the flesh of the whore of Babylon, and burn her with fire*, the slightest attention to these expressions, it might be apprehended, would be sufficient to persuade him, who is conversant in the language of prophecy, that they are to be figuratively understood. Yet Mr. Newton, notwithstanding he admits that the former of these prophetic clauses is symbolical, nevertheless supposes, that to *burn her with fire* is to be literally understood, and signifies, that *the city of Rome* shall be totally consumed by fire. He thinks it worthy of the wisdom of the divine author

¹⁸ V. 3.

¹⁹ ‘The ten horns of the dragon are not adorned with crowns, because they were nothing save bare provinces of Heathen Rome under the emperors.’ New Syst. of Apeo. p. 52.

of the apocalypse, that an ample portion of it should relate to the conflagration and desolate state of the papal city ; and declares it to be his opinion, that the whole of the xviiiith ch. consisting of four and twenty verses, is of an import thus confined. This opinion, having been long ago advanced, is opposed by Dr. More. After observing, that *to burn with fire* ‘ signifies only to consume and destroy, and to make to cease to be what it was,’ he says, ‘ I must confess I see no necessity of any such war, as should aim at the burning of the ancient city of Rome, but that this prophecy may be fulfilled without any such martial noise, or ruins, or garments rolled in blood²⁰.’

The ten horns shall hate the whore, &c. ‘ These words,’ says Brenius, ‘ do not require, that they should all, at the same time, rise up against the whore, but it is sufficient for their punctual verification, that now these, now those, should conceive, on different occasions, a detestation of her, until at length, with united force and council, they conspire for her destruction.’ Accordingly we find, that this prophecy has already begun to be fulfilled. The French nation have overthrown their hierarchy, despoiled her of her ornaments, and resumed her territorial revenues.

To prove that the explanation I have offered of St. John’s words is no novel interpretation ; I shall quote from two writers of the last century, and first from the celebrated Dr. John Owen. ‘ *The ten horns, which thou sawest upon the beast, being now shaken, changed, and translated in mind, interest, and perhaps government ; these hate the whore, and shall make her desolate.*’ And, a little farther, he states his opinion in more decisive language, and does not employ a *perhaps*. Speaking of the

²⁰ Myst. of Inq. p. 306.

' total destruction of Babylon, the man of sin, and all his adherents;' he says, 'as Sampson, intending the destruction of the princes, lords, and residue of the Philistines, who were gathered together in their idol-temple, effected it by pulling away the pillars whereby the building was supported, whereupon the whole frame toppled to the ground; so the Lord, intending the ruin of that mighty power, whose top seems to reach to heaven, will do it by pulling away the pillars and supporters of it, after which it cannot stand one moment. Now what are the pillars of that fatal building? Are they not the powers of the world, as presently stated and framed?—In this mighty work the Lord Jesus Christ will make use of *the power of the nations, the horns* of them, that is their strength, Rev. xvii. 16. They must hate the whore, and make her desolate, and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Now whether this can be accomplished or no in their present posture, is easily discernible.—Are not most potentates tied by oath, or other compact, to maintain either the whole, or some part, of the old tower, under the name of rites of holy church, prelates, and the like? And can any expect, that such as these should take up the despised quarrel of the saints against that flourishing queen²¹? Doubtless no such fruit will grow on these trees, before they are thoroughly shaken²².' My next citation is from Mr. Haughton's treatise on Antichrist.

²¹ Dr. Owen means *the whore of Babylon*, of whom St. John says (xviii. 7), that *she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow*. She is no widow, because she has a marriage-contract, or rather because she carries on an adulterous commerce, with the kings of the earth. 'He,' says Dr. Owen, 'that thinks Babylon is confined to Rome, and its open idolatry, knows nothing of Babylon, nor of the New Jerusalem.' Col. of Serm. serm. 87.

²² Col. of Serm. serm. 88.

' By horns here, it is not needful to understand *kings* in
' the strictness and formality of the notion.' By *the ten*
horns ' is meant only, the supreme power of the ten
' nations, by what names or titles soever they are called.
' Christ by *the earthquake* will shake down those powers,
' in whom are found a deal of carnal and popish dregs,
' and set up those in their room that are men of other
' spirits, *pares negotio*, fit for such a business as Christ
' hath in hand. Doubtless, the ten horns are the ten
' supreme Powers of Europe, who shall do the deed, that
' is so much desired and prayed for²³.'

On the prophet's emblem of *horns* enough has been said. The meaning of the other symbols I now proceed minutely to develope. *And the ten horns shall hate the whore of Babylon.* For the church of Rome, and every ecclesiastical tyranny, the new governments shall entertain sentiments of fixed detestation and abhorrence. *They shall make her desolate*, i. e. they shall cause her false worship to be abandoned: and they shall, adds the prophet, make her *naked*, i. e. shall bring shame and disgrace upon the antichristian church; for *nakedness* is, says Dr. Lancaster, a symbol of these ideas. *Her flesh also they shall eat.* On these symbols I quote from Dr. Lancaster. ' *Flesh* signifies the riches, goods, and possessions of any person or subject, conquered, oppressed, ' or slain.' For proof of this, appeal may be made to the Psalms, to Isaiah, to Micah, and to Zechariah. ' And thus in Dan. vii. 5, to devour much flesh is to conquer and spoil many enemies of their lands and possessions. All the oneirocritics concur in the same exposition of this symbol.' For instance, the Indian interpreter, in Achmet, ' says compendiously and at once, flesh is univer-

²³ P. 98, 99. The ten horns in this passage Lowman explains of the nations of Europe.

'fally interpreted of riches. To the same purpose speaks 'also Artemidorus.' *To eat*, 'when it comes under the notion of devouring, signifies destruction any way, or taking from others.' From this clause of the prophet, says Daubuz, 'it appears, that the Secular powers, who shall attack this *whore*, will not only strip her of her riches and revenues, but shall appropriate them to themselves.' To conclude the whole, they shall *burn her with fire*. These are both symbols of destruction. I, therefore, cannot employ any words, which will suggest a more correct idea of their meaning, than those of Mr. Cradock upon this passage. They 'shall utterly destroy her.'

The destroyers of the symbolic Babylon, says Daubuz, 'will appropriate her riches to themselves. It will, indeed, be admitted, that every hierarchy, which is anti-christian, it is proper to dissolve; and, when dissolved, to whom can its possession so properly revert as to the nation, in whose bosom it was seated, and to the government, which *they* have thought proper to constitute?' On the right which a state possesses to alienate the lands, and to terminate the existence, of an established church, the *Vindiciae Gallicæ* of Mackintosh may be consulted. 'The lands of the church,' says this able reasoner and eloquent writer, 'possess not the most simple and indis-pensable requisites of property. They are not even pretended to be held for the *benefit* of those who enjoy them. This is the obvious criterion between *private property* and a *pension for public service*. The destin-nation of the first is avowedly the comfort and happiness of the individual who enjoys it.' It is confessed, that no individual priest is a proprietor. Now if all the priests, taken *individually*, are 'not proprietors, the priesthood, as a body, cannot claim any such right. For what is a body, but an aggregate of individuals, and what new right can be conveyed by a mere change of name?—All

‘ men who enter into the public service must do so with
‘ the implied condition of subjecting their emoluments,
‘ and even their official existence, to the exigencies of the
‘ state.—The property of individuals is established on a
‘ *general principle*, which seems coeval with civil society
‘ itself. But *bodies* are instruments fabricated by the legi-
‘ flator for a *specific purpose*, which ought to be preserved
‘ while they are beneficial, amended when they are im-
‘ paired, and rejected when they become useless or inju-
‘ rious²⁴.’

‘ The treaty of Westphalia,’ says Mr. Mackintosh,
‘ secularized many of the most opulent benefices of Ger-
‘ many, under the mediation and guarantee of the first
‘ Catholic Powers of Europe. In our own island, on the
‘ abolition of episcopacy in Scotland at the Revolution,
‘ the revenues of the church peaceably devolved on the
‘ sovereign, and he devoted a portion of them to the sup-
‘ port of the new establishment. When at a still later
‘ period, the Jesuits were suppressed in most Catholic
‘ monarchies, the wealth of that formidable and opulent
‘ body was every where seized by the sovereign²⁵.’ A
foreign writer, speaking of the emperor Joseph, and his
hostility to the monks and abbés of his dominions, says,
‘ Here you see the good which war effects in christianity;
‘ for war costs immense sums, and princes borrow. New
‘ wars, new debts, which must be paid. The treasury
‘ being empty, what is to be done? The only remedy is
‘ to strip the clergy of their wealth; and necessity obliges
‘ monarchs to recur to this sole remaining expedient.
‘ Were our Calvin a witness of these events, he would thus
‘ address us. Admire, brethren, the impenetrable ways of
‘ Providence! The Being of Beings, who abhors the hor-
‘ rible and sacrilegious superstition into which the church

²⁴ See edit. 1. p. 82—102

²⁵ P. 93.

' has fallen, makes not the voice of the sage the instrument to render truth triumphant; nor deigns to work miracles to root up error! What then is the instrument this Being employs for the destruction of monks; and to cause those vile and impure organs of fanaticism to vanish from the face of the earth? Kings, brethren, Kings! That is to say, the most ignorant species of men that crawl on the surface of this globe. And how does the great Demiurgos make this ignorant species promote his end? By their interest, brethren. Yes! Infamous interest! For once, thou shalt be useful to mankind; by exciting the passions of these demi-gods of the age, by bidding them pillage the hoards of priests, thou shalt arm them with a destructive falchion, to cut off the race whose sacrilegious appetite and infatiate en-trails were unceasingly crammed with flesh and blood.'

The reader may perhaps be ready to conjecture, that the passage which he has just perused has been written subsequent to the accomplishment of the French Revolution; and perhaps he will suspect it to be the production of a native of France, and a zealot of democracy. But it is far otherwise. The author of this invective against princes and priests was himself a sovereign and a tyrant. It is extracted from a letter, which was written by the late king of Prussia to M. D'Alembert, and dated the 14th of July, 1781²⁶.

But though his Prussian majesty's statement be perfectly true, that the sceptered despots of Europe have, in many instances, seized on a large portion of the wealth of those, who plunder or tyrannize in an ecclesiastical character; yet there are the strongest reasons for concluding, that the power of the latter will be completely demolished,

²⁶ Posthumous Works of Frederic II. K. of Prussia, translated by Mr. Holcroft, vol XII. p. 281.

and their revenues principally confiscated, not by the rapacity of monarchs, but by the authority of nations and the decrees of legislatures.

There is another prophecy of the apocalypse, where the symbol of *eating flesh* is a second time introduced, which more immediately concerns the sceptered tyrants of Europe themselves. It is in ch. xix. The latter part of it there has before been occasion to quote and to explain. It was to the destruction of the *antichristian church*, as established in different parts of the European world, and to the confiscation of its revenues, that the prophecy, which I last explained, plainly referred. The passage which follows foretells the complete destruction of the *antichristian monarchies* of Europe, and the confiscation of those mighty treasures and immense possessions, which the antichristian princes and *their* respective partisans have so diligently accumulated.

Whilst he, whose name is called the *Word of God*, is represented in v. 15 as treading the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; in verses 17 and 18, 19 and 20, the prophet says, *And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the Great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false teacher²⁷, who shewed before him*

²⁷ In the Common Translation it is *the false prophet*. A part of the last sentence I have given, as translated by Mr. Wakefield.

those wonders, by which he seduced them that had received the mark of the beast, and the worshippers of his image: and both were cast alive into a lake of fire. On the decorum of the symbols themselves Dr. Lancaster may be cited. ‘ This destruction of them is represented, as a *sacrifice* to God’s justice, and as such, attended with a *feast*²⁸; it being the custom of the Jews and Gentiles to feast upon the flesh of the victims offered in sacrifice. ‘ And therefore since their flesh is to be eaten, the birds of prey, who are observed to follow armies and fall upon the slain, are invited to the feast, which is called *the great supper of God*, as being a perfection and completion of the judgments of God.’

To explain, as some commentators have done, a large part of the foregoing prophecy, as signifying the slaughter of the antichristian princes of Europe²⁹, appears to me too literal an interpretation. It points not so much to their defeat, as to the *consequences* of that defeat.

The false prophet, and the ten-horned beast, *were cast alive into a lake of fire*; i. e. the antichristian church and antichristian monarchies of Europe are to be utterly destroyed. At the same time, to use the prophetic diction, *the flesh of kings, of captains, and of mighty men, and of all men*³⁰, *both free and bond, both small and great*, is to be *eaten*. ‘ Here,’ says Dr. Lancaster, ‘ the destruction of the beast, and the false prophet, and their adherents, is represented as a total destruction, from which not so much as one of whatever quality or condition will es-

²⁸ ‘ God having decreed to destroy, and sacrifice to justice, the beast, the false prophet, and their obstinate adherents, they, and all they have, serve him to make up his feast.’ Daubuz.

²⁹ That the prophecy just cited denotes ‘ literally great slaughter of men,’ is the opinion of Dr. Priestley. Fast Serm. for Feb. 28, 1794; p. 12.

³⁰ It is proper to acquaint the reader, that the word *men* is not in the original.

' cape.' 'But,' says Daubuz, 'it must be limited to the subject in question.' It is to be confined to the partisans of civil or of ecclesiastical tyranny. They are the persons, whose privileges are to be sacrificed, and whose power is to be overturned.

Any attempt to explain the symbolic import of *the flesh of horses* being eaten, I do not remember to have seen. That it forms only a part of the general description, and admits not of a separate interpretation, is by no means improbable. A particular and appropriate explication of it would, however, it must be admitted, be more satisfactory. As the preceding expressions of *kings*, *captains*, and *mighty men*, which are introduced in a similar manner to the word *horses*, are, it is agreed, to be understood not symbolically, but literally; it is possible, the latter expression may signify, that those lands and possessions, which have hitherto been employed, by princes, by nobles, by the long line of their imitators, and by all the various retainers of a modern monarchy, for the maintenance of those innumerable horses, which serve no other purpose than to mount cavalry in war, or to gratify the desires of vanity and luxurious indolence, shall be converted to other uses, and appropriated to objects of solid advantage and general utility. Certainly this is not an unimportant circumstance to the happiness of mankind. There are few countries of Europe, in which the subsistence and comforts of the mass of the people are not materially affected, and in which they are not rendered more scanty and precarious, by the crowds of horses which are unnecessarily kept; and which are maintained in consequence of the nature of the subsisting governments, the prevalence of false ideas, and the extreme inequality which exists between the different ranks of society. Even of philosophers there are, I believe, but few, who are apprized of the magnitude of the evil.

All the fowls, that fly in the midst of heaven, are, says the prophet, to be gathered together to the supper of the Great God. ‘As birds of prey,’ says Daubuz, ‘feed upon carcases, so those that take the goods of other men eat as it were their flesh; which, in the symbolic language, ALWAYS signifies riches or substance. Now the symbol is in itself indifferent. The commission is that which makes the act lawful when God invites, who has a supreme power to bestow the goods of this world as he pleases; and in this case it is an act of his justice, but it is an evil to them that suffer by it. They are evil to them at least, though these birds of prey be such as do well in accepting God’s offer.—As *heaven* signifies the supreme powers, *the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven* denote, ‘such as in this Revolution are, or become, of a superior condition. Or perhaps all the princes and others who shall divide the spoils are only reckoned in an inferior state and under-governors, because none is now supreme.’ This statement of the accurate Daubuz, had he employed some other word, instead of *princes*, would, I believe, have been perfectly correct. The principal agents in the seizure and distribution of the confiscated property of the ten-horned and two-horned beasts, denominated by the prophet *the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven*, appear to denote such persons, as shall occupy official situations in the newly-erected governments, though, from the nature of those governments, none of them will be invested with supreme power.

After alleging those memorable words of the prophet, in v. 21, that *all the fowls were filled with their flesh*, Daubuz says, ‘This Great Revolution must produce a Great Change in the Secular Government, and Property of Lands, within the territories of corrupted Christendom.’ That there has already been a complete change, in these two important respects, in the dominions of one

of the most powerful horns of the Secular beast, every European is apprized.

I shall conclude the chapter with some striking observations of an illustrious writer. ‘If,’ says Sir I. Newton, ‘the last age, the age of opening these things, be now approaching, as by the great successes of late inter- preters it seems to be, we have more encouragement than ever to look into these things. If the general preaching of the gospel be approaching, it is to us, and our posterity, that those words mainly belong : *In the time of the end the wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear³¹ the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein³².*—As the few and obscure prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming were for setting up the Christian religion, which ALL NATIONS HAVE SINCE CORRUPTED; so the many and clear prophecies, concerning the things to be done at Christ’s second coming, are not only for predicting, but also for EFFECTING, a recovery and re-establishment of the long-lost truth, and SETTING-UP a kingdom wherein dwells righteousness. The event will prove the apocalypse; and this prophecy, thus proved and understood, will open the old prophets, and all together will make known the true religion, and establish it. For he that will understand the old prophets must begin with this; but the time is not yet come for understanding them perfectly, because THE MAIN REVOLUTION, predicted in them, is not yet come to pass. *In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath*

³¹ i. e. says Vitringa, *that understand*. This, indeed, is a frequent sense of *xxxvi.*

³² Apoc. i. 3.

· declared to his servants the prophets: and then the king-
 · doms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our
 · Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever, Apoc.
 · x. 7; xi. 15. There is already so much of the pro-
 · phecy fulfilled, that as many as will take pains in this
 · study may see sufficient instances of God's providence:
 · but then the signal Revolutions, predicted by ALL the
 · holy prophets, will at once both turn men's eyes upon
 · considering the predictions, and plainly interpret them³³.³³

His first chapter on the apocalypse Sir I. Newton con-
 cludes with the following observation: ‘ Amongst the in-
 · terpreters of the last age, there is scarce ONE of note,
 · who hath not made some discovery worth knowing; and
 · thence I seem to gather, that God is about opening these
 · mysteries³⁴.³⁴

³³ P. 251, 252. Like Sir I. Newton, Jurieu is disposed to believe, that
 the Deity may think proper ‘at last to make the prophecies be understood,
 · that they may the more easily be fulfilled.’ See Suppl. to the Introd. of
 Jurieu; and vol. II. p. 39.

³⁴ This observation is adopted by bishop Law (in his *Theory of Religion*,
 3d ed. p. 170); and not unsimilar is the language of another learned and
 liberal prelate. ‘ Though the name has been disgraced by a number of
 · hireling compilers, yet no competent critic has,’ says bp. Newcome,
 ‘ carefully studied the scriptures for himself, without smoothing the rug-
 · gedness of the way to those who follow him.’ Verf. of the Twelve Mi-
 nor Prophets, pref. p. 9.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON THE LATTER PART OF THE PROPHECY OF
JESUS, RECORDED IN THE TWENTY-FIRST
CHAPTER OF LUKE.

A MEMORABLE passage in the invaluable prophecy of Jesus, delivered by him on the mount of Olives, a short time before his crucifixion, has been explained¹; and it has been seen, that its symbolic import is scarcely darkened by any degree of doubt or ambiguity. But it is not sufficient that *its* meaning be ascertained. That of the context ought also to be examined into; and the result of the enquiry, I apprehend, will be, not merely that the interpretation of the verse alluded to perfectly harmonizes with the context, but that it is the only one which does. In truth, the common explications of our Lord's prophecy labour under insuperable difficulties; and Dr. John Edwards, an orthodox clergyman, who flourished at the conclusion of the last and the commencement of the present century, accordingly observes, that he had never met with any expositor, ‘that gave a clear and satisfactory account of it².’

Another Dr. Edwards, a clergyman of a different period and different principles, speaking of the xxivth ch. of Matthew, says, ‘the various and opposite methods, which theologians have adopted to remove an objection which is too obvious to be overlooked, form, it must be confessed, a very considerable presumption, that an adequate

¹ In chapter xxii.

² *Theologia Reformatæ*, 1713, fol. vol. I. p. 472.

‘ solution .

solution of the difficulty³ has not hitherto been discovered, and that the objection is founded on the basis of truth. Some interpreters imagine that the prophecy relates entirely to the ruin of the Jewish nation : others, by the convenient introduction of types and double senses, preserve in it a reference throughout to the consummation of all things: some have contended that it partly belongs to the former, and partly to the latter; but what portions of it are applicable to the one, and what to the other, they cannot ascertain: while a few have ventured to assert, that it represents the final judgment as immediately subsequent to the Jewish calamities⁴. The different modes of explaining our Lord's prophecy Dr. Edwards here professes to state. But there is another method of explication, of which this learned writer appears to be entirely ignorant; a method which has not, indeed, been adopted, or even been noticed, in any of the commentaries on the Gospels which this country has produced⁵, but which I nevertheless believe to be the true one.

That the prophecy of Jesus is of very difficult interpretation is very generally admitted. Grotius and Lowth, Sykes, Benson, and Macknight, bp. Watson and the Taylors, have, Mr. Nisbett acknowledges⁶ (he is here

³ Of the particular difficulty to which Dr. Edwards alludes notice will hereafter be taken.

⁴ Serm. on the Predictions of the Apostles concerning the End of the World, 1790, p. 18.

⁵ Accordingly when I first applied the latter part of the prophecy of Christ to the downfall of antichristian usurpation, and particularly that verse in it, which has been so copiously explained in ch. xxii. like Dr. Edwards, I knew not that *this* application of it had received any countenance from preceding writers, being led to it solely by my knowledge of the import of our Lord's symbols, and the internal evidence which appeared for embracing the interpretation.

⁶ Scripture Doctrine concerning the Coming of Christ, p. 13.

⁷ speaking

speaking of the scripture-doctrine of *the Coming of Christ*), ' all of them, without exception, manifestly discovered their embarrassment, and the difficulties which they laboured under, in considering the subject.' Surely this affords a strong presumption, that they have all failed of discovering the true import of Christ's celebrated prediction. To attempt to develope its meaning, after this declaration, may, perhaps, appear bold and presuming. But however desirable it may be to be exempt from the charge; I do not conceive, that it is of such a nature as to command silence, or that the publication of important truths, or of probable conclusions, ought, in any case, to be suppressed from the apprehension of it.

As the prophecy of Christ was a reply to a question, the scope of that question it will be proper to state. It is in the Gospel of Matthew that it is given at the greatest length. Jesus having assured his disciples (xxiv. 2.) that the time would arrive, when not one stone of the temple would be left upon another; they came to him (v. 3.), saying, *Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*; or,

as.

? The word *world* is given up by the majority of English commentators as an improper rendering; and, in the Latin versions of Jerom, Erasmus, Beza, and Montanus, *αἰών* is translated not *mundi*, but *seculi*. ' *Αἰών*', says Mr. Waple (On the Rev. p. 248), ' signifies an age of the world or some eminent period of it; and in correspondence with this Dr. Hammond observes (on Luke. i. 70), that in the New Testament it "most commonly is used in a general sense, not for the age of a man, nor again for an hundred years, but for an age of the world, or some eminent part in the division of that." ' Sometimes,' says Leigh in his *Critica Sacra*, ' it is put for that which continues a long time, and of which the end is not so clear; and this appears to be the exact meaning, which the disciples here annexed to the word. They enquired what would be the signs of the *οὐρτελεία τοῦ αἰώνος*, at the expiration of which another *αἰών*, or eminent period, was to commence; and accordingly, in the writings of the fathers (see Suicerus), the word *αἰών* frequently stood for this last period, that is to say for the Thousand Years. In an ancient work, the book of Tobit (xiv. 5.), *αἰών* appears manifestly

as it ought rather to be rendered, *of the end of the period*, i. e. the period then present? Dr. Campbell's translation is, *What will be the sign of thy coming, and of the conclusion of this state?*

The question of the disciples was two-fold: and its import, when shall that destruction of the temple which you mention happen; and what are the indications of *thy coming*, which Daniel foretells, and of the end of the present æra, when that coming is to take place?

manifestly to signify the *first of these great periods*, namely, that which is to continue till the commencement of the millennium; for it is there said of the Jews, that when the times of the period are fulfilled ($\pi\lambda\eta\varphi\omega\delta\omega\iota\ \alpha\iota\omega\varsigma$; τις αἰώνος are the words of the Septuagint), that they shall return from all places of their captivity. In Isaiah, on the contrary, ch. lxv. 18, the expression, *the age to come*, signifies the *second of these long periods*, namely, the millennium; for when speaking of the future restoration of the Jews to their own land, he says (according to the amended versions of bishop Lowth and Mr. Dodson), *but ye shall rejoice and exult in the age to come*. To v. 6 of ch. ix. of Isaiah reference also deserves to be made; for in that verse, according to the best copies of the Septuagint, and agreeably to the existing Hebrew text, Christ is called $\pi\chi\tau\eta\pi\ \tau\omega\ \mu\epsilon\lambda\lambda\o\tau\tau\sigma\ \alpha\iota\omega\varsigma$, the Father of the future period. In like manner, in the Vulgate, it is *Pater futuri seculi*. See Mr. Dodson's valuable *Translation of Isaiah*, and his elaborate note on this verse.

In the Targum on Kings the period of the Messiah is denominated *the age to come*; and says bishop Kidder, 'among the other Jewish writers nothing is more common than to call the times of the Messiah, the *Olam Hava*', i. e. ο αἰώνυ μελλων, or *the age to come*. *Demonstr. of the Messiah*, vol. III. p. 381. I close the note with a quotation from Dr. Thomas Burnet. 'The expression, αἰώνυ μελλων, is either taken largely for the times of the Messiah in general, or more particularly for the times of the Messiah's reign. In this last confined and more proper sense it is distinct both from the present age and from eternity, or that time, when Christ is to deliver up all dominion into the hands of the Father.' *1 Cor. xv. 24. 28.* 'And in this proper sense, viz. taken for some age between this present and eternity, it is often used in scripture. Christ, it is said, will reign *τις αἰώνι μελλοντι*', *Ephes. i. 22, 23.* On the State of Departed Souls, p. 282. See some similar observations in Dr. J. Edward's *Hist. of the Dispensations of Rel.* vol. II. p. 64.

The latter part of the question, as paraphrased by the great Dr. Clarke, strictly answers to my ideas. ‘ And ‘ by what signs shall we know, when the consummation of ‘ the present state of things in the world shall be? And ‘ when, and by what Revolutions, the kingdom of the ‘ Messiah shall be established?’

Supposing we had no positive information on the subject, it might fairly be presumed, that the remarkable prophecies of Daniel, relative to the erection of the proper kingdom of the Messiah, were familiar to the minds of the apostles. That they should be solicitous respecting their fulfilment, and should make enquiries respecting them, though far from being distinctly apprized of their meaning, need, therefore, excite no surprize. This, however, is a matter not only of antecedent likelihood, but of certainty. The Gospel-narratives amply attest, that there was, in fact, no subject respecting which they were more curious, no point respecting which they were more frequent in their enquiries, than the period, when the proper kingdom of the Messiah should be established, as foretold by the Hebrew prophet. Besides, says Dr. Sykes on this verse, ‘ that they meant his *coming*, as Daniel had prophesied of the Messiah, is plain from hence; that when our Lord answers the question, he uses the very words ‘ of the prophet, v. 30⁸.’ And since this judicious divine has elsewhere shewn⁹, that wherever Christ employs either of those expressions *the Kingdom of God*, or *the Son of Man*, he had an immediate view to Daniel’s prophecy of his universal kingdom, and borrowed the expressions from him; and since our Lord, in *his* prophecy¹⁰, has adopted both these expressions: it cannot, I think, reasonably be doubted, that he spoke of the very same events with the

⁸ Upon the Truth of Chr. p. 86. ⁹ P. 72, 79, 85, 115.

¹⁰ Mat. xxiv. 30; Luke xxi. 27, 31.

ancient Hebrew prophet. Now from the observations already made upon his predictions, and from those reserved for ch. xxx, it will, I trust, clearly appear, that *the coming of Christ*, which Daniel assures us shall take place quickly after the overthrow of the antichristian monarchies, is the commencement of that happy æra, commonly denominated the millennium.

That the latter part of Christ's prophecy does foretell the commencement of that auspicious period, appeared probable on various accounts to Wolzogenius, who was among the first of those who framed a judicious exposition of the Evangelists: but, fearful of departing from the general current of interpreters, he appears to have been embarrassed with doubts, and ventured not to decide in the affirmative¹¹. On the mind of Brenius, however, the disciple of the celebrated Episcopius, who lived about the same time, and whose works frequently accompany those of Wolzogenius, no doubts remained, that the words of our Lord are thus to be interpreted. But the ideas of this eminent commentator will be best explained by a quotation from him. 'It is,' says Brenius, 'not difficult to gain information of what the disciples understood by *the coming of Christ*, provided we shall have considered the hope entertained by the Jews respecting the Messiah, which was then generally prevalent, namely, that it was incumbent on him to restore upon earth the fallen kingdom of Israel, to establish the throne of David, so as never to be shaken, and to bring deliverance to them without exception from all their enemies.'

¹¹ See his notes on Mat. xxiv. 3, 29, 30, 31, 35. Ludovicus Wolzogenius was a nobleman of Austria, very unlike the generality of his own rank, now belonging to that country, as he wielded not the sword but the pen, acquired not military but theological glory, and was perpetually recommending the practice and cultivation of the mild and pacific virtues of Christianity.

‘ Hence that speech of the disciples travelling to Emmaus,
‘ *but we trusted that it had been he which should have
redeemed Israel.* Luke xxiv. 21. Wherefore it is true,
‘ that by the coming of Christ also in this place the apostles understood nothing else than the glorious kingdom
‘ of the Messiah to be erected upon earth, as others also
‘ have remarked before us. But this in scripture is
‘ elsewhere entitled *the kingdom of God*, concerning which
‘ all the prophets have predicted, and concerning the establishment of which his disciples asked their master, after
‘ he was risen from the dead, whether he would at that
‘ time *restore again the kingdom to Israel*¹².—By the end
‘ of the age then the disciples do not understand the
‘ dissolution of heaven and earth, but the destruction
‘ of the monarchies of the world, which had been first
‘ exhibited in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, and afterwards to Daniel; for likewise in Isaiah, ch. lxv. 17.
‘ lxvi. 22. God is introduced speaking thus of these
‘ times, *Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth:*
‘ *and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into
mind.* But they expected that this revolution in the
‘ monarchies, according to the prophecies which are extant Dan. ii and vii, would happen at the same time
‘ with the coming of the Messiah, upon whose entrance
‘ into his kingdom he would restore rule to Israel.’ They
thought also, that the subversion of the temple, and the proper establishment of Christ’s kingdom, would be contemporary. ‘ Which two things it is incumbent on us to separate: for although the disciples, as was before said, thought that all these things would occur at one and the same time, yet the event itself has taught us the contrary; since the demolition of the temple and city has now long ago happened, whilst the coming of

¹² Acts i. 3, 6, 7.

‘*Christ* is not yet accomplished. And in consequence of this, our Lord gives a *distinct* answer to each question.’

We may, says Dr. Lardner, readily admit the truth of what Josephus says,—“ that what principally excited ‘the Jewish people, the wise men,’ as he calls them, ‘as well as others, to the war with the Romans, was ‘the expectation of a great deliverer to arise among ‘them, who should obtain the empire of the world.’” Indeed, ‘the expectation of the coming of the Messiah, ‘about the time of the appearance of Jesus was universal, ‘and had been so for some while. But with the idea of a ‘prophet, or extraordinary teacher of religion, they had ‘joined also that of a worldly king and conqueror, who ‘should deliver the Jewish people from the burdens un- ‘der which they laboured, raise them to a state of inde- ‘pendence, and bring the nations of the earth into sub- ‘jection to them, to be ruled and tyrannized over by ‘them.’ If our Lord ‘would but have assumed the state ‘and character of an earthly prince, scribes and pha- ‘risees, priests and people, would all have joined them- ‘selves to him, and have put themselves under his ban- ‘ner. Of this we see many proofs in the gospels¹³.’

The reader who has attended to Daniel’s prophecy of the destruction of the fourth beast, or the Roman empire in the concluding period of its existence, and who recollects, that the prophet has not specified the time when that event was to take place, will experience little difficulty in accounting for the erroneous opinion, which the disciples had formed respecting the *period*, when that em-

¹³ Lardner’s works, vol. vii. 59. Similar is the statement of Dr. Sykes. ‘It is evident,’ says he, ‘that the opinion was fixed and settled, ‘and generally received amongst the Jews, that somebody of their nation ‘was to get an universal dominion : it is testified on all sides by Heathens ‘and Jews, as well as Christians, and consequently cannot be denied.’ On the Tr. of the Chr. Rel. p. 11.

pire should irrecoverably fall, and be succeeded by the proper kingdom of the Messiah. That they understood the fourth beast to be the Roman empire, there is no reason to doubt. That it was thus interpreted by the ancients in general¹⁴, Dr. Cressener has asserted and proved. A very small portion of what he has urged on this subject I shall now cite. ‘ Rabbi Abarbinel’s testimony is sufficient for the consent of the Jewish writers, being known to be one of the most learned of their nation. “ Our masters (says he,) are right in their tradition, that “ the fourth beast does signify the Roman emperors;” ’ whereby it appears to have been the common tradition of the learned Jews¹⁵.’ That this was the opinion of the Jewish church both BEFORE and after the time of Christ, is particularly noted by the learned Calovius¹⁶.

It may, however, be remarked, that the answer of Jesus to the enquiry of his disciples was well adapted to rectify their mistakes. For he informed them, that the capital of their country, instead of being speedily emancipated from a foreign yoke, would be besieged and desolated, and continue to be *trodden down* by the *Gentiles*; and that the proper kingdom of the Messiah, which is so magnificently described by the prophet Daniel, so far from being immediately erected, as they apprehended, would not be established, till wars, and a long series of calamitous events, had antecedently occurred.

It is proper to observe, that Dr. Sykes has satisfactorily shewn (the matter, indeed, admits not of dispute), that what our Lord addresses to his auditors, in the second person, is not on that account exclusively to be referred to *them*, or to the men of that generation. Thus, after

¹⁴ On this point the reader may look back to p. 356 and 357 of the present work.

¹⁵ Dem. of the Prot. Appl. of the Apoc. Append. p. 5.

¹⁶ In Dan. cap. 7.

his resurrection, Christ said, ‘ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations,—teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world¹⁷. Here it is evident, that a promise is made which was to extend to the end of the world¹⁸; and since the apostles have been long since dead, it is evident, that, under the terms YE and YOU, must be contained all, at all times, in like circumstances¹⁹. In the xiiith ch. of Mark (v. 37) our Lord has, indeed, himself in some degree given us intimation of this. *And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.* This Doddridge thus paraphrases: ‘ what I say to you in public characters, I say to all my disciples, in every station of life, and in every age, watch.’

Parallel to the xxivth chapter of Matthew and the xiiith of Mark, is the xxist chapter of Luke. In that chapter from v. 8 to v. 24 is a prediction²⁰, eminently minute and circumstantial, of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the sufferings of Christ’s followers. To his disciples it accordingly appears to have been addressed by him, as sustaining the character both of Christians and of Jews; and it must be remembered, in the explication of the subsequent part of the prophecy, that he still pursues the same course, and that his auditors are viewed in this

¹⁷ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

¹⁸ It may, however, be proper to remark, that the word employed is *awy*.

¹⁹ Sykes on the Tr. of the Chr. Rel. p. 88. To the same purpose speaks bp. Newcome (*Obs. on our Lord’s Conduct as a Div. Instr.* p. 263). ‘ What our Lord said to his immediate followers may well be considered as addressed to all mankind.’

²⁰ On this prophecy and the evidences of its fulfilment, Whitby and Jortin, Lardner, Macknight, and bp. Newton, have all treated at great length. See also the briefer but valuable observations of bishop Hurd (vol. I. p. 168—172), and archdeacon Paley (Evid. of Chr. 2d ed. vol. II. p. 15—23).

double light. In v. 24 he does, however, speak in the third person and of the Jews alone : *they shall fall by the edge of the sword ; and shall be led away captive into all nations ; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* Most commentators agree, that he speaks here of two distinct periods. The first principally respected the great slaughter of the Jews under the Romans, and the calamities they were to incur from the destruction of their city : the second extended to the whole period of their dispersion in the nations of the world. Here then it is that he makes his transition, in the very place where we should expect it ; and commences his reply to the second question of his disciples.

It is this second grand division of the prophecy which is now to be considered. As it proceeds from the very highest authority ; as it respects the most important events, and events which are all yet unfulfilled, though some of them probably may not be far distant ; as it opens to our view a new order of things, when the world shall be as it were renovated, and true religion shall reign upon the earth ; it surely deserves our most careful inspection. Any passage of the same length, having stronger claims on our attention, it would in truth be impossible to allege. The whole of it ought, therefore, to be viewed together ; and accordingly it shall be first transcribed, without omission, and without comment. Luke's account, on several important points, is more full and complete than the parallel place in Matthew and in Mark. From him, therefore, it shall be taken. It reaches from the beginning of v. 25 to v. 35.

As our Lord had predicted, at the close of v. 24, that *Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* ; it seems natural to conclude, and the contents of the prophecy itself will

warrant the conclusion, that, in the verses which follow, he was going to point out those momentous events, which are to take place, when *the times of the Gentiles* are fulfilled; or, in other words, when the long æra of spurious Christians, of adulterated religion, and of corrupt government, which have now subsisted during the revolution of so many centuries, shall be destined to terminate²¹. In truth, had an important particle which immediately follows been correctly rendered in our common version, it would have struck the reader at the first sight, as a matter not disputable, but clear and decided, that this most illustrious of the prophets has, in the succeeding passage, predicted the changes, which are to be accomplished *when the times of the Gentiles shall expire.*

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until

" The former part of the prophecy, in the opinion of Dr. Clarke, as well as of Vitringa, is not confined to the sufferings of the Jews and the destruction of their capital, but has an express reference to the subsequent spread of antichristianism, and to the heavy calamities which should afflict the Christian world. In the xxivth ch. of Matthew, says this distinguished English divine, ' our Lord, in answer to the question put to him by his disciples, gives them a large prophetic description of the destruction of the city and nation of the Jews, by the power of the Romans: and a long series of other events.—Our Lord tells them, that not only the city and temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the Jewish nation dispersed; but that, after this, there should still succeed a long train of calamities, and the end should not be yet. For Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And during that long period of time, in other parts of the world likewise, nation should rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there should be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places, and that even all these calamities, comparatively speaking, should be but the beginning of sorrows. For a deluge of corruption and iniquity should overspread the world. And there should be very great and very long persecutions: and a time of tribulation, such as had not been since the beginning of the world.' See Mat. xxiv. 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 21. Seventeen Sermons on Several Occasions, by Dr. S. Clarke, 1724, p. 378, 382. On this subject the reader also may look back to p. 393 of the present work.

the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. THEN shall there be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring: mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then²² shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things BEGIN to come to pass, THEN look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is now nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my word shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so THAT DAY come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

In this long passage I have, in a single instance, deviated from the English version. An alteration, introduced by Mr. Wakefield into his valuable translation, I have adopted as clearly a right one; substituting the words *then shall there be signs*²³, instead of *and there shall be signs*.

Then

²² Tote, then, i. e. 'after the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.' Grotius in loc.

²³ There seems little reason for doubting, that our Lord in speaking used *vau*, which corresponds to *γαν* in the Greek. Now such is the frequency with which *vau* signifies *then* in the Hebrew bible, that no less than two or three hundred instances of it are specified in the concordance of Noldius.

Then shall there be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. Already has the parallel verse in Matthew been carefully considered²⁴; and, being larger and more distinct, it throws a light upon the import of this briefer passage. The meaning of the Greek word, translated *signs*, no single word in our language is capable of conveying. οὐρανοῖς signifies any thing which happens contrary to the usual course of events²⁵: accordingly the clause may be thus rendered, *and then that which is extraordinary shall be in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.* When the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, great and extraordinary wants shall take place in the antichristian monarchies and aristocracies of the world; or, in other words, they shall be overturned.

Then will there be—upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity. Since εἶναι is used both here and in the last verse, why in one instance it has been translated *gentiles*, and in the other nations, it were difficult to say. But whatever arbitrary distinction the translator might intend to introduce, it is unreasonable to suppose,

After this note was written, I was gratified by meeting with a coincidence of opinion in the works of Mede. This passage he twice quotes (p. 910, 920) in the same manner as translated by Mr. Wakefield; and in one of his letters says, ‘the copulative καὶ verse 25 καὶ εἰς τὸ οὐρανόν &c.) ‘is to be taken after the Hebrew manner *ordinative*, for *tum, deinde, &c.* which you know is frequent in scripture, then shall be signs.’

It is in conformity to this translation, that St. Mark says, in the parallel place (xiii. 24), *in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, &c.*

²⁴ See ch. xxii.

²⁵ This is the proper sense of οὐρανοῖς in the New Testament. Accordingly between οὐρανοῖς and τερπτοῦ, lexicographers, with Theophylact and Ammonius of Alexandria at their head, point out the following distinction: the former expresses an event, which is extraordinary and unusual, but agreeable to the order of nature; the latter signifies that which is supernatural and miraculous. It is perhaps superfluous for me to add, that in the lexicons οὐρανοῖς is rendered *oflentum*, and (as the reader may find by turning to Littleton) *oflentum* signifies that, which is extraordinary, and which betokens something to come. The latter idea, however, is not always attached to the word.

that the word does not, in both places, carry a uniformity of import. In the original, Καὶ επι της γῆς συνόχη εἰσεγεῖται απωπίξῃ, a comma ought, I think, to be placed after συνόχη, and the right rendering of the words will then be, *and upon the earth distress, with perplexity of the Gentiles.* As *the sun, and the moon, the stars, and the sea,* are symbolic expressions, to annex a dissimilar interpretation to the word *earth* would be to incur the charge of inconsistency. Dr. Lancaster, indeed, observes, that ‘it is the *usual* style of the scriptures to represent such men as are sinners, idolaters, out of the covenant of grace, or at least apostates from it, by the names of *earth, inhabitants of the earth,* and the like.’ The clause, then, imports, that upon the antichristian part of the world there will be great distress, and that these heathens, as they may deservedly be styled, shall be perplexed, and thrown into the most nice and critical situations.

But our Lord does not merely apprise us of the fact, that, immediately previous to the downfal of oppressive government, the antichristian inhabitants of the world will be involved in singular distress; but he also acquaints us how this distress shall be caused. *And upon the earth distress, with perplexity of the Gentiles; the sea and the waves roaring;* which latter clause, as Dr. Priestley on the passage remarks, is ‘a figurative description of convulsions among nations by war, &c.²⁶’ Wars shall happen, which shall shatter the power of aristocracy and of despotism. Nor is the information the less sure and less to be depended upon, on account of its being figuratively expressed; for these symbols carry along with them a fixed and determinate meaning. ‘*Many waters²⁷,*’ says Dr. Lancaster, in his dictionary.

²⁶ Priestley’s Harmony. See the same observations in Wolzogenius.

²⁷ See pages 55 and 56.

' upon the account of their noise, number, and disorder, and confusion of their waves are the symbols of nations ;' and *sea troubled and tumultuous* denotes a collection of men in motion and war.' It is added, *men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.* Fear shall seize upon the hearts of many men. All those whose claims are at variance with the welfare and the rights of mankind (and, alas, they are a numerous body) shall tremble at those events which are transacting in the European world²⁸, and behold their approaching downfall with the most timorous solicitude.

We learn, then, that the calamities which are to be looked for with so much anxiety are to be inflicted upon the worldly-minded and the enemies of Christ's kingdom ; and therefore the *men*, whose *hearts are said to fail them for fear*, appear not to be mankind in general, but those in particular, who stand in the different ranks of the antichristian party²⁹.

The recently illustrated passages are completely in unison with the more detailed accounts of the apocalypse.

²⁸ The reader will here be ready to exclaim, why do you interpret *the earth*, the European world ; in the last verse annexing to it a symbolic, and in this a literal, sense ? But this difficulty will vanish, when it is replied, that the word translated *earth*, in the former verse, is *γη*; in the latter *οἰκουμένη*. Of these the one easily admits an emblematic meaning ; whilst the other is altogether a stranger to it. That *οἰκουμένη* signifies the countries of the Roman empire, and the principal part of Europe which are included under it, is plain from ch. ii. v. 1, of our evangelist, *there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world (απάντα τὴν οἰκουμένην)* should be taxed.

²⁹ Should the *earth*, however, be thought to denote in v. 25 mankind without distinction, still will the passage admit of an easy interpretation. In the conflict between many of the kings, and between the people, of the world, not a few of the latter will naturally be awake to uneasy apprehensions, lest untoward events should arise, and lead to the firmer rivetting of their chains, instead of their being broken upon the heads of their oppressors.

By our Lord, and by his favourite apostle, the same events are represented as antecedent to the proper establishment of his kingdom,—*general wars among the nations,—and the overthrow of the antichristian monarchies.* Those of his future disciples, who shall be witnesses of those occurrences, he has accordingly instructed, that they should pay a marked attention to them, as to THE SIGNS AND FORERUNNERS OF THE COMING OF HIS KINGDOM.

Having declared that the hearts of many *shall fail them for fear*, the founder of our divine religion immediately adds the reason: *for, says he, the powers of heaven*³⁰ *shall be shaken*³¹. The scorching luminaries of the political universe³² will be violently agitated, and at length removed out of their places; or, to quit the figures of the prophet, all the oppressive governments and aristocracies of the world will be shaken to their foundations and abolished. And THEN will the religion of Jesus operate with its full power, and have a glorious spread.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh, or, as Mr. Wakefield translates, *for your deliverance is at hand.* Seeing Christianity, stripped of all false appendages, and producing its proper effects, you will be converted to it, and will no longer be a people, oppressed and despised. And it is not those only of *your nation*, but those also of *your faith* (i. e. the Christian), whose *deliverance* will be accomplished³³. From

³⁰ ‘To shake the heavens,’ says Daubuz, ‘signifies to overthrow the throne of kingdoms.’ On the Apoc. p. 291.

³¹ In the commentary of Wolzogenius it may be seen, that the true interpretation of this passage had not entirely escaped him.

³² ‘Heaven and earth signify a Political Universe.’ Dr. Lancaster.

³³ ‘The restoration of the Jews, and the fall of Antichrist, shall happen about the same time.’ Bp. Newton, vol. III. p. 391.

that pressure of evil, which they are to suffer during the ascendancy of Antichrist, Christians as well as Jews will be liberated.

Since *the kingdom of God*, and *the kingdom of Heaven*, are expressions, which have been uniformly employed by modern writers to designate a future world, the passage which follows has, by the unlettered reader, been generally misapprehended. I copy it, as explained by Dr. Sykes. ‘*As when trees shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand; so likewise, when ye see these things come to pass³⁴.*’ ‘*know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand: that it will then be at its full growth and state of perfection³⁵.*’ This judicious divine has accordingly proved at length, that those Jewish phrases, THE KINGDON OF GOD³⁶, and THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN³⁷, which so often occur in the evangelists, are equivalent to *the kingdom of the Messiah*, and signify the dispensation of the gospel as preached and practised upon earth, and not a state of future existence, nor were ever thought to do so by the disciples of our Lord³⁸. To a Jew, indeed, these phrases

were

³⁴ ‘ As if he had said, as of yourselves you are apprized, that the unfolding of the leaves in trees is the forerunner of summer; so also know, that these signs are the forerunners of your deliverance.’ Wolzogenius.

³⁵ Ess. on the Truth of the Chr. Rel. p. 56.;

³⁶ i. e. a kingdom or dispensation set up by God.

³⁷ It is called, says bishop Kidder, ‘*the kingdom of heaven*, it being set up, as Daniel expresseth it, by *the God of heaven*.’ Demonstr. of the Messiah, vol. III. p. 388.

³⁸ P. 29—78. That they bear this sense may be seen in the works of Mede (vol. I. p. 134), in bishop Chandler’s Defence of Christianity from the Prophecies (p. 101), and in the commentaries of Macknight, Dr. Pearce, and Wolzogenius; and will undeniably appear from the allegation of two or three instances. Addressing himself as to the scribes and pharisees,

were familiar. Thus Mr Kidder assures us, that the Chaldee paraphraast, like the writers of the New Testament, sometimes denominated the kingdom of the Messiah, *the kingdom of God*³⁹. Accordingly, says Dr. Sykes, ‘the Jews were so well acquainted with the meaning of this expression, and were so well apprized of a kingdom which God had resolved in his due time to set up, that as often as Jesus talked of *the kingdom of Heaven, or, of God*; neither the people, nor their rulers ever offered to ask him the meaning of that phrase⁴⁰.’

Jesus said (Mat. xxiii. 13), *ye shut up THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* That their power reached to a future world, that the virtuous they could exclude from being admitted into the mansions of eternity, cannot for a moment be supposed. The meaning, then, plainly is: you will not yourselves enter into the gospel-dispensation, nor will you omit to practise various expedients to preclude others from the participation of its privileges. That Christ did not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils, was objected against him by his inveterate enemies, the pharisees (Mat. xii. 24, 28); and a part of his reply was, *but if I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then THE KINGDOM OF GOD is come unto you.* The interpretation is obvious, and is partly given in the words of Dr. Sykes: but if I perform miraculous works by the divine assistance, it is evident then, that ‘the kingdom of the Messiah is come in your times: and the miracles done by me confirm that I am no impostor.’ One other instance shall be alleged, as it is a famous text, which has, by the advocates of the Roman see, been greatly perverted. When Jesus said unto Peter (Mat. xvi. 9), *I will give unto thee the keys of THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN;* his meaning was, says Dr. Sykes, I will cause that you, the first of all the apostles, shall, by preaching, open the gospel dispensation both to the Gentiles and to the Jews. Within the narrow pale of the Jewish church religious privileges were no longer to be shut up and confined. They were to be unlocked to mankind in general. Accordingly we read in the Acts of the extraordinary success of Peter’s preaching; and that he did, in fact, bring into the church of Christ the first converts, and great numbers of them, as well from the Gentile world, as from the Jews.

³⁹ Dem. of the Mess. vo. III. p. 388.

⁴⁰ On the Tr. of the Chr. Rel. p. 25.

But a part of the words of Jesus shall again be cited. *When ye see and know these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand*⁴¹. Of these words the full import appears to be; when ye perceive that the antichristian monarchies and aristocracies of the world are falling to pieces, be assured, that what is the proper Messiah's kingdom is then approaching. Hitherto the way has only been prepared for this kingdom⁴². Hitherto has been the reign, not of genuine Christianity, but of antichristianism. This passage ought not lightly to be passed over, for, if duly considered, it will be sufficient to evince, that Christ could be speaking of the commencement of no other period, than that happy state of the world, which is so largely described by his beloved disciple, as certainly to be established, and certainly to continue for a very long duration.

Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. This clause of the prediction has, I conceive, not merely been generally misapprehended, but moreover falsely translated; and this is the opinion of men, who hold the first rank in scriptural criticism, namely of Mede and Wolfius and Dr. Sykes⁴³. To the destruction of Jerusalem a Mr. Hayne had applied this part of our Lord's prophecy. Hear a part of Mr. Mede's reply. 'I answer, first, while you endeavour in this manner to establish a ground for the

⁴¹ That is, says Mede, that the millennium is at hand. p. 934.

⁴² 'By Christ's kingdom,' says Dr. J. Edwards, 'is sometimes meant that peculiar and special time of his reigning,—when Christianity shall arrive at its height, when the Church shall be in its meridian.—It may be this is that kingdom of God, of which, and the things appertaining to it, our Saviour discoursed to his apostles before he left the world, Acts 1. 3.' *Hist. of all the Dispensations of Religion*, vol. II. p. 649.

⁴³ Other respectable critics, who have maintained the same opinion, it is also easy to name, as Brenius (in loc.) and Markius (in *Exercit. Eusegetic.* p. 560).

' first coming of Christ, you bereave the church of those
' principal passages of the scripture, whereon she hath
' always grounded her faith of the second coming. Se-
' condly, you ground all this upon the *ambiguity* of the
' word *generation*, whereas γενεὰ signifies not only ætas,
' but *gens*⁴⁴, *natio*, *progenies*, and so ought to be here
' taken; viz.—the nation of the Jews should not *perish*,
' till all these things were fulfilled. For so signifies
' παρελθον in the Hebrew notion, as you may see even in
' the verse following.—Chrysostom among the anc-
' ents⁴⁵, and Flacius Illyricus (a man well skilled in the
' style of scripture) among the moderns, and those who
' follow them, might have admonished others to take
' the word γενεὰ in this acceptation, rather than by turn-
' ing it *ætas* or *seculum*, to put this prophecy in little-
' ease, and the whole harmony of scripture out of frame,
' by I know not what confused interpretation⁴⁶. I only
add, that Dr. Sykes declares himself the more confirmed
in this translation 'from the remarkable, and indeed, un-
' paralleled, *preservation* of the Jews in the midst of
' hatred and continual persecutions⁴⁷'. The meaning
then is, the Jewish nation shall assuredly subsist as a dis-
tinct people, till all that has been previously mentioned
shall have been *fulfilled*, not only during the most cor-
rupt period of the church, but until the antichristian go-
vernments of the world shall have been dissolved, and
the religion of Jesus shall have begun to shine with its
natural lustre. And what is there in the existing circum-

⁴⁴ Accordingly Beza, in the Gospels, repeatedly renders γενεὰ by the word *gens*. Vorstius (in his *Philol. Sacr.* c. 12) says, 'γενεὰ PROPIE
' genus, progeniem, familiam significat. Deinde et τὴν γενεῶν *generationem*.'

⁴⁵ Indeed by the fathers in general, who must be admitted to have been competent judges of the meaning of the word, γενεὰ was not understood as signifying the generation then living. Some persons, however, there were, who held this opinion; but says Maldonatus, Origen entitles them *simplices*.

⁴⁶ P. 919.

⁴⁷ On the Tr. of the Chr. Rel. p. 61.

stances of the world, or of the Jews, which contradicts this assertion, or renders it incapable of being verified?

The language of Christ is expressed with all possible strength. *Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my word shall not pass away.* That is, says bp Newton, ‘Heaven and earth shall sooner or more easily pass away; the frame of the universe shall sooner or more easily be dissolved, than my words not be fulfilled⁴⁸.’ And surely the prediction of the Jews remaining as a separate people was a fact of sufficient importance, and sufficiently interesting to the persons whom our Lord was addressing, to account why he annexed to it an affirmation thus striking and solemn.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. To excite an habitual vigilance in Christians of every age appears to have been the primary aim of this admonition. From the manner in which our Lord introduces the expression, *that day*, it is, however, evident, that he is still speaking of the same period, of which he had been treating in the preceding verses. The verse, then, must be explained so as to harmonize with the rest, and accordingly may, in this manner, be paraphrased. Beware of falling into habits of intemperance and extravagance. Be cautious of being so besotted by sordid interest and the cares of this life; that you should in consequence engage in criminal pursuits and criminal com-

⁴⁸ ‘It is a common figure of speech in the oriental languages, to say of two things that the one shall be and the other shall not be, when the meaning is only, the one shall happen sooner or more easily than the other. As in this instance of our Saviour.’ Bp. Newton, vol. II. p. 318. But St. Luke expresses himself, on a like occasion, without a figure (xvi. 17), *it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail*.

binations, adverse to the general happiness of mankind, and to the practice of Christianity, and thus should not discern the *Signs of the Times*, nor perceive the approach of that momentous period, when the way shall be prepared for the establishment of that religion *in spirit and in truth*, and those, who uphold what is antichristian and oppressive, shall be subjected to the heaviest and most unlooked for calamities. *For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth.* When that period arrives, and unexpectedly will it arrive, those, who obstinately cling to antichristian abuses, shall be destined to fall a snare to the devices themselves have planned.

In the parallel chapter of Matthew (xxiv), in v. 41, 42, and 43 it is said, *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.* Therefore be ye also ready: for, in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh. Bp Newton observes, that ‘Christ is said to come upon any notable and illustrious manifestation of his providence⁴⁹;’ and accordingly the context here directs us to understand his coming of that splendid display of justice, when, as we are told in this chapter, the symbolic sun, and moon, and stars will all be darkened.

Strongly is this interpretation of these three verses confirmed by the manner in which a parallel passage is applied by St. John. In the war of Armageddon, the antichristian kings are to experience an irreparable defeat; and, in the account of this war, the following caution is inserted; *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth⁵⁰.* Here, says Daubuz, Christ himself is plainly represented as speaking. With a reference to the

⁴⁹ Vol. III. p. 346.

⁵⁰ XVI. 15.

exhortation of Christ, which has just been quoted from Matthew, I cite also the following passage from Dr. Hartley. ‘ How near the dissolution of the present governments, generally or particularly, may be, would be great rashness to affirm. Christ will come in this sense also, as a thief in the night⁵¹. ’

On the order of time, in which the events predicted by our Lord are to follow each other, somewhat may be farther noted. *The powers of heaven shall be shaken.* The antichristian powers shall be removed from the political universe. *And THEN shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* And quickly afterwards the religion of Jesus shall have a glorious prevalence. *AND WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS;* when a part of the oppressive governments of the world shall be destroyed (probably those of this character in Europe), and the Christian religion is in consequence beginning to produce its natural effects; *THEN look up, and lift up your heads; for your deliverance draweth nigh.* But Matthew says, that *the sun shall be darkened AFTER the tribulation of those days.* What then is the conclusion we draw from the comparison of the two passages? Since from Matthew we gather, that the tribulation and persecution of the Jews are entirely to cease, before the antichristian governments of the world shall be completely darkened; and since from Luke we learn, that what is called their *deliverance* is an event subsequent to the commencement of the destruction of these governments; it is probable, that an interval of time will elapse, between their being tolerated and freed from all considerable oppressions, and their return to their own land and acceptance of the gospel of

⁵¹ On Man, vol. II. p. 368.

Jesus. To the expectations of reason this, indeed, is perfectly consonant.

From the explication which has been offered of our Lord's predictions, it will, I hope, appear, that however awful and terrifying may be the aspect which they wear, when first surveyed, and however they may have been thought to threaten human kind in general ; yet that they do, when narrowly inspected and justly interpreted, cease to afford ground of alarm to the philosophic philanthropist and genuine Christian ; though they are, indeed, fitted to communicate a degree of seriousness and solicitude to every mind, and are calculated to inspire with the most painful reflexions and the deepest dismay all the sons of usurpation and of plunder, however elevated their power, however ancient their claims, and however artfully they may have sheltered themselves under the forms of law or the *profession* of Christianity. But persons of this description regard not the divine oracles. It were well, if, in the ears of such, the tremendous words of the apostle Paul were loudly sounded. *Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets : Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish ; for I work a work in your days, a work, which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you*⁵². These words ' St. Paul applied' (I am now quoting from bp Hurd) ' to the unbelieving Jews ; of whose mockery, ' and of whose fate, ye have heard what their own historian witnesseth⁵³ : and if we equal their obdurate spirit, ' that prophecy may clearly be applied, and no man can

⁵² Acts xiii. 40, 41.

⁵³ Vol. II. p. 228. ' Josephus tells us, that, in the last dreadful ruin of his unhappy countrymen, it was familiar with them, to make a jest of divine things, and to deride, as so many senseless tales and juggling impostors, the sacred oracles of their prophets ; though they were then fulfilling before their eyes, and even upon themselves,' Hurd, p. 226.

say, that it was not intended to be applied to ourselves.—
 ‘ Let us, then, on a principle of self-love, if not of pity, keep the sayings of this book⁵⁴, concerning THE MAN OF SIN. From many appearances, the appointed time for THE FULL COMPLETION of them may not be very remote. And it becomes our prudence to take heed, that we be not found in the number of those, to whom that awful question is proposed, ‘ How is it, that ye do not discern the signs of this time⁵⁵? ’ This cautious and courtly prelate here assumes an apostolic plainness; and seems, for a moment, to be forgetful of his episcopal station, and to divest himself of his natural character. To many of those, with whom his lordship associates, a more suitable lesson of caution and of advice he could not have possibly offered.

My next quotation is from another classical scholar, who has likewise contemplated the signs of the times with an attentive eye, and who also was educated in the bosom of the church and in the university of Cambridge; but whose principles of conduct have been perfectly opposite to those of the bishop of Worcester. ‘ There is,’ says Mr. Wakefield, ‘ a season, when inactivity were a crime; and public admonition, even at the hazard of personal comforts, rises into an indispensable obligation; to those at least, who are desirous that their master should not be ashamed of them at his second coming. I am expecting with trembling solicitude, amidst the incessant occupations of a literary life, that alarming catastrophe, which the signs of the times indicate, in my mind, to be rapidly approaching⁵⁶. ’

⁵⁴ Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein. Rev. i. 3.

⁵⁵ Luke xii. 56.

⁵⁶ Spirit of Christianity compared with the Spirit of the Times, p. 26.

To the reasons which have before been stated⁵⁷, to account why the preceding exposition of the prophecy of Jesus has not been embraced or noticed by any of our English commentators, it may be added, that most of them have been too contracted in their inquiries, and have been little careful to collect the light which has been struck out by foreign writers on the subject: and that their vernacular version, upon which too implicit confidence has been placed, is, in some important points, erroneous.

⁵⁷ In p. 396.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE COMMON INTERPRETATIONS OF CHRIST'S PROPHECY.

HAVING endeavoured to give a rational and consistent interpretation of the whole of the latter division of our Lord's prophetic discourse; I shall, in order to furnish the reader with a yet farther presumption of its truth, briefly allege some objections, which have forcibly struck my own mind, and appear completely to overthrow the two other hypotheses; one of which would explain it of the end of the world and the final judgment; whilst the other would confine it to the period, when the capital of Judea was captured and destroyed. Of these two interpretations, the first has obtained the greatest number of advocates¹; and with that I shall begin.

¹ See Cressener's Dem. of the Prot. Appl. of the Apoc. p. 31.

It is to the false translation of *τε αἰώνος*, as signifying *the world*, that its prevalence may in a great degree be attributed. This translation has the patronage of archbishop Tillotson. After our Lord's disciples had inquired, *when shall these things be*, i. e. when shall the temple be destroyed, to this inquiry ‘they subjoined,’ says the archbishop, ‘another; and what shall be the sign of thy coming? that is, to judgment, and of the end of the world? which, in all probability, was added to the former, because they supposed that the one was presently to follow the other².’ ‘The disciples,’ says Matt. Henry in a more positive tone, ‘had confounded the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, which was built upon a mistake, as if the temple must needs stand as long as the world stands.’ It is true, they were mistaken³. But *this* is an error, from which, I am convinced, they steered perfectly clear. ‘They must,’ as Dr. Macknight observes, ‘certainly have known, that Solomon’s building had been destroyed by the Babylonians, though erected by the appointment of God, and dignified with the Schechinah, or visible symbol of the Divine presence. If so, they could hardly think that a temple so much inferior, both in the greatness of its privileges, and the beauty of its fabric, was not to perish, unless in the desolation of the world. In the second place, according to this interpretation of the prophecy, Jesus hath declared, with the greatest solemnity, a thing which no person could be ignorant of. For who did not know, that with the world Herod’s temple, and all other buildings, should crumble into pieces?’

‘If,’ says Mr. Nisbett, ‘our translation is admitted to be right, the disciples not only introduce a question, which has no connexion with the occasion which gave

² Serm. 96.

³ See p. 531, 532.

rise

'rise to it, but which was directly opposed to their well-known sentiments. So far were they from conceiving 'the end of the world to be at hand, in the strict and literal sense of the expression, that they became the followers of Jesus from a firm persuasion, that he was the 'Messiah, who should reign gloriously over them⁴.' And it may be added, that the apostles could not have forgotten, what the repeated prophetic declarations of Daniel necessarily imply, that the kingdom of Christ to be established on earth should be of very long duration⁵.

Jerusalem, says the holy founder of our religion (Luk. xxii. 24), shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and, two or three verbes farther, when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your deliverance draweth nigh. That the first of these passages relates to the restoration of the Jews, is plain; and that the second has a reference to the same event, there can be little room to doubt. To suppose that all the latter part of our Lord's prophecy respects the dissolution of the world, is to suppose, that he has solemnly foretold the future deliverance of the Jews, and that this solemn declaration shall never be fulfilled. Such is the dilemma, to which the advocates of this opinion are reduced.

Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled, is the affirmation of Christ, as given in our common version. It is on the sense, here annexed to γενετη, and on the literal interpretation of other of his words, that an artful, and seemingly formidable, objection against the truth of our Lord's predictions has been founded. The quotation that follows is from a writer, who approaches the believer with the mask of a

⁴ Illustr. of Passages in the Epist. of the New Test. &c. p. 15.

⁵ See Dan. II. 44. vii. 14, 18, 27.

friend, at the same time that he breathes the most determined hostility against the religion of Jesus, and seizes every opportunity of silently aiming a blow against the evidences of its divine original. ‘ Those who understood ‘ in their literal sense the discourses of Christ himself ‘ were,’ says Mr. Gibbon, ‘ OBLIGED to expect the second and glorious coming of the son of man in the clouds, before that *generation* was totally extinguished, which had beheld his humble condition upon earth, and which might still be witness to the calamities of the Jews under Vespasian or Hadrian. The revolution of seventeen centuries has instructed us not to press too closely the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation ; but as long as, for wise purposes, this error was permitted to subsist in the church, it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians.’ But the lapse of time, I conceive, furnishes a very different lesson. It instructs us, not that the figurative language of prophecy has been pressed too closely, but that it has not been pressed close enough.

Not very differently speaks a doctor of the church, whose concession will probably be regarded as rather extraordinary, when it is considered that it proceeded from the pulpit of one of our universities. Our Saviour, says Dr. Thomas Edwards, in the xxivth ch. of Matthew, ‘ decisively foretells, that the *generation* then existing should not be totally extinguished, till it had witnessed his second and glorious appearance in the clouds of heaven. Yet the records of history *do not* authorize us to believe, that this prediction was accomplished at the destruction of Jerusalem.’

* Decl. and Fall of the Roman Emp. vol. II. p. 301.

† Sermon on the Predictions of the Apostles concerning the End of the World, preached before the University of Cambridge, 1790. p. 19.

And after professedly investigating the import of various passages relevant to this subject, and noticing the specious, and, as he conceives, unanswerable objection of Mr. Gibbon; he terminates his enquiry with declaring, that ‘ it becomes the antagonist of our historian most earnestly to consider, whether the real interests of Christianity would not be more essentially promoted by conceding the objection to his adversary, than by vainly attempting to remove it⁸. ’ But happily the attempt is not vain. The interpretation of our Lord’s prophecy, which has been given in the present work, completely wrests from the hands of the infidel this powerful objection, against the truth of Christianity, and the veracity of Jesus as a prophet.

What our Lord says (Mark xiii. 27), *and then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven*, will be explained in a future chapter; and I will here only observe, that this passage, which has been triumphantly urged as pointing to the day of judgment, and which, at the first sight, certainly does afford more countenance to that idea than any other verse in the whole of the discourse, is in truth *inapplicable* to that event. For, at that awful period, not *the elect* only, but all men whatsoever, will, it may be expected, be summoned before the tribunal of Christ.

Another portion also of the prophecy, which has been thought most favourable to the hypothesis I am considering, *and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven*, will, if traced to its source, be found altogether adverse to it. For the expression was borrowed by our Lord from the viith ch. of Daniel⁹, where

⁸ P. 35.

⁹ We may, says Mede, take ‘ this for a sure ground, that this expression of the Son of man’s coming in the clouds of heaven, so often inculcated in the

‘ New

it unquestionably relates not to the dissolution of the world, but to the commencement of the millennium. It might have been expected, that this circumstance would, of itself, have furnished the commentators with a clue, capable of guiding them in their researches, and that it would have led them to fix on the true period, to which our Lord's prophecy pointed.

The interpretation that follows from Matthew Henry is totally repugnant to reason and probability. In the 24th and 25th verses of the xiith ch. of Mark, Christ foretells the *final dissolution* of the present frame and fabric of the world: even of that part of it which seems least liable to change, even the upper part; *the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall no more give her light;* for they shall be quite out-shone by the glory of the Son of man, Isa. xxiv. 23. The stars of heaven, that from the beginning had kept their place, and regular motion, shall fall as leaves in autumn; and *the powers that are in heaven,* the heavenly bodies, the fixed stars, *shall be shaken*¹⁰. They are such interpretations as this,

¹ New Testament, is taken from and hath reference to the prophecy of Daniel, being no where else found in the Old Testament. As our Saviour also calls himself so frequently *the Son of man*, because Daniel so called him,—and that we might look for the accomplishment of what is there prophesied of in him. It was not in vain, that when our Saviour quoted the prophecy of Daniel, he added, *he that readeth him, let him understand.* p. 934. See a similar observation of Dr. Sykes mentioned in p. 529.

¹⁰ Dr. Pococke, in his Commentary on a similar passage in Joel, ch. iii. v. 15, where it is said, *the sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining,* says, ‘Jerom thinks the words so to sound, as if those heavenly bodies, not able to behold the sorrows of that day of God’s judgments spoken of, and the cruel torments inflicted on them that shall then perish, should even out of fear to themselves withdraw their presence. He seems to refer it to the dreadful day of the last judgment.’ That it cannot point to that day is plain from the temporal blessings, which are promised, in the subsequent verses, to the children of Israel.

and that other which is cited from Jerom in a note, which have afforded some colour of plausibility to the groundless declaration of Thomas Paine, a declaration on which he lays much stress (in his *Age of Reason*), that the belief of Christianity, and the belief of a plurality of worlds, are altogether irreconcileable. ‘What are we to think,’ asks this celebrated writer, ‘of the Christian system of faith, that forms itself upon the idea of only one world, and that of no greater extent, as is before shewn, than 25,000 miles¹¹?’ Certainly if this narrow, unphilosophic idea formed really a part of the Christian system, this circumstance would throw over it very strong suspicions. But the fact is, that the idea ought to be separated from it, and that Christianity stands perfectly clear of the charge¹².

Had

¹¹ P. 39—46. In animadverting on the manner in which Mr. Paine has spoken of the book of Revelation, Mr. Wakefield says, ‘that the random fiction of a distempered brain should be marked with such characters of consistency and truth, as are found on the face of the apocalypse, is to me perfectly inconceivable: not much unlike a suspicion, that the fabric of St. Peter’s at Rome was not the work of architectural ingenuity, but thrown up in its present form by an earthquake or a volcano.’ Exam. of the *Age of Reason*, 2d ed. p. 45.

¹² In truth, the study of revelation, by teaching us, that we are beings designed for immortality tends to enlarge our views with respect to the probable destination of many of the planetary orbs, which revolve either round our own or more distant suns. To suppose that the particular state of being and happiness, or the particular place of residence, to which virtuous men will be transported at their departure from this world, will for ever remain the same, is, I conceive, an expectation contracted and unphilosophic, though it has, indeed, been frequently countenanced by the declarations of divines. In the chain of existence, man, it may be presumed, constitutes no very elevated link. The distinctions of being, which intervene between man and the oyster, numerous as they are, it is likely, are surpassed in number by those which separate man from the Deity. Is it credible, that an immortality should be passed, on a single spot of creation, or in a uniform routine of occupations? Is it not rather to be expected,

Had the discourse of Jesus been prophetic of the dissolution of the world and of the day of Judgment, surely it might have been expected, that some notice should have been taken in it of the resurrection of the dead, of their being summoned before the bar of Christ, of the solemn sentence there to be pronounced, and of the varying situations of felicity and wretchedness in which each individual shall then be placed. But to these momentous circumstances there is no allusion in the prophecy.

Bp Newton, Dr. Macknight, Mr. Nisbett, and some other modern writers, plainly discerning that this interpretation of our Lord's prophecy, as referring to the end of the world, is altogether untenable, have advanced another, which they flatter themselves is more free from difficulties. The whole of it they explain as relating to the Jewish state alone, and the subversion of the Jewish capital and polity. As the interpretation they reject is principally grounded upon an erroneous translation of *αἰών*; in the same manner that which they have adopted derives its prime support from the ambiguity of a single word. But the argument, drawn from the equivocal meaning of *γένεται*, is spoken of by bp. Newton as if it

expected, that there will be a long succession of states and of worlds, in which improvements will gradually succeed to improvements, the faculties of the celestial inhabitants being more and more enlarged, and their prospects becoming more and more extensive? The promises of never-ending happiness, which the New Testament promises to the virtuous, do then perfectly correspond with those magnificent ideas of the extent of space, and the capaciousness of the heavenly bodies, which the study of Astronomy suggests. The extreme brevity of the period of our continuance on earth, when contrasted with the boundless extent of eternity, bears, indeed, some analogy to the difference, which subsists between the immensity of the material universe, and the comparative *diminutiveness* of the solar system, which, to an eye placed in the centre of existence, would appear but as a point, and, if annihilated, would be far from occasioning any perceptible vacuity.

were

were decisive and irresistible. ‘ It is,’ says he, ‘ to me a wonder how any man can refer part of the foregoing discourse to the destruction of Jerusalem, and part to the end of the world, or any other distant event, when it is said so positively here in the conclusion, *all these things shall be fulfilled in this generation*¹³. ’ In order to account for the wonder expressed by the prelate, and for his having sincerely felt it, candour might incline one to suppose, were the supposition admissible, that he had never heard of another signification having been annexed to the word. But since it was differently explained by the generality of the fathers, and, as has already been seen, by Brenius, and Mede, by Wolfius, Marckius and Dr. Sykes; and since the world was in possession of their respective writings, antecedently to the publication of the bishop’s Dissertations, not to mention other well known authors who had noticed this explication of the word; it is not credible, that so diligent a student as his Lordship could have been ignorant of it, or of its having been advanced by critics of eminence.

The reader has already seen, that in Matthew the question of our Lord’s disciples runs thus (and it is in Matthew that it is most fully expressed), *Tell us, when shall these things be?* i. e. the overthrow and demolition of the temple of Jerusalem. *And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the period?* That this passage contains two distinct questions, any person, I think, who views it with an impartial eye, will not fail of discerning; and it is therefore reasonable to believe, that our Lord would give to them distinct answers. As bp. Newton, however, clearly perceived, that if these premises were granted, the conclusion alleged would follow; he asserts, that ‘ the purport of the question plainly

‘is when shall the destruction of Jerusalem be, and what shall be the signs of it¹⁴.’—But this is only part of the purport; and, I believe, this mode of limiting the question is not more contrary to the opinion of the majority of interpreters, than it is at variance with the plain import of the words. ‘They inquire of him,’ says Chrysostom (in loc.), ‘these two things, when shall these things be; namely the dissolution of the temple, and what would be the sign of his *coming*.’

Theophylact (in loc.) has a similar passage. Indeed the learned Maldonatus (in his commentary printed in 1639) says, that *no one* denies, that the disciples asked of him distinct questions, respecting the destruction of the temple, and his *coming*. ‘Christ, if I am capable of discerning, any thing,’ says Grotius, ‘distinctly answers to distinct questions.—*The coming* of Christ many do not distinguish from the end of the world, being, I apprehend, deceived by the ambiguity of the word; for it is most certain, that the word παρεστη [or *coming*] has a diversity of acceptation.—I here interpret it, not of the Judgment, but of THE KINGDOM of the Messiah¹⁵.’

‘Our Saviour could not,’ says Mr. Taylor of Portsmouth, ‘mean to tell his disciples, that his *coming* would be during that generation and at the time of the desolation, because he had assured them, that the time of his *coming*, was known to God alone, verse 36. Mar. xiii. 32¹⁶.’

In the 24th v. of the xxist ch. of Luke our Lord foretells, that the Jews shall be led *into all nations*, and that the capital of their country shall continue in possession of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*. Now this period is not arrived, but *Jerusalem* is still trod-

¹⁴ Vol. II. p. 214.

¹⁵ Grot. in Mat. xxiv. 3.

¹⁶ On the *Grand Apostacy*, p. 52.

den down of the Gentiles: and it is therefore reasonable to suppose, from the manner in which the 9 subsequent verses are introduced, that neither are the prophecies contained in *them* yet accomplished.

It is to Judea and Jerusalem alone, that bp. Newton, and those who follow his hypothesis, of course apply the 25th verse ; which, according to the common translation, runs thus, *and there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.* But it would, I apprehend, require far greater talents than the bp. of Bristol or any other prelate ever possessed to shew, how *συνοχη εθνων*, which signifies the distress of the nations or of the Gentiles, and *οικουμενη*, which denotes either the habitable earth or the wide extent of the Roman empire, can be applied, with any shew of reason and of probability, to the Jewish people and to the narrow limits of Palestine.

With what colour of plausibility the encouragement of Jesus to *look up and lift up their heads*, on account of an approaching deliverance, can be applied, as bp. Newton and his followers have applied it, to the period when Jerusalem was destroyed, I am, also, altogether unable to discern. They cannot consider it to have been addressed by our Lord to his disciples in the character of Jews, since this was the æra, when the descendants of Abraham sustained a complete overthrow, and encountered the most signal calamities : nor is it agreeable to the veracity of his prophetic character, to suppose him to have foretold, that, at the destruction of Jerusalem, the hour of the deliverance of the Christians would approach, though it is a well-known fact, that they were then exposed, and for a *very* long period of years subsequent to that time continued to be exposed, to all the frowns and insults of the world ; to the powerful enmity of the priesthood, and to

the persecutions of the civil magistrate, persecutions cruel in their effects and frequent in their recurrence.

Our Lord says (I am now transcribing from Matthew), *and then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* The expression translated, *all the tribes of the earth*, bp. Newton asserts, signifies merely the Jewish tribes, inhabiting the province of Judea; and he maintains, that this passage plainly signifies, 'that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ's power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn'. But unfortunately for this interpretation, it is completely at variance with the testimony of civil and ecclesiastical history. So far from authorizing us to conclude, that the Jews discerned or acknowledged, in the destruction of their city, any display of Christ's power; or that they attributed to their rejection of him, and the cruel death which he had received at their hands, the overthrow of their armies, their capital, and their polity; it informs us, that they still insulted the memory of their crucified Messiah, and still remained hardened in infidelity.

Dr. Campbell, speaking of that verse in Luke where it is said, *then shall there be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress, with perplexity of the nations*, says, 'the prediction, which the verse under examination introduces, is accurately distinguished by the historian, as not commencing till after the completion of the former. It was not, till after the calamities which were to befal the Jews should be ended; after their capital and temple, their last resource,

should be invested and taken, and the wretched inhabitants destroyed or carried captive into all nations; after Jerusalem should be trodden by the Gentiles; nay, and after the triumph of the Gentiles should be brought to a period; that the prophecy contained in this and the two subsequent verses should begin to take effect. The judicious reader, to be convinced of this, needs only give the passage an attentive perusal¹⁸. To this quotation another from Mede may be added. To interpret the ‘coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, and his kingdom then, of his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, is contrary to the context of our Saviour’s prophecy: for the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem was the beginning and cause of that great and long tribulation of that people; but the coming and appearing of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven is expressly said should be after it, immediately after the days of that tribulation, &c. Matt. xxiv. 29. Mark xiii. 24.’ To the same purpose Luke says, after, or when the ‘Times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, THEN shall be signs in the sun and moon, and THEN they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud¹⁹.’ This point Mr. Mede had closely considered, and the foregoing statement, he was convinced, was clear and incontrovertible. But some one, unacquainted with the character of this great commentator, may suppose, that, however profoundly learned, he might, notwithstanding, be accustomed to frame his interpretations of scripture, hastily and on light

¹⁸ So extremely brief are Dr. Campbell’s observations on our Lord’s prophecy, that the passage above, to every word of which I subscribe, constitutes a large part of them; and though that passage is accompanied with no doubts, the learned translator, nevertheless, in direct opposition to it, renders the 32d verse, verily I say unto you that this generation shall not pass, until ALL be accomplished.

¹⁹ P. 920.

grounds. To the consideration of such a one I recommend the following testimony of a learned prelate.
 ‘ Cool, deliberate, and severe, in forming his judgments,
 ‘ he was so far from being obsequious to the fancies of
 ‘ other men, that he was determined only by the last de-
 ‘ gree of evidence, to acquiesce in any conclusions of his
 ‘ own²⁰.’

To the scholar, who is disposed to pay yet farther attention to the prophetic discoveries of Jesus, and is desirous to study every verse in the parallel account of Matthew, as well as that prophecy which is recorded in the xviiith ch. of Luke²¹, I recommend, as highly worthy of his perusal, three chapters of the learned Brenius’s treatise, *De Regno Ecclesiæ Glorioſo*²².

²⁰ Such is the language of Hurd (vol. II. p. 124). I may add, that his friend Warburton, speaking of the reign of James the first, entitles Mede, ‘ the greatest divine and scholar of that age.’ His Works, 4to, vol. V. p. 451.

²¹ From v. 20—v. 37.

²² Opera, Amstelædami. 1666. Pars I. cap. 5, 7, and 8.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DISPERSION AND RESTORATION OF THE JEWS REPEATEDLY FORETOLD.

TO the restoration of the Jews allusion has several times been incidentally made. But such is the perspicuity, the number, and the importance, of the passages which foretell this event, that the subject deserves to be illustrated in a separate chapter. The predictions relative to this people, which have already been accomplished,

plished, are, observes bishop Newton, ‘ a sufficient pledge and earnest of what is yet to come¹. ’

Various are the passages of Holy Writ, which point out the last and greatest of their dispersions. With respect to its extent, what similitude could have been more expressive than that of the prophet Amos²? *I will sift the house of Israel among ALL NATIONS, like as corn is sifted in a sieve.* With respect to the manner in which they have been treated, what denunciation could have been more correctly fulfilled, than that of Jeremiah³? *I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.*

The predictions of Moses, the founder of the Jewish polity, recorded in the xxviiith ch. of Deuteronomy, must also be admitted to be wonderfully perspicuous and circumstantial. Nor did they by any means receive their complete accomplishment in the events of the Babylonish captivity. If, said this divine law-giver, addressing himself to the Jews, you forsake the living God, then *shall he bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth: a nation, whose tongue thou shalt not understand: a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young.* And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land. *And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustest, throughout all thy land.*

The nation, spoken of by the prophet, was to come *from far, from the end of the earth.* ‘ This shews,’ says bishop

¹ Vol. I. p. 240.

² IX. 9.

³ XXIV. 9.

Patrick, that ‘ he speaks of the Romans, rather than of the Chaldeans, who did not come *from far*, much less from the *end of the earth*:—whereas the Romans by whom they were last destroyed, came literally *from far*, and from the *end of the earth*; particularly Julius Severus was called by the emperor Hadrian to their destruction out of this island of Britain; wherein Vespasian also had given great proof of his conduct. And Hadrian himself, and Trajan, by whom they were still more crushed, after Vespasian had destroyed their city and temple, were both Spaniards by birth. And, therefore, Manasseh Ben Israel says peremptorily, in his book *de Termino Vitæ* (lib III. sect. 3), this is to be understood of the soldiers in Vespasian’s army, which he brought out of England, France, and Spain, and other remote parts of the world.’ ‘ The Romans too,’ says bp. Newton, ‘ for the rapidity of their conquests might very well be compared to eagles, and perhaps not without an allusion to the standard of the Roman armies, which was an eagle⁴.’ Not only *the eagles*, and *the distance from Rome*, says Dr. Apthorp, ‘ discriminate the Romans from the Chaldeans, but also *the language*, for that of the latter was only a dialect of the Hebrew⁵.’

This distant people, says the Jewish legislator, shall be *of fierce countenance, not regarding the person of the old, nor shewing favour to the young*. To the conduct of the Romans these particulars, says bishop Patrick, are strictly applicable; for they were ‘ a people stern, fierce, undaunted,’ who ‘ inflexibly pursued their designs.’ The passage that follows is from bp. Newton. ‘ When Vespasian entered Gadara, Josephus saith, that “ he slew all, man by man, the Romans showing mercy to no age, out of hatred to the nation, and remembrance of

⁴ Vol. I. p. 179.

⁵ Vol. I. p. 228.

“ their

" their former injuries." The like slaughter was made at Gamala. " For no body escaped besides two women, " and they escaped by concealing themselves from the rage of the Romans. For they did not so much as spare young children; but every one, at that time, snatching up many, cast them down from the citadel⁶." Their enemies were also to besiege and take their cities. The Romans, as we may read in Josephus's history of the Jewish war, demolished several fortified places, before they besieged and destroyed Jerusalem. And the Jews may very well be said to have *trusted in their high and fenced walls*, for they seldom ventured a battle in the open field.' We read also, that, in the reign of Hadrian, ' 50 of their strongest castles, and 985 of their best towns, were sacked and demolished⁷'.

Moses adds in the verses which follow, the man's eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom; because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straightness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. And in like manner the woman's eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter. This also was fulfilled, and in the most literal manner. I know not whether the extremities of famine, to which the Jews were reduced in the memorable siege of their metropolis by Titus, are to be fully paralleled in all the records of history. ' Women,' says Josephus, ' snatched the food out of the very mouths of their husbands, and sons of their fathers, and (what is most lamentable) mothers of their infants.' And ' in every house, if any semblance of food appeared, a battle ensued, and those who were the dearest friends, snatching away the miserable pro-

⁶ Bel. Jud. I. III. c. 7. I. IV. c. i.

⁷ Newton, vol. I. p. 178; vol. II. p. 296.

'visions of life, fought with one another.' And we read in the same author, that a woman of rank and opulence killed and eat her own infant-child⁸.

But the prophet does not foretell merely the greatness of their sufferings during the siege. What should happen to them at a subsequent period he also predicts: the unexampled dispersion they should experience, the universal opprobriums with which they should be assailed, and the cruel persecutions which they should encounter. *Ye shall, says Moses, be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess⁹. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other¹⁰.*—And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy feet have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart¹¹, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, *Would God it were even!* and at even thou shalt say, *Would God it were morning!*—And thou shalt be oppressed and spoiled evermore.—The Lord will make thy plagues wonderful,—even great plagues, and of long continuance.—And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.

⁸ Bel. Jud. I. V. c. 10; I. VI. c. 3.

⁹ Moses elsewhere says, in the name of the Supreme Being, *I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.* Lev. xxvi. 33.

¹⁰ In v. 25 of the same chapter Moses says, *and thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.*

¹¹ The same idea is elsewhere given by Moses in a more expanded form, and with great felicity of expression. Upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts, in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. Lev. xxvi. 36.

It is from the xxviiith ch. of Deuteronomy¹², that all these remarkable passages, which have been quoted from Moses, are taken. ‘Had any thing like this, in Moses’s time,’ asks Dr. Clarke, ‘ever happened to any nation? ‘Or was there in nature any probability that any such ‘thing should ever happen to *any* people? That, when ‘they were conquered by their enemies, and led into ‘captivity, they should neither continue in the place of ‘their captivity, nor be swallowed up and lost among ‘their conquerors, but be scattered among all the nations ‘of the world, and hated by all nations for many ages, ‘and yet continue a people? Or could any description ‘of the Jews, written at this day, possibly be a more exact ‘and lively picture of the state they have *now* been in ‘for many ages; than this prophetic description, given by ‘Moses, more than 3000 years ago¹³?’

‘Here,’ says bp. Newton, ‘are instances of prophecies, ‘of prophecies delivered above three thousand years ago, ‘and yet as we see fulfilling in the world at this very ‘time: and what stronger proofs can we desire of the ‘divine legation of Moses? How these instances may af- ‘fect others, I know not; but for myself I must acknow- ‘ledge, they not only convince, but amaze and astonish ‘me beyond expression¹⁴.’ ‘Chrysostom,’ says Dr. Worthington¹⁵, ‘often presses the argument from the ‘completion of the prophecies concerning the Jews, hav-

¹² Deut. xxviii. 37, 49—52, 59—67. Moses says in another place, *And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them.* Lev. xxvi. 44.

¹³ Evid. of Nat. and Rev. Rel. 1738, p. 433. For a minute account of the fulfilment of all the prophecies relating to the Jews, in their dispersed and persecuted state, Jortin, bp. Newton, and Basnage may be consulted.

¹⁴ Vol. I. p. 199.

¹⁵ Vol. II. p. 33.

ing continued so long in his time. How much greater strength must this argument have acquired since¹⁶?

What bishop Newton has related respecting the origin of his *Dissertations on Prophecy*, in the dedication prefixed to them, may with pertinence be alleged, after the citation of the memorable prophecy of Moses. To the statement of the author of the *Dissertations* the infidel would do well to attend. Should he unite in himself the abilities of a Hume, a Gibbon and a Voltaire, he would not be equal to the task of demonstrating the insolidity of the bishop's conclusion. 'What first suggested the design were some conversations formerly with a great general¹⁷', who had for many years the chief commands in the army, and was a man of good understanding, and of some reading, but unhappily had no regard for revealed religion or the clergy. When the prophecies were urged as a proof of revelation, he constantly derided the notion, asserted that there was no such thing, and that the prophecies which were pretended were written after the events. He was informed, that though such a thing might with less scruple and more confidence be affirmed of some prophecies fulfilled long ago, yet it could never be proved of any, the contrary might be proved almost to a demonstration: but it could not be so much as affirmed of several prophecies without manifest absurdity; for there were several prophecies in scripture, which were not fulfilled till these latter ages, and were fulfilling even now, and consequently could not be framed after the events, but undeniably were written and published many ages before. He was startled at this, and said, he must acknowledge, that if this point could be proved to satisfaction, there would be no arguing against such

¹⁶ *Orat. III. in Judæos*, tom. VI. p. 337. ed Sacil.

¹⁷ In the recently published Discourses of the Rev. Mr. Robert Gray, he is said to have been Marshal Wade.

' plain matter of fact; it would certainly convince him, ' and he believed would be the readiest way to convince ' every reasonable man, of the truth of revelation.'

There are subjects, which to contemplate with what is called *philosophic indifference* (a favourite and perverted expression among a certain class of persons), infallibly indicates a want of feeling and a deficiency of discernment; betrays the incontestable marks of an unnatural insensibility to the best interests of mankind, and of a blind disregard to their own most important concerns and ultimate destination. Prophecy and Revelation are doubtless deserving of being ranked in this class of subjects. The fact, however, is, that infidels are generally chargeable with omitting to consult the pages of prophecy at all; and, when they do consult them, they bring not along with them that degree of previous knowledge, without which, in many cases, it were vain to attempt to arrive at their meaning. Is it then to be wondered, that viewing them, as they do, with an eye, rendered dim by indifference, jaundiced by prejudice, and clouded by ignorance, they should, as they hastily inspect them, discover no solid ground on which to stand? Is it not to be expected, that, amid this religious apathy and neglect of inquiry, they will still wander in the labyrinths of error and the perplexing paths of infidelity; and, remaining involved in its melancholy gloom, will still tread over the tremulous surface of doubt and uncertainty; without being able to descry, through the mists of futurity, mists which the light of revelation enables man to penetrate, those mansions of immortality and happiness, of exalted virtue and improved intellect, which are situated beyond the confines of the grave and this sublunary world, and to which the Christian looks forward with such steady confidence and such transporting hope?

But

But I return to the subject of the chapter. The stubborn incredulity of the Jews, and the extraordinary desolation of their land, Isaiah thus describes. And he said, *Go, and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make¹⁸ the heart of this people fat, and make their eyes 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.* Then said I, *Lord how long?* And he answered, *until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate. And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land*¹⁹. ‘Here is,’ says bp. Newton, ‘a remarkable gradation in the denouncing of these judgments. Not only Jerusalem and the cities should be wasted without inhabitant, but even the single houses should be without man; and not only the houses of the cities should be without man; but even the country should be utterly desolate; and not only the people should be removed out of the land, but the Lord should remove them far away; and they should not be removed for a short period, but there should be a great or rather a long forsaking in the midst of the land. And hath not the world seen all these particulars exactly fulfilled? Have not the Jews laboured under a spiritual blindness and infatuation in hearing but not understanding, in seeing but not perceiving the Messiah, after the accomplishment of so many prophecies, after the performance of so many miracles? Hath not their land been utterly desolate? Have they not been removed far away into the most distant parts of the earth? And hath not their removal or banishment

¹⁸ ‘In the style of scripture the prophets are said to do what they declare will be done.’ Bp. Newton in loc. vol. I. p. 33²

¹⁹ VI. 9—12.

' been now of near 1700 years duration? And do they
' not still continue deaf and blind, obstinate and unbeliev-
' ing? The Jews, at the time of the delivery of this pro-
' phesy, gloried in being the peculiar church and people
' of God: and would any Jew of himself have thought
' or have said, that his nation would in process of time
' become an infidel and reprobate nation, infidel and re-
' probate for many ages, oppressed by men, and forsaken
' by God? It was above 750 years before Christ, that
' Isaiah predicted these things; and how could he have
' predicted them, unless he had been illuminated by the
' divine vision; or could they have succeeded according-
' ly, unless the spirit of prophecy had been the spirit of
' God²⁰?

' That the Jews,' says the bp of Worcester, ' should
' continue for so many ages under such treatment,' as
they have experienced; ' every where and always spurned,
' reviled, oppressed; yet neither worn out by this usage;
' nor induced by it to renounce their offensive profession,
' and take refuge in the mass of people among whom they
' live; that neither time, nor custom, nor suffering,
' should get the better of their bigotry or patience; but
' that they should still subsist, a numerous, a distinct, a
' wretched people, as they do to this day; all this hath
' something prodigious in it, which the common prin-
' ciples of human nature will not easily explain.—They
' thrive under their oppressions, and seem to multiply
' amidst their distresses; as if the order of things were
' reversed in regard to them, and the same causes ope-
' rated to the conservation of this people, which tend so

²⁰ Bp. Newton, vol. I p. 233. ' That a country should be depopulated
' and desolated by the incursions and depredations of foreign enemies
' is,' says the prelate in another place (p. 222), ' nothing wonderful, but
' that it should lie so many ages in this miserable condition is more than
' man could foresee, and could be revealed only by God.'

' naturally

' naturally to the waste and destruction of every other.
 ' That *small colonies* of men, transported into strange
 ' and populous nations, should preserve distinct exist-
 ' ence, and not insensibly moulder away and mix them-
 ' selves with their numerous native masters; this, I think,
 ' is without example in the history of mankind. If
 ' the Jews might be expected to abound any where, it
 ' should methinks be in Judea; where the sight of the
 ' Holy Land, and the memory of their past fortunes,
 ' might invigorate their prejudices, and perpetuate their
 ' attachment to the Jewish name and worship. But it so
 ' happens, that the number of Jews in that country hath
 ' now for many ages been inconsiderable, while they
 ' swarm in every other²¹.'

' The drops of rain which fall, nay the great rivers
 ' which flow into the ocean, are soon mingled and lost
 ' in that immense body of waters: and the same *in all hu-*
man probability would have been the fate of the Jews,
 ' they would have been mingled and lost in the common
 ' mass of mankind; but on the contrary they flow into all
 ' parts of the world, mix with all nations, and yet keep
 ' separate from all. They still live as a distinct people,
 ' and yet they no where live according to their own laws,
 ' no where elect their own magistrates, no where enjoy
 ' the full exercise of their religion²².

' Religions,' says Basnage, ' triumph under the protec-
 ' tion of a conqueror; they languish and sink with sink-
 ' ing monarchies. Paganism, which once overspread the
 ' face of the earth, is extinct. The Christian church,
 ' glorious in its martyrs, yet was considerably diminished
 ' by the persecutions to which it was exposed; and the
 ' breaches, made in it by those acts of violence, it was
 ' not easy to repair. Here, however, we behold a church

²¹ Hurd, vol. I. p. 177, 182, 183.

²² Ep. Newton, vol. I. p. 216.

' hated

‘ hated and persecuted for seventeen centuries; but nevertheless sustaining itself and widely extended. Often have kings employed the severity of edicts and the hand of executioners to ruin it. Seditious multitudes, by means of massacres, have committed outrages against it still more tragical. Princes and People, Pagans, Mahometans, and Christians, at variance in so many things, have coalesced in the design of exterminating it, and have been unable to succeed. The *Bush of Moses*, surrounded with flames, perpetually burns, and is never consumed. At different periods, the Jews have been expelled from all parts of the world; which hath only served to spread them in all regions. From age to age they have been exposed to persecution and misery²³. Yet still they subsist, in spite of the ignominy and the hatred which hath pursued them in all places; whilst the greatest monarchies are fallen, and nothing remains of them besides the name²⁴.’

In addition to those important facts, the *length* and the *severity* of their sufferings, there are some other circumstances, not perhaps entirely unworthy of being noted, which serve to augment our wonder at the Jews still remaining unintermingled with the natives, and with the sects of the various climes which they inhabit. ‘ They profess a religion founded on temporal promises only; and how miserably these have failed them, the experience of many ages hath now shewn.’ They ‘ are shut out from the only country in the world, where the several rites and ordinances of their religion can be regularly and lawfully observed.’ They ‘ have, besides, the sen-

²³ ‘ The account of the Jews who have been plundered, sent naked into banishment, starved, tortured, left to perish in prisons, hanged, and burnt by Christians, would fill many volumes.’ Jortin’s Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. II. p. 420.

²⁴ *Hist. des Juifs*, VI i.

' fible mortification of knowing, that all their brethren
 ' of the dispersion are every where in equal distress with
 ' themselves; and that there is not one Jewish state or
 ' sovereignty subsisting on the face of the whole earth²⁵.'

From considering the present extraordinary situation of the Jews, and the prophecies that foretell their dispersion, I shall pass on to some of those, which assert their future restoration.

' About the time of the fall of the Othman empire and
 ' of the Christian Antichrist, the Jews,' says bp. Newton, ' shall turn to the Lord, and be restored to their own
 ' land. *Innumerable* are the passages concerning the con-
 ' version and restoration of this people²⁶.' This, ob-
 serves Mr. Lowth, ' is plainly foretold by MOST of the
 ' prophets of the Old Testament²⁷.' ' That the Jews,'
 says Dr. Priestley, ' shall return to their own country,
 ' about the time of the commencement of the millen-
 ' nium; that they shall possess it many years in peace, and
 ' be a very flourishing nation, seem to be most distinctly
 ' foretold in many prophecies of the Old Testament²⁸.'

From those words of Christ, that *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*, says Wolzogenius, ' it clearly appears,
 ' that to the oppression of the Jewish nation by the Gen-
 ' tiles a certain termination and limit is placed; so that
 ' it is unquestionable, that they will not remain for ever
 ' in that state of servitude, but at some period will be
 ' emancipated from this yoke.' To the same purpose
 speaks bp. Newton. ' When the Times of the Gentiles
 ' shall be fulfilled, then the expression implies that the
 ' Jews shall be restored: and for what reason, can we
 ' believe, that though they are dispersed among all nations,

²⁵ Hurd, vol. I. p. 180.

²⁶ Vol. III. p. 389.

²⁷ On Isa. XI. ii.

²⁸ Institutes of Nat. and Rev. Rel. vol II. p. 420.

' yet

‘ yet—they are kept distinct from all, but for the farther manifestation of God’s purposes towards them²⁹?’ *Jerusalem*, says bp. Hurd, was ‘to be trodden down of the Gentiles³⁰, until the Times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled³¹. Nor say, that this last prophecy is indefinite, for the Times of the Gentiles is a period well known in the prophetic writings; a period of long duration indeed, as the event hath shewn; yet a period, marked out by other prophecies (which may come, in turn, to be considered in this Lecture) no less distinctly than their other captivities had been³².’ As the learned prelate has not thought proper to treat farther on the subject, I shall, with respect to it, quote from the Discourse of Mr. Mede, on the *Apostasy of the Latter Times*, which the bishop entitles ‘exquisite and unanswerable.’ ‘Until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled: that is (as was said before) until THE MONARCHIES OF THE GENTILES should be finished. For the Times of the Gentiles are that last

²⁹ Vol. II. 314.

³⁰ Since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and during a course of above 1700 years, it has accordingly never once been in possession of the Jews, unless indeed it be fact (and this is a matter disputed), that in their rebellion against Hadrian, a small number of them occupied it for a few months or for about the period of a year. It has successively been under the dominion of the Romans, Saracens, Franks, Mamalukes, and Turks. ‘And there is not the least apparent probability,’ says Mr. Evanson, ‘that its condition will be altered, till the world shall see that Grand Revolution in human affairs take place, at the period denominated in all the Christian scriptures the coming of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth.’ On the Dissonance of the Evangelists, p. 101.

³¹ As Christ denominates the period in which we now live, the Times of the Gentiles, it is plain, that those principles of practice, and those systems of religion, which at present have the ascendant, are regarded, in the eye of prophecy, as unworthy of the name of Christian, and as in fact being gentile or heathen.

³² Vol. I. p. 174.

‘ period of the Roman kingdom prophesied of, a *Time*, ‘ *Times*, and half a *Time*³³.’ Now these, Mede elsewhere observes, are equivalent to three prophetic years and a half, or 1260 ordinary years. But, as there is reason to believe, that the conclusion of the 1260 years is the period, when the monarchies of the Gentiles will be materially enfeebled and endangered, and not that when they will be universally overthrown and destroyed, *the Times of the Gentiles* mentioned by Christ do, perhaps, not merely contain the 1260 years, during which anti-christianism and tyranny were triumphantly to prevail, but likewise that shorter and subsequent period, during which antichristian oppression is to maintain a partial ascendancy, and which is immediately to precede the downfall of the corrupt systems of power established in Europe.

Whilst the memorable declaration of Jesus, that *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles*, is in the xxist ch. of Luke and the 24th verse, he says in the 22d verse, of the same chapter, *these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled*. Now ‘ where were these things written,’ asks bp. Chandler³⁴, ‘ but in Daniel, whom Christ cites by name in the beginning of this discourse³⁵? ’ And our Lord, as the learned prelate has observed, refers in particular to the two last verses of the ixth chapter of Daniel, where, speaking of

³³ P. 873. ‘ *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, i. e.*’ says Mr. Whiston, ‘ till the times allotted by the divine providence, for the dominion of the four Gentile and idolatrous monarchies, be fulfilled.’ p. 70. In like manner Brenius declares, that these times will be fulfilled, when the destruction of the monarchies, predicted by Daniel, shall have taken place. See the same observed by Dr. Wells, by bp. Newton (vol. II. p. 314), and by Mr. Lowth on Dan. ix. 27.

³⁴ Def. of Christianity, p. 359.

³⁵ When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, &c. Mat. xxiv. 15.

Jerusalem and the coming of the Romans to besiege it, he says, *and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and—he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and with the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolator*³⁶. I now give the explanation. And the Roman army shall come to destroy Jerusalem and its temple; they shall cause its sacrifices and its offerings completely to cease; with their idolatrous armies³⁷ they shall render it desolate; and the land shall continue³⁸ to be laid waste and overspread with abominations, till the period appointed for their being consummated arrive; and, that determined æra being come, desolation shall overwhelm the desolators themselves. A doubt here arises, to whom does the expression *the prince*, here allude? *The people of the prince*, says Dr. Wells, are ‘the people of the Roman empire, or Roman army under Titus;’ and it is of them he observes, that the pronoun *he*, which afterwards occurs, is to be understood. But, by *the people of the prince that shall come*, Mede understands the future people of the Messiah. The two opinions do not, however, stand widely separate; for the people of the Messiah, says Mede, signify ‘the people of the Roman empire, where Christ was principally to have his church and kingdom, whilst Israel should be rejected³⁹.’ In like manner ‘bishop Lloyd corrects the common translation thus, *the prince’s* (i. e. the Mef-

³⁶ The last word I give, as rendered by Dr. Wells, bishop Lloyd, and bishop Chandler.

³⁷ What is translated *overspreading of abominations* is perhaps a phrase of general application. It signifies, according to Mede, ‘an army of idolatrous Gentiles.’ p. 870.

³⁸ This desolation, says Mede (in loc.), would ‘continue until the monarchies of the Gentiles should be finished.’ p. 873.

³⁹ P. 868.

*‘ siah’s) future people.—This people that learned prelate
understands to be the Romans and their empire, which
was the seat of the Christian church⁴⁰.*

The quotation which follows is from bp. Chandler. What is in Daniel, ‘ even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolator, is interpreted by Christ, Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and then shall be the consummation, i. e. the end of wrath upon this people. The Gentiles in St. Luke are the Desolators in Daniel; and in both the Roman empire is intended, by whose army this great desolation was effected.’ The Jews therefore are, by Christ’s interpretation of Daniel, to remain in a long captivity, till the coming of the period that God hath fixed for pouring out his wrath on the Roman empire. And that empire being still subsisting, as the Jews affirm, in one of its forms, according to the vision of Nebuchadnezzar’s image; so it hath happened, that all the efforts of the Jews, though many and vigorous, for rebuilding their city and temple, have been vain⁴¹.’ The next extract is a part of Dr. Wells’s paraphrase on the last two verses from Daniel. ‘ During the period of time reckoned by scripture to the Fourth and last kingdom of the Gentiles, not only the Romans, but also the Saracens, and the Popish Christian kings of Jerusalem, and the Turks, (each of which, though of different extract, yet shall be people or inhabitants of the countries once belonging to the Roman empire) in their respective order and times shall be the lords of Jerusalem, and shall profane the said holy city with their respective abominations, or false and idolatrous worship,—even until that grand consummation of God’s indignation against the Jewish

⁴⁰ See Mr. Lowth in loc.

⁴¹ Def of Christianity, p. 360.

‘ nation

' nation, or Israelites in general, so often and so much
' spoken of in holy scripture. Then, when this time de-
' termined for putting an end to the Fourth and last king-
' dom, and so to the whole succession of the four king-
' doms of the Gentiles, shall be come, that is (in the
' words of our Saviour, *Luke xxi. 24*), when *the Time of the*
' *Gentiles* (viz. of their lording over the Jews and other
' Israelites) *shall be fulfilled*; then, I say, that utter de-
' solation, which is determined upon all the enemies of
' Christ or of his true religion, *shall be poured upon the*
' *desolator*, i. e. upon the Gentile people inhabiting the
' (once) countries of the Roman empire, namely such of
' them as shall then be either downright opposers of Chris-
' tianity, or else false Christians.—As for Israel; all Israel
' shall then be converted to Christianity.'

Immediately after predicting the wide dispersion of the Israelites, Moses says, *But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God); he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them*⁴². The great legislator of the Hebrews also elsewhere says, *it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will*

⁴² Deut. iv. 29, 30, 31.

turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul⁴³.

No less perspicuous is a prophecy of Ezekiel. Nor is it in the least conditional. *Thus saith the Lord God; behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land.—And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever⁴⁴.*

Not less striking is the declaration in the xlviith chapter of Jeremiah (v. 28). *Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee.* ‘The ‘providence of God,’ says bp. Newton, ‘has been re-‘markable in the destruction of their enemies, as well as ‘in their preservation’. For from the beginning who ‘have been the great enemies and oppressors of the Jewish ‘nation, removed them from their own land, and com-‘pelled them into captivity and slavery? The Egyptians ‘afflicted them much, and detained them in bondage

⁴³ Deu. xxx. 1—6.

⁴⁴ xxxvii. 21, 25.

' several years. The Assyrians carried away captive the ten tribes of Israel ; and the Babylonians afterwards, the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The Syro-Macedonians, especially Antiochus Epiphanes, cruelly persecuted them : and the Romans utterly dissolved the Jewish state, and dispersed the people so as they have never been able to recover their city and country again. And where are now these great and famous monarchies, which in their turns subdued and oppressed the people of God ? Are they not vanished as a dream, and not only their power, but their very names, lost in the earth ?—What a wonder of providence is it, that the vanquished should so many ages survive the victors, and the former be spread all over the world, while the latter are no more⁴⁵. '

The passages next to be quoted, besides ascertaining the restoration and the future meliorated situation of the Jews, corroborate that interpretation of our Lord's prophecy, which was before alleged ; because they speak the same language with respect to *the period* when this persecuted people shall be restored, declaring that this will happen about the time, when a great Revolution takes place in the symbolic *heavens* and the symbolic *earth*.

The prophet Joel, immediately after foretelling in those verses which have already been cited⁴⁶, v. 9—14⁴⁷, the decisive defeat of the antichristian armies; in v. 15 declares, in the symbolic language of prophecy, the consequences of that defeat, that *the sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining*, and that *the heavens and the earth shall shake*. The Lord, he immediately adds, at this period *will be the hope of*

⁴⁵ Vol. I. p. 218.

⁴⁶ In p. 301 and 302.

⁴⁷ Ch. III.

his people, and the strength of the children of Israel⁴⁸. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling⁴⁹ in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. My favour towards you, ye shall know, ye shall learn by experience. Then Jerusalem shall be untouched by foreign armies, and no more shall they pass through her streets and her provinces at their pleasure.

Isaiah after recurring to the same class of symbols, and saying in ch. lxv. 17, *behold I create new heavens and a new earth*, adds in the two succeeding verses, *But ye shall rejoice and exult in the age to come⁵⁰*, which *I create: for, lo! I create Jerusalem a subject of joy, and her people of gladness; and I will exult in Jerusalem, and rejoice in my people. And there shall not be heard any more therein, the voice of weeping, and the voice of a distressful cry⁵¹.*

In another place Isaiah says, that, when men *shall not hurt nor destroy*, and when the earth *shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord*, that is to say, at the commencement of the millennium; it *shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt,—and from the isles of the sea.* And he *shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth⁵².* In the expression, *the isles of the sea*, Europe, says Vitringa, is undoubtedly included.

⁴⁸ In explication of these words, Dr. Pococke pertinently cites, Luk. xxi. 28, *Then look up, and lift up your heads; for your deliverance draweth nigh.*

⁴⁹ To dwell among, says Dr. Lancaster, signifies protection.

⁵⁰ i. e. in the $\alphaιων$ or eminent period, called the millennium;

⁵¹ To bp. Lowth the translation above belongs.

⁵² XI. 9, 11, 13. In the versions of bp. Lowth and Mr. Dodson it is, from the four extremities of the earth.

After alleging so many passages, all of which prove that the restoration of the Jews *will* be accomplished, and several of which serve to evince, that that event will take place about the time, when the new symbolic heavens and symbolic earth are to commence; I shall perhaps be thought to have unnecessarily directed the attention of the reader to the following citation from Dr. Whitby. It is not, however, long, and, of itself, seems capable of conveying conviction to the mind.

' St. John speaks of *a new heaven and a new earth*, ' that he saw, saying, *the former heaven and earth were passed away*, Rev. xxi. 1: and introduceth our Lord, ' saying, *Behold, I make all things new*, v. 5. And the prophet Isaiah introduceth God, thus speaking at the conversion of the Jews, *Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind*⁵³. H. lxxv. 17. And again,—in the very words of the author of the Revelations, *Behold, I make all things new*, ch. xlivi. 18, 19. Seeing then these *new heavens and new earth* must be contemporary with the conversion of the Jews, sure they must be before the conflagration of the world, i. e. before the Jewish nation be consumed to ashes; and therefore can only be a *new heaven and new earth*, in that moral sense in which Maimonides explains the phrase⁵⁴:

In the scriptures of the Old Testament, agreeably to what might be expected, the prophecies relative to the future state of the Jews are principally to be found. That

⁵³ In his *Thoughts on the Grand Apostasy* (p. 190), Mr. Taylor (the author of *Ben Mordecai's Apology*) has not omitted to warn the reader, that this passage relates not to the dissolution of the natural, but merely of the political, world.'

⁵⁴ On the Millennium, c. II. sect. 3. The expression of the prophet, Maimonides admonishes the reader, is symbolically to be understood.

there is a plain prediction of the great founder of our religion upon this subject has, however, been seen. To this a prophetic declaration of St. Paul may with propriety be added. In the beginning of the XIth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, he asks, *Hath God cast away his people?* *God forbid*, says the apostle, *God hath not cast away his people?* And again in verses 25 and 26, *I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery,—that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.* That the descendants of Abraham, much as they have been distinguished by obstinate incredulity, shall hereafter acknowledge the evidences, and enjoy the advantages, of Christianity, is, indeed, the great truth, which is to be deduced from the whole tenor of the chapter⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ Dr. Whitby, in his elaborate, and, I may add, in his convincing, Appendix to the xith chapter of the Romans, says, ~~to~~ strengthen the argument which I have offered from it, ‘for the conversion of the Jewish nation to the Christian faith; let it be noted, that this hath been the constant doctrine of the church of Christ, owned by the Greek and Latin Fathers, and by ALL commentators I have met with on this place. Among the Greek Fathers by St. Chrysostom,’ Theodoret, Gennadius, Photius, Theophylact, and Origen. ‘All the Latin Fathers, who have left us any commentaries, or notes on this epistle, are plainly of the same mind, as you may see by consulting Hilary the Deacon, Primasius, Sedulius, and Haymo, upon the 25th verse of this chapter.’ That the exiled wanderers of Judea shall hereafter embrace the Christian faith, was also the opinion of Jerom and Justin Martyr, of Cyril and Augustin, as their writings attest.

That the Jewish nation shall hereafter be converted to Christianity is observed, in their respective commentaries on the xith. ch. of the Epistle to the Romans by Poole and Mr. Samuel Clark, by John Locke and Mr. Taylor of Norwich, by Doctors Guyse, Doddridge, and Wells, by Brenius, Slichtingius, and Crellius, by Pareus, Beza, Marlorat, and Erasmus. And that this is the import of St. Paul’s words is incidentally observed by Vitringa (in Jesai. tom. II. p. 795).

It is observable, says Dr. Hartley, that 'the promises of restoration relate to the ten tribes, as well as the two of Judah and Benjamin⁵⁶.' 'That the Jews, both of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the other ten, shall hereafter be restored to their own land, is,' says Mr. Hallett, 'foretold by ALL the ancient prophets. The twelve tribes of Israel continued one people till the reign of Rehoboam, son of Solomon; when the ten tribes revolted from him. These ten tribes were called, the kingdom of Israel: the other two were called, the kingdom of Judah. About 250 years after the division, the kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, and the people carried away captive, 2 Kings, xvii. 5, 6, &c. These have never yet returned to Judea⁵⁷.'

'The difficulty of finding out the habitations of the ten tribes hath', says bp. Newton, induced some 'to maintain, that they returned into their own country with the other two tribes after the Babylonish captivity. The decree, indeed, of Cyrus extended to *all the people of God* (Ezra I. 3.), and that of Artaxerxes to *all the people of Israel* (vii. 13.); and 'no doubt many of the Israelites took advantage of these decrees, and returned with Zerubbabel and Ezra to their own cities: but still, the main body of the ten tribes remained behind. Ezra, who should best know, faith, that there *rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin* (1. 5.), and he calleth the Samaritans *the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin* (iv. 1.): these two tribes were the principals, the others were only as accessories. And, if they did not return at this time, they cannot be sup-

⁵⁶ On Man, vol. II. p. 373.

⁵⁷ Notes on Several Texts of Scripture and Discourses, by Joseph Hallett, Jun. vol. III. p. 409.

' posed to have returned in a body at any time after this :
 ' for we read of no such adventure in history, we know
 ' neither the time nor the occasion of their return, nor
 ' who were their generals or leaders in this expedition.
 ' Josephus, who saw his country for several years in as
 ' flourishing a condition as at any time since the captivity,
 ' affirms, that Ezra sent a copy of the decree of Artaxerxes
 ' to all of the same nation throughout Media, where the
 ' ten tribes lived in captivity, and many of them came
 ' with their effects to Babylon, desiring to return to Je-
 ' rusalem: but the main body of the Israelites abode
 ' in that region: and therefore it hath happened, saith
 ' he⁵⁸, that there are two tribes in Asia and Europe,
 ' living in subjection to the Romans, but the ten tribes
 ' are beyond the Euphrates to this time⁵⁹.' And it is
 observed by Prideaux, ' that, during all the time of the
 ' second temple, and for a great many ages after, the
 ' number of the Jews in Chaldea, Assyria, and Persia,
 ' grew to be so very great, that they were all along
 ' thought to exceed the number of the Jews of Palestine,
 ' even in those times when that country was best inha-
 ' bited by them⁶⁰.'

With respect to the ten tribes, the following questions, which bp. Newton has stated, are, as he observes, doubtless embarrassing. ' Where have they subsisted all this while ? - And where is their situation, or what is their condition at present⁶¹ ? ' It may, however, be observed, that the Jews, who still subsist under great circumstances of depression in Persia, are the descen-

⁵⁸ Antiq. lib. II. cap. 5. sect. 2. p. 482. edit. Hudson.

⁵⁹ Vol. I. p. 209.

⁶⁰ Connection of the Hist. of the Old and New Test. fol. 7th ed. vol. I. p. 108.

⁶¹ Vol. I. p. 207.

dants of the ten tribes⁶²; and some passages from a recent work of Oriental literature may deserve to be transcribed, as *they seem to afford some hope*, that a ray of light may be unexpectedly thrown over a subject, which has hitherto been dark and unusually clouded by difficulties.

After an account of the Afghans, inserted in *the Asiatic Researches*, the parent of that work, Sir William Jones, who unites in his own person two very rare characters, that of an accomplished Oriental linguist and a meritorious British inhabitant of Hindostan, adds, ‘This account of the Afghans may lead to a very interesting discovery. We learn from Esdras⁶³, that the ten tribes, after a wandering journey, came to a country called Arfareth, where we may suppose they settled. Now the Afghans ARE SAID BY THE BEST PERSIAN HISTORIANS TO BE DESCENDED FROM THE JEWS; they have traditions among themselves of such a descent; and it is even asserted, that their families are distinguished by the names of Jewish tribes, although, since their conversion to the Islam, they studiously conceal their origin. The *Pushto* language, of which I have seen a dictionary, has a manifest resemblance to the Chaldaic; and a considerable district under their dominion is called Hazareh, or Hazaret, which might easily have been changed into the word used by Esdras.

⁶² See Bænigae's Hist. of the Jews, b. VI. ch. 2, 4.

⁶³ B. II. ch. xiii. 41—50. Visionary and wild as many parts of the Second Book of Esdras certainly are, it nevertheless ascertains the antiquity of this tradition. It is, declares Bengelius, a matter admitted by the learned, that this book was written in the beginning of the second century (*Intr. to the Apoc. &c.* p. 285); and Bænigae, speaking of the author of it, says (Hist. of the Jews, b. VI. c. 2, 4), ‘we must place him at the end of the first, or beginning of the second, century.’

• I strongly recommend an inquiry into the literature and
• history of the Afghans⁶⁴.'

The title given to the piece, to which Sir William Jones's observations are annexed, is *on the Descent of the Afghans from the Jews*. It is translated from the Persian by Mr. Vansittart; and the Persian work is itself an abridgment of a more early performance, written in the Pushto or Afghan language, and entitled, *the Secrets of the Afghans*. It is from this Persian abridgment that the following statements are taken. 'The Afghans, according to their own traditions, are the posterity of Melic Talut' (king Saul), and Afghan, who had a military command under Solomon, was the grandson of Talut. Then follows an account of the war between the children of Israel and the Amalekites, and various particulars, relative to the Jewish monarchs, Saul and David, and the prophet Samuel. 'The Afghans are called Solaimani, either because they were formerly the subjects of Solomon, king of the Jews, or because they inhabit the mountain of Solomon.—Their nation has produced many conquerors of provinces,' and seven princes 'of this race have sat upon the throne of Dehli.'

The order of ranks, which prevails among them, cannot but have operated in preserving a large part of them separate from those who are of a different origin. 'They framed regulations,' says the author of the Persian abridgment, 'dividing themselves into four classes.—The first is the *pure class*, consisting of those, whose fa-

⁶⁴ See the *Asiatic Researches*, 4to vol. II; or a smaller work, published by Nicol, entitled *Dissertations and Miscellaneous Pieces, relating to the Hist. and Antiq. the Arts, Sciences, and Liter. of Asia*, by Sir W. Jones, &c. 8vo. vol. II. p. 128.

•thers and mothers were Afghans⁶⁵.' The Afghans, Mr. Vansittart observes, have been subject to the kings of Persia⁶⁶, as well as to the princes of Hindostan.

That the ten tribes were transported into some of the provinces of the Persian empire, is universally admitted⁶⁷; and that they continued there for a considerable time, and were very numerous, cannot be doubted. Now as we know them to have been exposed in that empire, at different periods, to oppression and the severest calamities⁶⁸; it certainly does seem reasonable to conclude, independently of any positive testimonies which may be alleged on the subject, that considerable numbers of them, in order to escape from the fury of persecution, would enter and inhabit one or both of the two adjoining countries of Tartary and India, where their settlement would be favoured by the facility with which revolutions were affected, and by the comparatively small power, which the princes of those countries, from

⁶⁵ See the *Dissertations, &c.* p. 119—128. The Afghans, says Mr. Hanway, 'have an utter aversion against marrying their daughters to strangers.' Hist. of the Revolutions of Persia, vol. III. p. 43.

⁶⁶ At the beginning of the present century, the province of Kandahar, which the Afghans inhabited, was subject to Persia. Oppressed and plundered in the most outrageous manner by the Persian governor, and the licentious troops whom he commanded, the Afghans in the year 1709 rebelled, and succeeded in erecting that province into a small but independent monarchy. In the year 1722 the Afghans penetrated to the heart of the Persian empire; and, having defeated an army of nearly 50,000 Persians, and obtained possession of Ispahan, the prince of the Afghans ascended the throne of Persia. In the year 1726 the Porte having declared war against the Afghan king of that country, the Afghans defeated an army of between 70 and 80,000 Turks. But the Afghans, in the year 1729, were defeated by the celebrated Kouli Khan, and expelled from Persia. For these facts see Hanway's Account of the Revolutions in Persia, vol. III. p. 22—255; and vol. IV. p. 1—40.

⁶⁷ See bp. Newton, vol. I. p. 206, 207.

⁶⁸ See Bapnage's Hist. of the Jews.

the smallness of their territories, frequently possessed. That they would gradually be induced to corrupt the purity of the Jewish worship, to embrace heathenism, and afterwards to acknowledge a belief in the divine mission of Mahomet, seems also extremely probable; powerfully led to it, as they would be, by motives of policy and the contagion of example, by ignorance of letters, and their total separation from their brethren in Turkey and in Europe. To these conclusions the preceding extracts are doubtless favourable; nor are they unsupported by the testimonies of other writers.

The quotation that follows is from bishop Law. At the termination of the captivity of the Jews at Babylon, ‘the greatest part of them, and those of the greatest eminence, staid behind, and settled in Chaldea, Assyria, and other Eastern provinces;—whence it is probable, that some of their descendants spread so far as the East- Indies, where their posterity continue to this day; as appears from the accounts of many modern travellers’⁶⁹.

As the subject is curious, some of these accounts, though certainly not exempt from error, may perhaps deserve to be collected, and to be briefly noticed. That the Afghans are those, to whom some of these travellers refer, can hardly be doubted.

The learned Mr. Jacob Bryant, speaking of a colony of Jews at Cochin upon the coast of Malabar, says, they ‘came there according to Hamilton⁷⁰ as early as the captivity under Nebuchadnezzar. Thus much is certain, the æra is so far back, that they know not now the time of their arrival.—They consisted formerly of 80,000 families: but are now reduced to 4000. Mr. Bate, a clergyman, who had a son in the East Indies,

⁶⁹ Law’s *Theory of Religion*, 3d. ed. p. 140.

⁷⁰ Account of the East Indies, c. xxvi. p. 323.

" made application to have some particulars of their history. " I wrote⁷¹ over to the coast of Malabar, to know what tradition the Jews have retained, as to the time of their settlement at Cochin, but had no satisfactory answer. Ezekiel, the Rabbin of the synagogue, did, indeed, send me a transcript of their copper plate, hung up in their synagogue. It is written in the Malabar language, put into common Hebrew characters ; interlined with a literal version in Hebrew⁷²". This account, it is manifest, does not relate to the Afghans. But it may be observed, that it is at least a possible case, that of the Jews who emigrated from Persia a small portion might, like their brethren of Europe, steadily adhere to the religion of Moses.

The extract which follows is from Bernier's description of Hindostan. Bernier was a learned Frenchman, who resided twelve years at the court of the Great Mogul, and in the year 1664 accompanied him in his journey to the small kingdom of Kachemire or Cashmire ; a country very rarely visited by Europeans, as it is situated at the extremity of Hindostan, borders upon Tartary and upon Persia, and is extremely difficult of access, being shut up and almost insulated by the mountains of Caucasus⁷³. In answer to some inquiries made by that industrious traveller, M. Thevenot, whether there were Jews in the kingdom of Cashmere, and whether they were possessed

⁷¹ ' Bate's Rationale, p. 223. Masseius in his Indian History speaks of those Jews, as being in great numbers at Cochin.—See his Hist. Lib. XVI. p. 332.'

⁷² Bryant upon the Authenticity of the Scriptures, and the Truth of the Chr. Rel. p. 273.

⁷³ In order to form an accurate idea of the singularly insulated situation of Cashmere, see the Map of the South East part of Asia, prefixed to Dr. Robertson's Hist. Disq. on India ; or major Rennel's map of the Countries between the Sources of the Ganges and the Caspian Sea ; or the map of Cashmere in the second volume of the *Voyages de Bernier*.

of the writings of the Old Testament ; Bernier informs him, that if there have in that country been those who have professed Judaism, ‘as there is some reason to believe, there are none now remaining,’ but ‘that all the inhabitants are either Pagans or Mahometans.—Nevertheless one cannot fail of finding there many marks of Judaism. The *first* is, that on entering this kingdom, after having passed the mountains of Pire-penjale, ‘all the inhabitants that I saw in the first villages appeared to me to be Jews in their air and deportment, and moreover in that indefinable peculiarity, which enables us to distinguish one nation from another’⁷⁴. I am not the only person, who has been of that opinion ; our father, the Jesuit, and many of us Europeans have entertained it before me. The *second* is, that I have remarked, that among the lower ranks of people in this town⁷⁵, although Mahometans, yet the name of Mousa, which signifies Moses, is very much in use. The *third* is, they commonly say, that Solomon came into their country, and that it was he who cut through the mountain of Baramoulé to give a free passage to the waters. The *fourth*, that Moses died at Cashmere, and that his tomb is one league distant from this town. The *fifth*, that they pretend, that that little and very ancient edifice, which appears from this place upon a high mountain, was built by Solomon, and that it is for that reason, that to this very day they call it *the throne of Solomon*. Therefore I would not deny, that some Jews have penetrated hither. These people, in the

⁷⁴ Speaking in another place of the inhabitants of Cashmere, he says, ‘they are celebrated for their fine complexion. They are as well made as we Europeans : at the same time having nothing of the countenance of the Tartar, with his flat nose, and little pig’s eyes.’ *Voyages de Francois Bernier*, tom. II. p. 281.

⁷⁵ The town of Cashmere, I apprehend.

' lapse of time, may have lost the purity of their law ; have become idolaters, and at length Mahometans'⁷⁶.

' The race of the Afghans,' says the Persian writer translated by Mr. Vansittart, ' possessed themselves of the mountain of Solomon, which is near Kandahar'⁷⁷, ' and the circumjacent country, where they have built forts.' And Mr. Vansittart adds, ' the country of the Afghans, which is a province of Cabul, was originally called Roh, and from hence is derived the name of Rohillahs'⁷⁸. The city, which was established in it by the Afghans, was called by them Paishwer, or Paishor, ' and is now the name of the whole district'⁷⁹. It is worthy of observation, that the city of Kandahar stands on the very frontier of Persia; that not only the province of that name, but also that of Cabul, is on the borders of the Persian empire; and that the former of these provinces is adjacent to the kingdom of Cashmere, and that the latter immediately joins it. With respect to the city of Paishwer, a principal residence of the Afghans, the maps of Hindostan ascertain its vicinity to Cashmere.

⁷⁶ *Voyages de Francois Bernier, docteur en Medecine de la Faculte de Montpellier; contenant la description des Etats du Grand Mogol.* Amsterdam, 1723, tom. II. p. 316. Bernier was a man of penetration, and greatly superior to the general mass of travellers. Accordingly Mr. Gibbon (vol. I. p. 333), when speaking of his journey to the kingdom of Cashmere and of the camp of Aurengzebe, says, ' that most curious traveller Bernier—describes with great accuracy the immense moving city.' And it is observed by major Rennel (*Memoir of a Map of Hindostan*, p. 66), that Bernier ' deserves the greatest credit for veracity.'

⁷⁷ That ' the Afghans originally inhabited the mountainous tract lying between India and Persia, or the ancient Paropamisus,' is the statement of major Rennel. *Memoir of a Map of Hindostan*, pref. p. 48.

⁷⁸ Of the Rohilla nation, who are a part of the Afghans, and who inhabited the beautiful province of Rohilkund, a considerable part were cruelly extirpated in a war undertaken by the instigation of Mr. Hastings.

⁷⁹ See the *Asiatic Researches*, or *Dissertations*, ut Supra.

After introducing extracts from Bernier and Bryant, Vansittart and Sir W. Jones, it may, perhaps, not be improper briefly to notice the statements of three celebrated Jewish writers, Benjamin of Tudela, Eldad, and Peritsul of Ferrara, though their narratives, it must be admitted, have so great a mixture of what is fabulous and untrue, that they deserve not attention any farther than they are supported by other writers and by independent evidence. Benjamin, says Basnage, was ‘a famous traveller of the 12th century, who seems to have undertaken his voyage only to discover the state of his dispersed nation in all parts of the world.—His testimony seems to be the more authentic, because he speaks as an ‘eye-witness, and relates what he had seen.’ Eldad, who is supposed to have lived in the 13th century, wrote largely on the history of the twelve tribes. Peritsul was a geographical writer of the 16th century. Benjamin relates, that, in the course of his travels in the East Indies, he met with a very considerable number of his countrymen; that there were, as he was informed, 20,000 Jews intermingled with the Pagan worshippers of fire; and that a nation of Jews was seated in the neighbourhood of Persia, secured by the mountains which surrounded them, and independent of the power of that country. After relating that four of the Jewish tribes migrated beyond the rivers of Chaldea, and that they lived in a great degree after the manner of the Tartars, accompanied by their flocks, and dwelling in tents; Eldad asserts, that of the tribe of Issachar, which was subject to the Persians, a part conformed to some of the laws of the country, and that fire was the object of their religious adoration. And that colonies of Jews were planted along the shores of the Ganges, is the statement of Peritsul⁸⁸.

⁸⁸ See Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, b. VI. ch. 2, 3.

The author of a supplemental dissertation, inserted in Picart's elaborate work, on *the Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the World*, after referring to the relations of Benjamin and of Peritful, says, ‘ supposing it was true, that there ever was a Jewish settlement in those countries, we might very justly conjecture, that they were the remainder of the ten tribes. Gulielmus de Rubruquis⁸¹, who travelled into Tartary in the year 1646, assures us, that about two day's journey beyond Derbent, on the road to Great Tartary, he met with a great number of Jews in a city called Samaron; and he mentions likewise an inclosed country towards the Caspian sea, where the Jews were confined. Carpin⁸², who travelled at the same time, gives us likewise an account of some of the Jews of Tartary⁸³. ’

Indeed Basnage informs us, that ‘ there are chiefly two opinions, that have been current with the Jews,’ and the Christians, and that one of these opinions is this, ‘ that the ten tribes went into Tartary, in which are still observed some traces of ancient Judaism.’ Menasseh, who was one of the wisest of the Jewish doctors, ‘ in the last century asserted the transmigration of the ten tribes into Tartary.’ And ‘ Ortelius, that ingenious geographer, in giving the description of Tartary, notes the kingdom of Arsareth, where the ten tribes retiring succeeded the Scythian inhabitants⁸⁴. ’

These opinions, it is proper to state, obtained not the approbation of Basnage himself. There are, he says, Jews dispersed in the East Indies: but they are not de-

⁸¹ P. 272, edit. of Paris.

⁸² P. 377.

⁸³ Bernard Picart's *Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World*, fol. 1733, vol. I. p. 166.

⁸⁴ Hist. of the Jews, p. 474.

scendants of the ten tribes, but merchants, drawn thither by commerce. ‘If we would seek out the remains of the ten tribes, we must do it only on the banks of the Euphrates, in Persia, and the neighbouring provinces⁸⁵.’ The accounts respecting the emigration of Jews into Tartary or India are doubtless intermingled with much which is fabulous and wild⁸⁶: but perhaps there is ground for concluding, that Basnage, engaged as he was in the composition of a work which involved a vast variety of inquiries, was too hasty in peremptorily rejecting the whole of these accounts, and that, notwithstanding his very extensive knowledge of the Jewish dispersions, he was on this point not sufficiently careful in separating probability from fiction. Information on the subject from Oriental writers it must, indeed, be admitted, he had not an opportunity of procuring.

That a large body of the Jews should settle on the borders of Hindostan, is much more probable, than that they should inhabit any district of Tartary. But even with respect to the latter statement, the reasoning of Basnage, is not, I think, eminently conclusive. How improbable is it, says the author of the History of the Jews, that a handful of fugitives, should be able to conquer and ‘expel the Scythians, a people terrible for their fierceness and expence in war.’ And he immediately after exclaims, what a specimen of romantic folly ‘would it be, to leave a tolerably good country, to go and make conquests upon the Scythians⁸⁷.’ That the Persian Jews should conquer the Scythians, is certainly incredible; but that they should defeat some particular Tartar hordes is not impossible. That they should draw the

⁸⁵ P. 747.

⁸⁶ Postel, Basnage informs us (p. 474), stated the Turks to be descended from the Jews.

⁸⁷ P. 479.

sword against any of the shepherds of Tartary is not, however, a necessary supposition. Their country is of vast magnitude; and who does not know, that myriads of its wandering inhabitants have frequently emigrated, and invaded some civilized nation of the globe? Surely, then, there is no difficulty in supposing, that a considerable part of the Jews of Persia might discover and occupy a portion of vacant land, equal in point of extent to all their wants. Nor is there any thing absurd in their abandoning Persia, cruelly persecuted as they often were by the prince and the people of that country.

It is observable that Moses says, *the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other Gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone*⁸⁸. ‘And is it not,’ asks bp. Newton⁸⁹, ‘too common for the Jews in popish countries to comply with the idolatrous worship of the church of Rome, ‘and to bow down to stocks and stones, rather than their effects should be seized and confiscated.’ The prelate then quotes Basnage. “The Spanish and Portugal Inquisitions,” saith he, “reduce them to the dilemma of “being either hypocrites or burnt. The number of these “dissemblers is very considerable; and it ought not to be “concluded, that there are no Jews in Spain or Portugal, because they are not known: they are so much “the more dangerous, for not only being very numerous, “but confounded with the ecclesiastics, and entering “into all ecclesiastical dignities.” And in another place “he saith, “The most surprising thing is, that this religion spreads from generation to generation, and still “subsists in the persons of dissemblers in a remote posterity. In vain the great lords of Spain make alliances,

⁸⁸ Deut. XXVIII, 64.

⁸⁹ Vol. I, p. 196.

" change their names, and take ancient scutcheons ;
" they are still known to be of Jewish race, and Jews
" themselves. The convents of monks and nuns are
" full of them. Most of the canons, inquisitors, and bi-
" shops proceed from this nation. This is enough to
" make the people and clergy of this country tremble,
" since such sort of churchmen can only profane the sa-
" craments, and want intention in consecrating the host
" they adore. In the mean time Orobio, who relates
" the fact, knew these dissemblers. He was one of them
" himself, and bent the knee before the sacrament.
" Moreover he brings proofs of his assertion, in main-
" taining, that there are in the synagogue of Amsterdam
" brothers and sisters and near relations to good families
" of Spain and Portugal ; and even Franciscan monks,
" Dominicans, and Jesuits, who come to do penance,
" and make amends for the crime they have committed
" in dissembling⁹⁰." This is the whole of what bp. New-
ton has alleged in illustration of the prophecy, which I
have just cited from Deuteronomy. It is not, I think,
completely satisfactory ; for the fact is, that the Jews,
who are scattered among the nations of Europe, have
upon the whole adhered with uncommon steadiness to
the faith of their ancestors. In order then to remove
the difficulty, I would observe, that this prediction has
principally received its fulfilment in the apostasy of the
descendants of the ten tribes, who have disappeared from
the eyes of the world ; and it may be remarked, that the
Afghans, previously to their embracing of Mahometan-
ism, were, as there is reason to believe, debased by the
practice of idolatry and of heathen superstitions.

Agreeably to this Dr. Priestley, when speaking of
another prediction, which relates to the Jews abandoning

⁹⁰ Basnage, book VII. ch. 21, sect. 26 ; and ch. 33. sect. 14.

the religion of their ancestors, says, this prophecy has most literally ' been fulfilled in the ten tribes, few of whom ' ever returned to Palestine, and not being at present ' distinguished from other nations, they have, no doubt, ' adopted their idolatrous religions. It is not impro- ' bable, however, but that they somewhere form a distinct ' people, and that in due time their origin may be dis- ' covered. Some traces of them have of late appeared.' This celebrated writer immediately adds in a note, it is ' with considerable probability,' that Sir William Jones ' conjectures, that the Afghans, a people living between ' Persia and Hindostan, are of Israelitish extraction⁹¹.'

With respect to the Afghans, I shall only farther add, that *should* this conjecture relative to them hereafter *be* proved to be a fact, it would not be very difficult to account for its having lain so many centuries in concealment. The following circumstances would, perhaps, afford a solution of the difficulty. Till *very lately* the gaining of territory, the acquisition of riches, and the opportunity of living with profusion and splendor, are the objects which have *solely* occupied the minds of the Europeans of Hindostan; and, in the pursuit of *these*, it must be admitted, they have discovered no want of eagerness, and no unnecessary scruples with respect to the means of obtaining them. Recent is the period when the literary treasures of Hindostan began to be sought after with any degree of activity; and small is the number of persons, who have applied to Hindu and Persic literature. The mountainous regions at the extremity of Hindostan, where was the proper seat of the Afghans, intelligent and inquisitive Europeans have scarcely visited at all: should a small number be found to have done this, they were very imperfectly acquainted with

⁹¹ Disc. on the Evi. of Rev. Rel. 1794. p. 216.

the ordinary language of the country : and of the Pushto or Afghan language Europeans have scarcely had the slightest knowledge. Lastly, the Afghans have kept their origin enveloped in studied obscurity.

If the nation of the Jews do perish in their present state of wretchedness, ‘ the Holy Spirit,’ says Jurieu, ‘ hath deceived this nation, all their oracles are false, ‘ and God hath borne them up with vain hopes.’ But this is a supposition, which it is almost irreverend to name. ‘ The Messiah,’ says the French divine, ‘ belongs to the Jews, he was promised to the Jews; this nation from its very original hath been fed with the hopes of the Messiah’s *coming*, as of such a good, which was too great to be described. At last he comes; and this people, instead of seeing those great promises accomplished, see their temple burnt, their capital city razed, their service abolished, their posterity dispersed throughout the world, and made the execration and contempt of mankind. Thus the Messiah, the glory of their nation, brings them nothing but shame, desolation, and infinite miseries, which have no parallel in any other people⁹².’ That such will be the final result of events, can surely never be believed. That we have hitherto seen only a partial accomplishment of the divine purposes, with respect to this people, is a conclusion to which the believer is compelled to resort. The statement of Vitringa may, however, be perfectly correct, that the Jews will remain undistinguished by any peculiar privileges⁹³.

The literal fulfilment of the ‘ prophecies concerning the calamities, and total dispersion of the Israelites, must,’ says Dr. Priestley, ‘ satisfy that nation, and in time all mankind, that Moses was inspired in delivering

⁹² Vol. II. p. 298.

⁹³ In Apoc. p. 436.

them

' them.—His other prophecies concerning their future restoration, and flourishing state, are as distinct and express as those concerning their calamities, and far more numerous. They are not only contained in Moses, but the favourite subject is resumed, enlarged upon, and set in a thousand different lights, by Isaiah and most of the succeeding prophets.' They are 'equally clear and free from ambiguity, so that there can be no doubt concerning their meaning, and consequently, if we believe in revelation, concerning their literal accomplishment⁹⁴.'

There are some, however, who will probably object, that it is altogether unreasonable to expect, that the period will ever arrive, when any considerable number of the Jews, unceasingly as their desires are fixed on the means of acquiring a subsistence or augmenting a fortune, deeply as they are involved in the concerns of trade or the perplexities of commerce, should seriously turn their thoughts to a departure from their respective countries, and consent to abandon all those sources of wealth to which they have been accustomed to recur. This objection is coloured by a certain degree of plausibility. But it may be asked, does it correspond with past experience? Is it true, in point of fact, that the Jews have ceased to place a confidence in the prophecies of their future restoration? Is it true, that, since their expulsion from Judea, their minds have become reconciled to banishment? Is there reason to believe, that they have forgotten the country, whence they derive their origin, and where their forefathers once enjoyed such distinguished privileges? Have they, during the period of their dispersion, felt no fond desires of re-entering the borders of Palestine, and of raising the

⁹⁴ Disc. on the Evid. of Rev. Rel. p. 216.

standard of national independence?—The fact is far otherwise. Instead of not being influenced at all by these hopes, instead of not paying a reasonable degree of attention to the sacred oracles which promise their restoration at some future time, they have often rushed into the contrary extreme, and have been ready to listen with an excess of credulity to every impostor, however slender his pretensions, provided he held out to them the expectation of a return to the country of their ancestors.

In order to prove this assertion, I shall, as the subject is curious, give a compressed account of some of the false Messias and impostors, who have appeared at different periods subsequent to the demolition of Jerusalem by Titus.

About 50 years after that event, Barcochebas was acknowledged by the Jews for the Messiah; and, having enlisted forces to the amount of 200,000 men, declared war against the emperor Hadrian. Animated by enthusiasm, and confiding in his lofty pretensions, the Jews, under his conduct, displayed signal valour; and repeatedly defeated the Roman general, Rufus. So great, indeed, was the slaughter of the Romans, that the emperor, in his letters to the senate, was induced to withhold his accustomed salutations; and we are told by the historian Dion, that, in the war with Hadrian, 580,000 Jews were destroyed by the sword, besides an immense number who perished by fire, by hunger, and by disease. The island of Crete, and the year 434, furnished an almost incredible instance of credulity. In this year appeared Moses Cretensis, who not only pretended to be appointed by heaven to be the leader of the Jews; but promised that he would divide the sea, and, after having opened a passage through its waters, would conduct them in safety to the land of Judea: and he not only obtained a great multitude

multitude of followers; but procured their assent to the full extent of his promises, and succeeded in making them prepare for their departure. The citizens abandoned their houses, and the husbandmen their farms; and repaired to a promontory, to which the Cretan enthusiast had directed their steps. When arrived there, the frantic multitude felt no diminution of confidence or of courage. The men, the women, and the children, who occupied the foremost ranks, did, the contemporary historian Socrates assures us, precipitate themselves from the promontory and plunge into the sea. Of these deluded Jews a part were drowned; a part were saved by some Christian fishermen, who happened to be near the shore in their barks; and the enthusiasm of the remainder was effectually cooled by the bad success of this singular experiment. With respect to Moses Cretensis himself, his fate was not certainly known.

In the year 529, the Jews and Samaritans of Palestine, rising in rebellion against the Roman power, acknowledged one Julian, as their king and their messiah; and a great number of them were in consequence slaughtered. It was also in the 6th century, that rabbi Meir arose, and pretended that the Deity had, on his account, miraculously lighted up a pillar of fire. Assembling a body of troops, he declared war against the Persian monarch, and experienced seven years of success: but at length was taken prisoner by the Persians and put to death. In the 8th century, the character of the Messiah was assumed by the Jew Serenus. Multitudes of the Jews of Spain submitted themselves to his guidance; and many of them, for the purpose of accompanying the impostor to Palestine, abandoned their estates.

But no period has been so fruitful in Jewish impostors as the 12th century. It was in France, and in the year 1137, that the first of them appeared. In consequence, many

many of the Jews were killed, and many of their synagogues levelled with the ground. In the following year the East was disturbed by a false Messiah, who collected so formidable an army, as to march in order of battle against the king of Persia, and to induce that powerful prince to purchase the return of tranquillity by the payment of a very considerable sum of money. Short, however, was the period of this impostor's prosperity. In the year 1157 the Jews of Spain listened to the tales of a native of Corduba and a claimant to the title of the Messiah; and fatal were the consequences of their credulity, for it brought down upon them the severities of a general persecution. Ten years afterwards, another of these impostors appeared in the kingdom of Fez; and in the same year, the year 1167, an Arabian Jew, who styled himself the forerunner of the Messiah, was admired and followed by multitudes of the Jews of Arabia. Not long after this, vast numbers of the Jews who dwelt beyond the Euphrates yielded up their reason in favour of an enthusiast, who laid claim to the title of the Messiah; and in the year 1174, the Jews of Persia, in consequence of the appearance of another false Christ in that country, were again exposed to the fury of persecution. At this period Moravia abounded with Jews, and in the year 1176 a pretended Messiah, of the name of David Almussler, excited commotions in that part of Germany. But the most famous impostor of the 12th century, and one who rendered himself conspicuous towards the close of it, was David el David. He was a man of learning, and a pretended worker of miracles. Persia was the theatre of his delusions. He styled himself the king of the Jews; and, having gained their belief, rose in arms against the Persian monarch, and engaged to lead them back to the ancient capital of Judea. After various adventures, he was at length betrayed by his

his father-in-law, and beheaded. Of many of the Jewish impostors of the 12th century an account is to be found in the writings of Maimonides.

In the year 1222 a false Messiah appeared in Germany; and in the same century a multitude of the Jews of Spain were imposed upon by Zechariah, who entitled himself a prophet and forerunner of the Messiah. In the year 1499 the same character was sustained by rabbi Leinlem, a Jew of Austria, who had the credit of working miracles, and who announced to his brethren their return to the Holy Land in the year 1500. His vain predictions obtained a general reception, and many of the Jews of Germany prepared for their departure. Accordingly as they expected to be settled in Jerusalem the following year, many of them pulled down their ovens, in which they baked their unleavened bread, as now ceasing to be useful. Soon perceiving that he had fixed on too early a period for the fulfilment of his predictions, David Lemlein asserted, that the sins of the people had retarded the appearance of the Messiah. Still the eyes of the Jews remained unopened: and many of them assembled near Jerusalem, and celebrated a solemn fast, in order that they might propitiate Jehovah, and accelerate their deliverance. At the close also of the 15th century, Ismael Sophy, a young prince who was in fact a Mahometan, and who afterwards ascended the throne of Persia, assumed the name of a prophet; and the Jews, dazzled by his valour and the celerity of his successes, indulged the notion of his being their promised Messiah. In the year 1509, an infamous Jew of Cologn is said to have arrogated the appellation of the Messiah. About the same time, also, Jacob Melstinski appropriated to himself the same lofty title, and, traversing Poland and Silesia at the head of twelve pretended apostles whom he had chosen, deluded multitudes of people. And in the year

year 1534, rabbi Salomo Malcha, having declared himself the Messiah, was burnt in Spain by order of Charles the Vth.

The 17th century was still more favourable to credulity, and still more fruitful in imposture. In the early part of it, a false Messiah arose in the East Indies and in the Portuguese city of Goa ; and deceived great numbers of the descendants of Abraham, who sighed for the recovery of liberty and independence. At Amsterdam, and in the year 1624, there appeared another impostor, a Jew of Germany, who declared that he had seen the Messiah at Strasburgh, and announced the mighty victories he was to accomplish.

But his fame was greatly eclipsed by Sabatai Sevi, the son of a poultreer of Aleppo, a man of learning, and, as there is reason to believe, at once a fanatic and an impostor. As the accounts respecting him, from his comparatively recent appearance, have more of copiousness and authenticity, than the narratives of imposture can commonly be known to possess, I shall perhaps be authorized in citing a long passage from bishop Kidder, the third volume of whose work on *the Messias* was published in the year 1700, 34 or 35 years after the commencement of the imposture of Sabatai Sevi. But long as it is, it is only a part of what the bishop has related respecting him. In the year 1666, says the prelate, ‘ Sabatai Sevi appeared at Smyrna, and professed himself ‘ to be the Messias. He promised the Jews deliverance ‘ and a prosperous kingdom. This which he promised ‘ they firmly believed; the Jews now attended to no busi- ‘ ness, discoursed of nothing but their return. They ‘ believed Sabatai to be the Messias, as firmly as we ‘ Christians believe any article of faith. A right reverend ‘ person then in Turkey, told me, that meeting with a ‘ Jew of his acquaintance at Aleppo, he asked the Jew, ‘ what

‘ what he thought of Sabatai. The Jew replied, that he
‘ believed him to be the Messias, and that he was so far
‘ of that belief, that, if he should prove an impostor, he
‘ would then turn Christian. It will be very fit I should
‘ be very particular in this relation, because the history
‘ is so very surprizing and remarkable; and we have an
‘ account of it from those, who were then in Turkey,
‘ and are now alive. I am so well satisfied as to the facts,
‘ that I dare vouch for the truth of the relation, and ap-
‘ peal for the truth of it to very many persons of great
‘ credit who are now alive.—At Gaza Sabatai preached
‘ repentance (together with a faith in himself) so effec-
‘ tually, that the people gave themselves up to their devo-
‘ tions and alms. The noise of this Messias began to fill
‘ all places.—Throughout Turkey the Jews were in great
‘ expectation of glorious times. They now were devout
‘ and penitent, that they might not obstruct the good
‘ which they hoped for. Some fasted so long that they
‘ were famished to death; others buried themselves in the
‘ earth till their limbs grew stiff; some would endure
‘ melted wax dropped on their flesh; some rolled in the
‘ snow; others in a cold season would put themselves
‘ into cold water; and many whipped themselves. Busi-
‘ ness was laid aside; superfluities of household utensils
‘ were sold; the poor were provided for by immense
‘ contributions. Sabatai comes to Smyrna, where he
‘ was adored by the people, though the *Chacham* contra-
‘ dicted him, for which he was removed from his office.
‘ There he in writing styles himself *the only and first-*
born Son of God, the Messias, the Saviour of Israel.’
Whilst the Jews in their synagogues had been accustom-
ed to ‘ pray for the Grand Seignior, he orders those
‘ prayers to be forbore for the future, thinking it an in-
‘ decent thing to pray for him, who was shortly to be his
‘ captive; and, instead of praying for the Turkish em-

'peror, he appoints prayers for himself, as another author relates. And, as my author goes on, he elected 'princes to govern the Jews in their march towards the 'Holy Land, and to minister justice to them when they 'should be possessed of it.' After declaring that he was appointed by heaven to visit Constantinople, he went thither, and was thrown into prison by the Vizier. Still, however, 'the Jews pay him their visits, and they of this 'city are now as much infatuated as those of Smyrna. 'They forbid traffic, and refused to pay their debts. 'Some of our English merchants, not knowing how to 'recover their debts from the Jews, took this occasion 'to visit Sabatai, and make their complaints to him against 'his subjects. Whereupon he wrote this following letter to the Jews:

*"To you of the nation of the Jews, who expect the
"appearance of the Messias, and the salvation of Israel,
"peace without end. Whereas we are informed, that
"you are indebted to several of the English nation, it
"seemeth right unto us to order you to make satisfaction
"to these your just debts; which if you refuse to do, and
"not obey us herein, know you, that then you are not to
"enter with us into our joys and dominions."*

'Sabatai remained a prisoner in Constantinople by the 'space of two months. The Grand Vizier, designing 'for Candia, thought it not safe to leave him in the city, 'during the Grand Seignior's absence and his own. He 'therefore removed him to the Dardanelli; a better air 'indeed, but yet out of the way; and consequently importing less danger to the city: which occasioned the 'Jews to conclude, that the Turks could not, or durst 'not take away his life, which had, they concluded, been 'the surest way to have removed all jealousy. The Jews 'flocked in great numbers to the castle where he was a 'prisoner; not only those that were near, but from Po-
'land,

' land, Germany, Leghorn, Venice, and other places. ' They received Sabatai's blessings and promises of advancement.—The Jews of the city paid Sabatai Sevi great respect. They decked their synagogues with S. S. in letters of gold, and made for him, in the wall, a crown: they attributed the same titles and prophecies to him which we apply to our Saviour.' At length being ordered into the presence of the Grand Seignior, and required to perform a miracle, he was obliged, in order to save his life, to profess Mahometanism. ' During these things, the Jews, instead of minding their trade and traffic, filled their letters with news of Sabatai, their Messias, and his wonderful works. They reported that when the Grand Seignior sent to take him, he caused all the messengers, that were sent, to die.' In consequence of these and other reports, ' the Jews of Italy sent legates to Smyrna, to inquire into the truth of these matters.'

In the year 1682 appeared rabbi Mordechai, who was famous, among his countrymen in Germany, for his attainments in learning and his austerity of life. He laid claim to the prophetic character and to the title of the Messiah. By the Italian Jews he was extremely caressed; and the genuineness of his credentials was admitted by them and many of the Jews of Germany. As late as the year 1703 another impostor, named Daniel Israel, deluded the Jews of Smyrna. He pretended to perform various miracles; and asserted, that Sabatai Sevi was still alive, and would shortly emerge from the place of his concealment, and gloriously deliver the Jews from their present state of dispersion and ignominy. Nor was he admired and followed only by the crowd, many of whom celebrated the day of the nativity of Sabatai Sevi, and anxiously expected his appearance: the lying declarations of this impostor of the 18th century were also vindicated and approved by

the rabbins : but, at length, he was expelled from Smyrna by the governor of that city, and great was the dislur- bance, which his banishment occasioned among its Jewish inhabitants⁹⁵.

This long narrative I shall conclude by observing, that it contains ample evidence of the fulfilment of one of the prophecies of Jesus, *I am come in my Father's name said our Lord to the Jews, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive*⁹⁶.

Basnage, who wrote at the beginning of the present century, in the chapter which treats on the *Present State of the Jews*, says, ‘They still consider themselves with their ancient haughtiness as *the people of God*.—They always are expecting a glorious return, which shall raise them above all the nations of the earth. They flatter themselves, that this deliverance will speedily arrive, though they are ignorant of the time’⁹⁷.

⁹⁵ For the facts respecting the Jewish impostors see Basnage’s History of the Jews (p. 516, 518, 551, 564, 577, 597, 631, 633, 664, 697, 699, 701, 730, 731, 738, 757); bishop Newton’s Dissertations on Prophecy (vol. III. p. 42); Jortin’s Remarks on Ecclesiastical History (vol. II. p. 361—366); bishop Kidder’s Demonstration of the Messias (vol. III. p. 391—421); and Dion Cassius (Leunclavii, Hanoviae, 1606, lib. LXIX. p. 794).

⁹⁶ John v. 43. To *come in his own name*, says Dr. Whitby, ‘is to come without commission or testimony from God.’ Of Dr. Clarke’s paraphrase on these words the following is the principal part. ‘Ye reject me, I say, principally for this very reason, because I seek not temporal interests, neither set up myself as the head of a sect in the way of worldly pride and ambition; but preach to you plainly in the name of God my Father.—If another should come, pretending himself to be the Messias; though without any of that evidence of divine authority, which I have brought along with me; and should set up himself to be a great person; promising you for your service worldly power and dignity, and suffer- ing you quietly to go on in your vices; him you would entertain and follow with all eagerness.’

⁹⁷ P. 748.

- On the state of the Jews in the last century, and there is no reason to believe that it is greatly altered, I shall quote the words of Luzzati, a rabbi who taught at Venice in that century. " It is a difficult thing," says Luzzati, " to give an exact account of the number of the " Jews, who are at present dispersed into so many " places. We cannot tell any certain news of the ten " tribes Salmanazar carried away; and it is not known " where they are, though the whole world be sufficiently " known. To begin with the East. We know, that " there are abundance of Jews in the kingdom of Per- " sia, though they have but little liberty. The Turkish " empire is their chief retreat, not only because they " have been settled there a long time, but because a great " many of those that were banished out of Spain retired " thither. There are more of them at Constantinople " and Salonicchi, than in any other place. They reckon " above fourscore thousand in these two cities, and about " a million in the Grand Seignior's empire. A great " number of pilgrims come from all corners of the world " to Jerusalem, and considerable sums are sent thither " to sustain the poor, and keep up the academies. " There are a great many of them in Germany in the em- " peror's dominions; but they are more numerous in " Poland, Lithuania, and Russia: here we have acade- " mies and disciples by thousands, who study our civil and " canon laws, because we are allowed the privilege of " judging the civil and criminal cases, that happen in " the nation. There are not so many Jews in the Pro- " testant states which separate from the Roman church; " but yet they treat them with a great deal of charity and " indulgence in the low countries; at Rotterdam, Ams- " terdam, and Hambourg, because these merchandizing " cities are open to foreigners. All the Italian princes " receive the Jews, countenance them, protect them,

" and inviolably maintain their privileges without altering them ; and I believe there are not less than 25,000 in this country. Fez, and Morocco, and the other neighbouring cities, which are not subject to the Turk, contain the greater numbers, because they are not remote from Spain or Portugal, from whence they may retire thither. There are other places upon the coast of Africa, which are also peopled with Jews; but, as we know but little of them, it is hard to fix the number⁹⁸."

The Jews, says bishop Law, ' are universally believed to be more numerous in the whole at present, than they have ever been in their most flourishing estate, in their own land⁹⁹.'

' Some appearances,' says Dr. Worthington, ' indicate a working towards their conversion and restoration. Dr. Jackson¹⁰⁰ observes, " that the continuation of their former plagues seemeth much interrupted," and " the plagues themselves much mitigated, in this last age, since the gospel hath been again revealed, as if their misery were almost expired, and the day of their *redemption drawing nigh.*" On the other hand, they do not shew that extreme malice towards Christians, nor Christians that hatred of them, which they formerly exercised towards each other. The good usage, which, in these latter ages, they have met with from Christians, hath undoubtedly abated their prejudices, and conciliated their minds to them ; and a continuance of the same justice and lenity may, with God's blessing, contribute greatly to prepare them for, and by degrees bring about, their conversion¹⁰¹. '

⁹⁸ Simon Luzzati *Discorzo circa il stato degli Hebrei*, c. 18. The quotation above is immediately taken from the English translation of Basnage's *History of the Jews*, p. 744.

⁹⁹ Law's *Theory of Religion*, 3d ed. p. 164.

¹⁰⁰ Dr. Th. Jackson's Works, vol. I. p. 153.

¹⁰¹ Dr. Worthington, vol. II, p. 64.

Though these observations of Dr. Worthington are upon the whole correct; we are not, I conceive, authorized in speaking of 'the good usage,' which the followers of Moses have experienced from the disciples of Christ during 'these latter ages.' The treatment of the former, either from governments or from individuals, has not, till very lately, been in any degree mild or liberal. Even of those whose prejudices have been softened by literature, not a few have been disposed to keep the posterity of Abraham, still loaded with shackles, and still discouraged by depression. In the last chapter of the last volume of his *Demonstration of the Messiah*¹⁰², bishop Kidder has interspersed some observations relative to the means of converting the Jews; but, of the methods which he specifies, some are very ill adapted to accomplish the intended effect. He recommends, that the Jews should be compelled occasionally to attend at places of Christian worship, and to hear the sermons preached there; that they should be obliged to engage in conferences with Christian divines; that they should not 'have the liberty to use what prayers they please' in their synagogues; that the government should force the richer Jews to maintain their poorer brethren, as they have been used to do, though they should reject Judaism and embrace Christianity; and that the Jews should continue to be excluded from places of honour and power, and from enjoying the freedom of the press. Accordingly having observed, that rabbi Aben Amram complained greatly, that the Jews possessed not 'the liberty of the press'; he is careful to clear himself from the most distant imputation of being an advocate, for their using so horrid an engine as the press; a far more mischievous discovery, in the eyes of civil tyrants and interested pre-

¹⁰² This volume was published in the year 1700.

Iates, than that of gun-powder, or any the most destructive invention, which the boldest flight of the human imagination can conceive. ‘*Far be it from me,*’ says the bishop, ‘ for pleading for any such liberty as that.’ And he afterwards adds, that it is undoubtedly ‘ a very great favour in Christian kings and states to permit the Jews ‘ to live in their several kingdoms and countries without ‘ disturbance ;’ and that ‘ nothing can be more adviseable ‘ than to keep them low¹⁰³.’

Dr. Hartley, in addition to the arguments from prophecy which he has alleged to prove, that the Jews will return to Palestine, notices some concurring evidences, which the existing circumstances of that people suggest. After observing in the *First* place, that they ‘ are yet a *distinct* people from all the nations amongst which they reside ;’ he says, ‘ *Secondly*, they are to be found in all ‘ the countries of the known world. And this agrees ‘ with many remarkable passages of the scriptures, which ‘ treat both of their dispersion and of their return. *Third-* ‘ *ly*, they have no inheritance of land in any country. ‘ Their possessions are chiefly money and jewels. They ‘ may, therefore, transfer themselves with the greater facil- ‘ ity to Palestine. *Fourthly*, they are treated with con- ‘ tempt and harshness, and sometimes with great cruelty, ‘ by the nations amongst whom they sojourn. They must ‘ therefore be the more ready to return to their own ‘ land. *Fifthly*, they carry on a correspondence with ‘ each other throughout the whole world; and conse- ‘ quently must both know when circumstances begin to ‘ favour their return, and be able to concert measures ‘ with one another concerning it. *Sixthly*, a great part ‘ of them speak and write the rabbinical Hebrew, as well ‘ as the language of the country where they reside. They

' are therefore, as far as relates to themselves, actually
' possessed of an universal language and character ; which
' is a circumstance that may facilitate their return, beyond
' what can well be imagined. *Seventhly*, the Jews them-
' selves still retain a hope and expectation, that God will
' once more restore them to their own land¹⁰⁴.

Their establishment in Judea, it may be added, will be of the more easy accomplishment, because the detestable government of the Turks has, in a degree almost incredible, depopulated Judea, Syria, and the fertile countries which are contiguous, and therefore there will be ample territories for them to inhabit and to cultivate.
' The total population of Syria', says Volney, "may be
' estimated at 2,305,000 souls." But ' let us suppose it
' two millions and a half, and since Syria contains about
' 5250 square leagues, at the rate of 150 in length and 35
' in breadth, we shall have upon an average 476 inhab-
' itants for every square *league*. So feeble a population
' in so excellent a country may well excite our asto-
' nishment, but this will be still increased, if we compare
' the present number of inhabitants, with that of ancient
times.—From the accounts we have of Judea in the
' time of Titus, and which are to be esteemed tolerably
' accurate, that country must have contained four mil-
lions of inhabitants.—If we go still farther back into
' antiquity, we shall find the same populousness among
' the Philistines, the Phœnicians, and in the kingdoms
' of Samaria and Damascus. It is true, that some writers,
' reasoning from what they see in Europe, have called in
' question these facts; several of which, indeed, ap-
peared to be disputable; but the comparisons on which
' they build are not on that account the less erroneous;
' first, because the lands of Asia in general are more fer-

¹⁰⁴ *On Man*, vol. II. p. 373.

' tile than those of Europe; secondly, because a part of
 ' these lands are capable of being cultivated, and in fact
 ' are cultivated, without lying fallow or requiring ma-
 ' nure; thirdly, because the Orientals consume one half
 ' less for their subsistence than the inhabitants of the
 ' Western world, in general; for all which reasons it
 ' appears, that a territory of less extent may contain
 ' double and treble the population. These authors ex-
 ' claim against the armies of two and three hundred thou-
 ' sand men, furnished by states, which in Europe would
 ' not produce above twenty or thirty thousand; but it is not
 ' considered, that the constitutions of ancient nations
 ' were wholly different from ours; that these nations
 ' were purely cultivators; that there was less inequality,
 ' and less idleness than among us; that every cultivator
 ' was a soldier; that in war the army frequently consisted
 ' of the whole nation.—Without appealing to the po-
 ' sitive testimony of history, there are innumerable mo-
 ' numents, which depose in favour of the great popula-
 ' tion of high antiquity. ' Such are the prodigious quan-
 ' tity of ruins dispersed over the plains, and even in the
 ' mountains, at this day deserted. On the most remote
 ' parts of Cariel are found wild vines and olive-trees,
 ' which must have been conveyed thither by the hand of
 ' man; and, in the Lebanon of the Druzes and Maronites,
 ' the rocks, now abandoned to fir-trees and brambles, pre-
 ' sent us in a thousand places with terraces, which prove
 ' they were anciently better cultivated, and consequently
 ' much more populous than in our days¹⁰⁵. '

It is in the name of Almighty God, that Ezekiel says,
And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel,
even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the
wastes shall be builded: and I will—do better unto you

¹⁰⁵ Volney's Travels through Syria and Egypt, vol. II. p. 365.

than

than at your beginnings.—And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know, that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it¹⁰⁶.

After having stated Dr. Hartley's general arguments, on the practicability of the restoration of the Jews to the country of their ancestors, it may not be unallowable to enter into the field of conjecture, and concisely to state the more immediate causes, which may possibly contribute to their migration and their establishment in Palestine. Should the Turkish empire be overturned by Russia, and should many of the Jews discover an inclination to settle in Palestine, which it is likely they would do on the event of so important a revolution; it is by no means improbable, that the policy of the Russian government would embrace an opportunity of colonizing without expence a country, possessed of so many natural advantages, but which is, at present, so scantily inhabited, and so imperfectly cultivated. In such a climate, and under such circumstances, the first settlers would be likely to prosper; and, having prospered, it surely is not irrational to conjecture, that they would be followed by greater numbers, and at length by the general mass of their countrymen, encouraged, as they would be, by the predictions of the Hebrew scriptures, and animated by the hope of attaining to national independence and

¹⁰⁶ Ch. xxxvi. 10, 11, 34, 35, 36. This chapter of Ezekiel contains, says Mr. Lowth, 'a prediction of the general restoration both of Israel and Judah.'

personal security. Now should the Russian empire, already greatly superior in point of magnitude to any permanent empire which has ever existed, in consequence of her insatiable ambition and the progress of her arms, become still more extensive; and should the various climes under her dominion be afterwards governed by the rash and fluctuating counsels of a feeble prince; it can hardly be a matter of doubt, that the unwieldy and ill-compacted fabric, requiring the most steady and discerning hand to direct its multifarious movements, and containing within itself the principles of discordancy and dissolution, would, in a short time, fall to pieces, and its disunited fragments be so arranged as to form separate governments. Amid these changes and convulsions, it is easy to conceive, that some of the provinces of Syria, which the Jews had recently colonized, might, with little difficulty, and without any violation of justice, be erected into an independent and respectable state.

But however easy, as we may *conjecture*, may be the settlement of the Jews in Palestine, there are prophecies in the Old Testament, which lead us to expect, that they will not remain unmolested in the possession of their country.

The following prophecy is extracted from the xxxviiith ch. of Ezekiel. *The word of Jehovah came also unto me, saying: Son of man, set thy face against Gog of the land of Magog, prince of Rhos, Meshech, and Tulat, and prophesy against him, and say, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: behold I am against thee, O Gog.—Thou shalt go up, as a storm cometh, thou shalt be as a cloud to cover the land; thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: it shall come to pass at the same time, that things shall arise in thine heart, and thou shalt think an evil thought; and shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; and I will*

I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely; all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates: to take a spoil, and to divide a prey; to turn mine hand against the desolate places that are become inhabited, and against a people gathered out of the nations, possessing cattle and goods, dwelling in the middle of the earth.—In that day, when my people Israel dwelleth securely, Shalt thou not rise up and come from thy place, from the north quarters, thou and many people with thee, all them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army? Shalt thou not come up against my people as a cloud to cover the land? Shall it not be in the latter days, that I will bring thee against my land; that the nations may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes?—Art not thou he, of whom I spake in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days and years, that I would bring thee against them¹⁰⁷. And in the next chapter the prophet says: And I will turn thee back, and leave but a sixth part of thee, when I cause thee to come up from the north-quarters, and bring thee upon the mountains of Israel.—Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou and all thy bands, and the many people that are with thee.—And I will set my glory among the nations; and all the nations shall see my judgment which I have executed, and mine hand which I have laid upon them.—And the people of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God, in that I caused them to be carried away captives among the nations, and afterwards collected them into their own land. And none of them will I leave there any more, neither hide my face any more from them¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁷ The expressions here used, of old times, and which prophesied in those days and years, plainly imply, that there was to be a succession of many ages between the publishing those prophecies and this event foretold by them.' Mr. Lowth in loc.

¹⁰⁸ The passages above are copied from Dr. Newcome's Improved Version of Ezekiel.

In his argument to the xxxviiith and xxxixth chapters of Ezekiel, Mr. Lowth says, ‘ the prophecy, contained in this and the following chapter concerning Israel’s victory over Gog and Magog, without question relates to the latter ages of the world, when the whole house of Israel shall return into their own land.’ And in commenting on the 8th v. of ch. xxxviii he says, ‘ the sense is, that after the return of the people of Israel into their own country, and their having lived there for some time in peace and safety, this enemy will think to take advantage of their security, and fall upon them unexpectedly.’

‘ As for the name *Gog*, it signifies,’ says Mede, ‘ the very same with *Magog*, for *mem* is but an Hematic letter; and it pleased the spirit of God to take away this first syllable to distinguish between the people and the land of the people, calling the people *Gog* and the land the land of *Magog*¹⁰⁹.’ That the Gog and Magog of the apocalypse¹¹⁰ cannot be understood of the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel, this sagacious commentator has remarked¹¹¹; and I regard his observation as indubitable.

Bochart, one of the most learned men whom France, or indeed Europe, ever produced, after observing, that among the ancients, it was the opinion of Josephus, Eustathius, Jerom, and Theodoret, that Magog was the father of the Scythians; and that this opinion is perfectly true; alleges various reasons to prove, that Magog signifies Scythia. The beginning of the passage recently quoted from Ezekiel may, he says, be thus paraphrased. Prepare yourself to prophecy against the king of the Scythians, of the land of Magog or Scythia, who is also the

¹⁰⁹ Mede’s Works, p. 374.

¹¹⁰ Mentioned ch. xx. v. 8, 9.

¹¹¹ See his Works, p. 751.

prince of Rhos, of Mesech, and of Tubal¹¹², that is, of the districts of Araxene, Moschica, and Tibarenia, countries contiguous to each other, and, at the time of the publication of the prophecy, subject to the Scythian power.

After observing that the territories of Tubal were situated to the South-East of the Euxine, Mr. Mede speaks of the original seat of the posterity of Magog, and says, Magog, ‘with the consent of all men, we place North of Tubal, and make him the father of those Scythians, ‘that dwelt on the East and North-East of the Euxine sea.’ For this we have also an ‘argument from the report of Pliny, in that Scythopolis and Hierapolis, which these Scythians took when they overcame Syria, were ever after by the Syrians called Magog.’ In course of time, his descendants, he observes, would have an opportunity of spreading over a vast extent of country, and of penetrating even to Nova Zembla¹¹³.

‘Magog,’ says Mr. Lowth, ‘was the son of Japhet, Gen. x. 2. from whence the Scythians are generally supposed to be derived. The Mogul Tartars, a people of Scythian race, are still called so by the Arabian wri-

¹¹² Rhos signifies, says Bochart, those who inhabit the Araxene of the Greeks, a province watered by the Araxes and in the neighbourhood of the Caspian. Meshech and Tubal, according to the same writer, are the appellations of two adjoining nations, who in the times of Grecian antiquity were called the Moschi and Tibareni, who had immediately to the North of them the people of Gog, and who themselves inhabited a considerable part of the country between the Euxine and the Caspian, and to the South of the Euxine. See the Phaleg of Bochart, l. iii. c. 12. See also a similar statement in the commentary of that learned Benedictine, Calmet. That Magog, Tubal, and Meshech were the grandsons of Noah and the sons of Japhet, we are told in the 2d verse of the xth chapter of Genesis. On the districts of Asia which they colonized and gave name to, Dr. Wells’s *Historical Geography of the Old Testament* may also be consulted, vol. I. p. 154—159.

¹¹³ Mede’s Works, p. 374, 378.

'ters.' To the same purpose speaks bp. Newcome. In 'Gen. x. 2.' says he, 'we learn, that Magog was the second son of Japhet. Ezekiel uses Magog for the country of which Gog was prince.' Michaelis (Spic. Geogr. p. 34) 'thinks, that Magog denotes those vast tracts of country to the north of India and China, which the Greeks called Scythia, and we Tartary.—The Arabs call the Chinese wall *Sud Yagog et Magog*¹¹⁴, that is *Jagger Gog et Magog*¹¹⁵.'

Notwithstanding the Scythians and the Tartars are admitted to be the ancient and modern names of the same people, and notwithstanding the passages which have been quoted from different writers appear to lead to a very plain conclusion; yet I have not met with a single commentator, who states it to be his opinion, that it is probable, this memorable prophecy of Ezekiel principally relates to the Tartars. 'By Gog and Magog,' says Mr. Lowth, 'may most probably here be meant the Turks;' and both Mede¹¹⁶ and bishop Newton¹¹⁷ speak of their being signified in these chapters of Ezekiel, as of a point that is well established. The principal reason which is given is, that the Turks, though they have now inhabited a different part of the world for centuries, are descended from the Tartars: but to me, I confess, this appears far from being satisfactory. The Russians and the Moscovites having been supposed by some to have been colonies sent out from the people of Rosh and Mesech or Mosoch; Mr. Bicheno supposes¹¹⁸, that the army which will attack the newly peopled country of the Jews will consist principally of Russians. But Mr. Bicheno attempts not to shew, that there is, or that there ever has been thought to be, any conceivable reason for explain-

¹¹⁴ Hyde's Works by Sharpe, II. 426. ¹¹⁵ Newcome on Ezek. xxxviii 2.

¹¹⁶ P. 374, 751, 1000.

¹¹⁷ Vol. II. p. 187; vol. III. p. 329.

¹¹⁸ Signs of the times, Part II. p. 45.

ing Gog and Magog of the Russians; and it is to be remembered, that, whoever Gog and Magog may be supposed to be, they constitute the main part of the invading army, and that the others are lesser powers and auxiliaries, who are to march under the banners of Gog.

I shall now briefly allege some reasons in support of my *conjecture*, that this formidable army will principally consist of Tartars. That the name of *Gog* and *Magog* perfectly agrees with that idea has already been seen.

Thou shalt come, says Ezekiel, *from thy place out of the North Parts*¹¹⁹, *thou and many people with thee*. This account, it is plain, corresponds not so well to the situation of the Turks, who are principally settled in the warm regions of the South, as to that of the Tartars, who inhabit regions, which are in general cold and are extended to very Northern latitudes. That the invading host will come from a distance, the words of Ezekiel, it may be added, seem to imply: but the Turks, at present at least, are situated in Judea and the contiguous countries. *Thou shalt say*, declares the prophet, *I will go up to the land of unwalled villages,—to take a spoil, and to take a prey*. And again, *Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?*¹²⁰ These particulars appear not to be descriptive of the regularly conducted wars of the Russians or the Turks, which are ordinarily wars of aggrandisement or defence; and there certainly seems reasonable ground for expectation, that they would have been spoken of in a very different manner, had they been the Turks come to recover the territories they had lost. But the prophetic statement completely harmonizes with

¹¹⁹ XXXVIII. 15. This circumstance is repeated again xxxix. 2.

¹²⁰ XXXVIII. 11, 12, 13.

the general character of Tartar warfare, with the predatory spirit, and the transitory inroads, of the shepherds of the North. The prophet represents them to be extremely numerous, as being *like a cloud* which shall *cover the land*; and it is well known, that there is no nation, which has been accustomed to bring such numerous forces into the field as the princes of Tartary. They are also spoken of as *ALL of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army.* To the Tartars, and to the Tartars only, this description exactly corresponds; for there is no other nation in the world, who constantly make use of cavalry alone¹²¹. Ezekiel likewise says¹²², *I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand*¹²³; and it is observable, that the Tartars in every age have encountered their enemies with bows and arrows, and that these are the weapons which they still employ, in this respect differing both from the Russians and the Turks.

As the subject is in itself instructive and curious, I may be indulged in quoting from Mr. Gibbon some extracts respecting the manners of this nation of shepherds. At present the Tartar tribes are deterred from planning

¹²¹ ‘Constant practice,’ says Gibbon, had seated the Scythians ‘so firmly on horseback, that they were supposed by strangers to perform the ordinary duties of civil life, to eat, to drink, and even to sleep, without dismounting from their steeds.’ vol. IV. p. 348.

¹²² XXXIX. 3.

¹²³ See the Observations annexed to the *Genealogical History of the Tartars* by Abulgazi Khan, 1730, vol. II. p. 400. ‘Most of the Tartars,’ says the author of the observations, ‘hang their bow at the left side, in a sort of case, when they take horse; but they carry their quiver upon their backs.’ And Mr. Gibbon, speaking of them, says (vol. IV. p. 350), ‘the long Tartar bow is drawn with a nervous arm; and the weighty arrow is directed to its object with unerring aim, and irresistible strength.’

any schemes of invasion, and awed into tranquillity, by the armies and the fame of the Ottoman Porte, and still more by the mighty strength and vigorous administration of the Russian monarchy. But should these empires fall to pieces, the subsequent extracts display the extreme probability, that the Tartars, laying hold of this favourable opportunity for the renewal of foreign hostilities, will make a new and formidable irruption into some of the fertile provinces of Turkey¹²⁴.

' In every age, the immense plains of Scythia, or Tartary, have been inhabited by vagrant tribes of hunters and shepherds, whose indolence refuses to cultivate the earth, and whose restless spirit despairs the confinement of a sedentary life. In every age the Scythians, and Tartars, have been renowned for their invincible courage, and rapid conquests. The thrones of Asia have been repeatedly overturned by the shepherds of the North; and their arms have spread terror and devastation over the most fertile and warlike countries of Europe.' Many circumstances, indeed, concur to inspire the Tartars with a military spirit, and to encourage their invasion of countries that are feebly defended. This will appear, if an attention be paid to their diet, their habitations, and their exercises.

' In the military profession, and especially in the conduct of a numerous army, the exclusive use of animal food appears to be productive of the most solid advantages. Corn is a bulky and perishable commodity; and the large magazines, which are indispensably necessary for the subsistence of our troops, must be slowly transported by the labour of men or horses. But the flocks and herds, which accompany the march of the Tartars,

¹²⁴ On the formidable irruptions of the Tartars in the 5th, the 13th, and the 14th centuries see the note in p. 476—480.

afford a sure and encreasing supply of flesh and milk : in the far greater part of the uncultivated waste the vegetation of the grass is quick and luxuriant; and there are few places so extremely barren, that the hardy cattle of the North cannot find some tolerable pasture. The supply is multiplied and prolonged, by the undistinguishing appetite, and patient abstinence, of the Tartars. They indifferently feed on the flesh of those animals, that have been killed for the table, or have died of disease.—The active cavalry of Scythia is always followed, in their most distant and rapid incursions, by an adequate number of spare horses, who may be occasionally used, either to redouble the speed, or to satisfy the hunger, of the Barbarians. Many are the resources of hunger and poverty. When the forage round a camp of Tartars is almost consumed, they slaughter the greatest part of their cattle, and preserve the flesh, either smoked, or dried in the sun. On the sudden emergency of a hasty march, they provide themselves with a sufficient quantity of little balls of cheese, or rather of hard curd, which they occasionally dissolve in water; and this unsubstantial diet will support, for many days, the life, and even the spirits, of the patient warrior.

The progress of manufactures and commerce insensibly collects a large multitude within the walls of a city; but these citizens are no longer soldiers; and the arts, which adorn and improve the state of civil society, corrupt the habits of the military life. The pastoral manners of the Scythians seem to unite the different advantages of simplicity and refinement. The individuals of the same tribe are constantly assembled, but they are assembled in a camp; and the native spirit of these dauntless shepherds is animated by mutual support and emulation. The houses of the Tartars are no more than small tents.—The palaces of the rich consist of wooden huts,

‘ huts, of such a size that they may be conveniently fixed
‘ on large waggons.—The flocks and herds, after grazing
‘ all day in the adjacent pastures, retire, on the approach
‘ of night, within the protection of the camp. The ne-
‘ cessity of preventing the most mischievous confusion, in
‘ such a perpetual concourse of men and animals, must
‘ gradually introduce, in the distribution, the order, and
‘ the guard, of the encampment, the rudiments of the mi-
‘ litary art. As soon as the forage of a certain district is
‘ consumed, the tribe, or rather army, of shepherds, makes
‘ a regular march to some fresh pastures; and thus ac-
‘ quires in the ordinary occupations of the pastoral life,
‘ the practical knowledge of one of the most important
‘ and difficult operations of war. The choice of stations
‘ is regulated by the difference of the seasons: in the sum-
‘ mer, the Tartars advance towards the North:—In the
‘ winter they return to the South.—These manners are
‘ admirably adapted to diffuse, among the wandering
‘ tribes, the spirit of emigration and conquest. The con-
‘ nexion between the people and their territory is of so
‘ frail a texture, that it may be broken by the slightest ac-
‘ cident. The camp, and not the soil, is the native
‘ country of the genuine Tartar. Within the precincts
‘ of that camp, his family, his companions, his property
‘ are always included; and, in the most distant marches,
‘ he is still surrounded by the objects which are dear, or
‘ valuable, or familiar in his eyes. The thirst of rapine,
‘ the fear or the resentment, of injury, the impatience of
‘ servitude, have, in every age, been sufficient causes to
‘ urge the tribes of Scythia boldly to advance into some
‘ unknown countries, where they might hope to find
‘ a more plentiful subsistence, or a less formidable
‘ enemy.’

The Tartars are possessed of much leisure, and this lei-
sure is ‘ spent in the violent and sanguinary exercise of

' the chace. The plains of Tartary are filled with a
' strong and serviceable breed of horses, which are easily
' trained for the purposes of war and hunting. The Scy-
' thians of every age have been celebrated as bold and
' skilful riders.—The exploits of the hunters of Scythia
' are not confined to the destruction of timid or innoxious
' beasts; and there is one of their modes of hunting,
which opens the fairest field to the exertions of valour,
and ' may justly be considered as the image, and as
' the school, of war. The general hunting matches, the
' pride and delight of the Tartar princes, compose an in-
' structive exercise for their numerous cavalry. A circle
' is drawn, of many miles in circumference, to encom-
' pass the game of an extensive district; and the troops
' that form the circle regularly advance towards a com-
' mon centre; where the captive animals, surrounded
' on every side, are abandoned to the darts of the hun-
' ters. In this march, which frequently continues many
' days, the cavalry are obliged to climb the hills, or swim
' rivers, and to wind through the vallies, without inter-
' rupting the prescribed order of their gradual progress.
' They acquire the habit of directing their eye, and their
' steps, to a remote object; of preserving their intervals;
' of suspending, or accelerating, their pace, according to
' the motions of the troops on their right and left; and
' of watching and repeating the signals of their leaders.
' Their leaders study, in this practical school, the most
' important lesson of the military art; the prompt and ac-
' curate judgment of ground, of distance, and of time.
' To employ against a human enemy the same patience
' and valour, the same skill and discipline, is the only al-
' teration, which is required in real war; and the amuse-
' ments of the chace serve as a prelude to the conquest of
' an empire.'

As late as the year 1771, was a great transmigration of Calmucks. Three hundred thousand of them, after having remained about a century under the protection of Russia, near the banks of the Volga, and in the neighbourhood of Astrachan, traversed an immense extent of country, and returned to their native seats on the frontiers of the Chinese empire¹²⁵.

Along with the numerous forces of Gog, there will, the prophet informs us, be the bands of Gomer¹²⁶ and Togarmah¹²⁷, together with troops from Persia, Æthiopia, and Lybia¹²⁸; and it is very credible, that the fame of this great invasion, the successes which will be gained in the course of an extensive march, and the expectation of a participation in the spoil, will allure bodies of troops from different countries to enlist under the banners of this mighty host of military plunderers¹²⁹.

The prophecy teaches us to expect, that the Jews will not be preserved from the efforts of their invaders, merely by their own valour, or by that of any allies whose assistance they may be able to obtain; for it seems plainly intimated, that the army of the enemy will be dissolved, partly by the spread of some contagious disease, and partly by the progress of internal discord, and the prosecution of sanguinary quarrels among the hostile squa-

¹²⁵ Gibbon, vol. IV. p. 342, 344, 346, 349, 350, 370.

¹²⁶ 'Cimmerians: a very old and celebrated people, who inhabited the peninsula of Crim Tartary.' Michaelis in loc. as quoted by bp. Newcome.

¹²⁷ According to Bochart, *Togarmah* is Cappadocia.

¹²⁸ XXXVIII. 5, 6.

¹²⁹ In the 13th century, the fame of the arms of the Moguls excited a number of persons to go as far as China from the remote countries of the West, and to enlist themselves into the service of the Tartars. In their attack of the cities in the Northern empire of China, 'the sieges,' says Mr. Gibbon (vol. XI. p. 415), 'were conducted by the Mahometans and Franks.'

drons. *Every man's sword, says the prophet, shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood*¹³⁰.

Of the invading multitude described by Ezekiel, the far greater part, the prophet assures us, shall be destroyed¹³¹; and supposing them to be Tartars, and to display the same eagerness to violate all the principles of justice and humanity, as their countrymen have been *accustomed* to discover, they will probably be thought to deserve their fate. ‘In all their invasions of the civilized empires of the South, the Scythian shepherds,’ says Mr. Gibbon, ‘have been uniformly actuated by a savage and destructive spirit.—After the Moguls had subdued the northern provinces of China, it was seriously proposed, not in the hour of victory and passion, but in calm deliberate council, to exterminate all the inhabitants of that populous country, that the vacant land might be converted to the pasture of cattle.—The most casual provocation, the slightest motive of caprice or convenience, often provoked them to involve a whole people in an indiscriminate massacre: and the ruin of some flourishing cities was executed with such unrelenting perseverance, that, according to their own expression, horses might run, without stumbling, over the ground where they had once stood. The great capitals of Khorasan, Maru, Neisabour, and Herat, were destroyed by the armies of Zingis; and the exact account, which was taken of the slain, amounted to 4,347,000 persons.—In his camp before Delhi, Timur massacred 100,000 Indian prisoners, who had smiled when the army of their

¹³⁰ XXXVIII. 21, 22. ‘It is plain,’ says bp Newcome, that the circumstances, mentioned in these verses, ‘remain to be accomplished on the future enemies of the Jews, when his people are reinstated in God’s favour.’

¹³¹ XXXIX, 2, 11.

‘countrymen’

' countrymen appeared in sight. The people of Ispahan supplied 70,000 human skulls for the structure of several lofty towers; and ' he erected on the ruins of Bagdad a pyramid of 90,000 heads¹³².'

The same causes and the same events, it may be added, which will predispose the Jews to investigate the proofs of the divine mission of Jesus, and which will strike conviction into their minds, will operate with similar force upon the disciples of infidelity.

I conclude the chapter with a short but solemn declaration, relative to the future happy state of the Jews, contained in the Ixiid ch. of Isaiah. Speaking of Jerusalem, the prophet says, *Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate. The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength. Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the strangers shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: but they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it*¹³³.

¹³² Vol. VI. p. 53—56; Vol. XII. p. 24.

¹³³ V. 4, 8, 9.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON THE PREDICTIONS RELATIVE TO THE PERIOD, DENOMINATED THE MILLENNIUM.

IN the preceding chapters it has been shewn, that the destruction of ecclesiastical usurpation, of the anti-christian monarchies in Europe, and of Oriental despotism,

potism, is pointed out in the prophetic scriptures; and, according to the natural order of things, the accomplishment of these great events may justly be thought to have prepared the way for a period of terrestrial felicity, signally elevated and lasting. The prospect of such a period must be soothing to the mind of man, when it returns, fatigued and dispirited, from contemplating the miseries of human-kind, which press so thick upon each other in the page of history. How unceasingly have their rights been usurped, and an ample portion of their property plundered, to promote the interests of a tyrannic priesthood, or in compliance with the orders of the noble, the statesman, or the monarch! How uniformly, in every past period, has their blood been shed, their virtues debased, their understandings darkened, in order to gratify the vices, or to secure the power, of the privileged orders! ‘ He, who the most dispassionately contemplates so sad a scene,’ to use the words of bishop Hurd, ‘ can hardly reconcile appearances to what must have been his natural expectations. Here, then, the prophecies of this work, I mean, of the apocalypse, comes in to our relief.’ They shew, ‘ that the end of this dispensation (the Christian) is to promote virtue and happiness; and that this end shall finally, but through many and long obstructions, be accomplished.’ Thus ‘ they reconcile us to that disordered scene which hath hitherto been presented to us; and give repose to the anxious mind, in the assured hope of better things to come¹. ’

Before I select from those passages of scripture, which point out the certain arrival of a permanent period of happiness on earth, it will be proper to explain what my ideas of a millennium are. For I am aware, that, against the more common representations of it, strong prejudices

¹ Vol. II. p. 206.

have with justice been entertained. By the disorderly imagination of some visionaries it has been painted as a state of things, altogether wild and irrational; and even many, of a sober turn, and a cultivated judgment, have annexed to it much of the marvellous and improbable. By the MILLENNIUM I mean a period of great length, eminently distinguished for the spread of KNOWLEDGE and of genuine CHRISTIANITY, in consequence of which good GOVERNMENT will universally be established, VIRTUE will not only be generally esteemed but practised, and human HAPPINESS will be carried to an unexampled height.

The literal construction of texts is, I apprehend, the grand source of error on this subject. Strange is the length to which this mode of explanation has been carried by very sensible writers; who, upon this topic, appear to have altogether forgotten, that the prophetic scriptures are conspicuously characterized by highly figurative language. The same men, who uniformly acknowledge all the former part of the apocalypse to be written in the symbolic style, when they come to the three last chapters, appear all at once to change their method of explication, and in a great degree interpret it according to the letter. Many of the ancient fathers, from carrying this to its full extent, brought discredit, not only on themselves, but on the book of Revelation itself. The too literal expounding of passages has, says Dr. Jortin, ‘ produced strange and precarious notions amongst ancient and modern Christians concerning the millennium: thus it has been supposed, that Christ shall come and reign personally upon earth a thousand years, that the old Christian martyrs shall rise again to reign with him, that the Jews shall have a temple rebuilt, and a temple-service renewed².’

* Rem. on Eccl. Hist. Vol. II. p. 424.

As a proof, however, that rational ideas on the nature of the millennium have long been entertained, I transcribe a short extract from Mr. Stephens, as printed nearly 140 years since. ‘ For the nature of this kingdom, we desire that we may not be mistaken. We do not plead for a personal reign, nor a literal resurrection of the martyrs, nor a confluence of all sensual delights, as many have done. That which we principally stand for, is, the universal subjection of the nations to the laws of the Gospel, and the rest of the church from such persecutions as have been in all antichristian times³. ’

As a day usually stands for a year in the apocalypse, and three years and a half for 1260; I think it an opinion not entirely destitute of plausibility, that the Thousand Years, spoken of by St. John, are prophetic years, and denote a period of 360,000 common years. This was thought probable by Hartley⁴, and is the opinion of Priestley⁵. It is not, I am aware, unencumbered with difficulties; and is exposed to a very formidable objection, drawn from a consideration of the size of the globe and the probable progress of population. That mankind will subsist in this world only ten centuries, after the commencement of the millennial period, I do, however, conceive to be a notion as irrational and unfounded, as it is gloomy and dispiriting.

To the reality of a millennium a crowd of passages bear testimony. Of these a few shall be alleged.

Daniel, having declared in the 35th v. of the iid. ch. that all the oppressive governments of the world shall be broken to pieces, says, in the close of the same verse, that *the stone, which was cut out without hands, became a great*

³ A Calcul. of the Numb. &c. p. 91. ⁴ On Man, Vol. II. p. 400.

⁵ See his Institutes, Vol. II. p. 417.

mountain, and filled the whole earth, ‘that is,’ says Dr. Lancaster, ‘the kingdom of the Messiah, having destroyed the four monarchies, became an universal monarchy.’ What a lofty idea do these symbols suggest to us of the final spread of Christianity⁶! That, which at first was so narrow in its extent, as justly to be likened to a small stone, will at length be worthy of being compared to a mighty mountain. This prophetic vision, says Mr. Mede, ‘points out two states of the kingdom of Christ. The first to be while those times of the kingdoms of the Gentiles yet lasted, typified by a stone hewn out of a mountain without hands, the monarchical statue yet standing upon his feet. The Second not to be until the utter destruction and dissipation of the image, when the stone having smote it upon the feet, should grow into a great mountain, which should fill the whole earth. The First may be called, for distinction sake, *regnum lapidis*, the kingdom of the stone; which is the state of Christ’s kingdom which hath hitherto been: the other, *regnum montis*, the kingdom of the mountain (that is, of the stone grown into a mountain, &c.), which is the state of his kingdom which hereafter shall be⁷.’ But the subject, which Mr. Mede was handling, he felt to be a very delicate one, and but ill calculated to gratify the ruling powers.

⁶ With the dictates of reason this perfectly agrees. ‘As the gospel was plainly fitted for the use of all mankind, so nothing can seem more reasonable and fit, than that sometime or other it should be made known to all.’ *Christianity the Perfect. of all Rel.* by Tho. Jeffery, p. 98.

⁷ However the doctrine of the millennium may be understood, ‘it is clear,’ says Mr. Gray, ‘that the prophetic declarations promise the universal establishment of Christianity, in purity and truth, to be preceded by the fall of that antichristian power, of which the character is described as so repugnant and hostile to the spirit of the church.’ *Gray’s Discourses*, 1793, p. 316.

⁸ P. 99.

In a letter to Mr. Hayne, who differed with him on the prophecy of Daniel, he accordingly says, ‘ I am unwilling to put all in writing, which I would utter in a private and personal discourse?’

To the Jews, says bp. Chandler, we might on these points appeal. ‘ Ask them, what is meant by *the stone*, and they answer as one man, *the Messias*. Go to the image, that the stone smote on the toes, and they are as unanimous in saying, it is the Roman empire, which must be, therefore, still in being, according to their sentiments¹⁰. ’

The bishop, to authenticate this statement, cites as witnesses, a crowd of the most celebrated rabbins. To these conclusions the words of Daniel do, indeed, irresistibly lead. In his explication of this vision to Nebuchadnezzar, he says, in v. 44 & 45, that the symbolic *stone broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold*; and that *the kingdom, which the God of heaven set up, shall never be destroyed*. The restricted sense of the word *never* will be more conveniently noted in a future page.

After observing, that ‘ the present kingdoms of Europe are unquestionably represented by the feet and toes of the great image,’ Dr. Priestley says, ‘ From Daniel’s interpretation of this vision it may be clearly inferred, that the forms of government, ecclesiastical and civil, which now subsist in Europe, must be dissolved; but that something very different from them, and greatly superior to them, more favourable to the virtue and happiness of mankind, will take place in their stead. That this is the meaning of the prophecy can hardly be doubted by any person, who shall give the least attention to it¹¹. ’

⁹ P 915.

¹⁰ Def. of Christianity, p. 100.

¹¹ Institutes, &c. Vol. II. p. 426.

But another prophetic vision of the same import, and yet more clear, is recorded in ch. vii. After predicting, in v. 11 and 12, the destruction of the papal power and the oppressive monarchies of the world, Daniel immediately adds in v. 13 and 14, *I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven;—and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, THAT ALL PEOPLE, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES, SHOULD SERVE HIM.* ‘The time, in which this kingdom is given,’ says Dr. Sykes, ‘is expressly mentioned to be after the death of the beast, or after the expiration of the fourth kingdom.—And here it is observable, that the kingdom of the Son of man is not spoken of as a kingdom, in this prophecy, till the judgment was set, i. e. not till that glorious state of it, when the stone should actually become a mountain¹².’

There has before been occasion to introduce extracts from Daubuz and from bp. Newton, wherein they remark, that it is the custom of the prophets first to describe an event in the language of symbols, and afterwards to represent it in plain and ordinary words. Thus, in the passage just cited, the *first* clause is cloathed in the emblematic language of the East; but the *second* is expressed literally, and is explanatory of the meaning of the former. Dr. More accordingly observes in his prophetic alphabet, that ‘*riding upon the clouds* signifies—success against our enemies and enlargement of power.’ In confirmation of this, I give the words of Achinet, as appealed to by Dr. More, and quoted by Dr. Lancaster: this ancient writer says, that, according to the usage of the Persians and Egyptians, ‘a king’s riding upon the clouds is interpreted of foreign nations serving him, of

¹² Upon the Truth of Chr. p. 18. What Mede observes, p. 933, is in exact agreement with this quotation from Dr. Sykes.

'his ruling over them, and of his being exceedingly prosperous and successful¹³.' Indeed bp. Newton says, on Mat. xxiv, 30, that 'in the ancient prophets God is frequently described as *coming in the clouds*, upon any remarkable interposition and manifestation of his power; and the same description is here applied to Christ¹⁴.' To the same purpose speaks Vitrina. 'Christ is said to come in the clouds of heaven in the style of scripture, as often as he demonstrates his glory and majesty by the signal effects of his favour, severity, and power¹⁵.'

That a *cloud* is a symbol, denoting success, was before remarked¹⁶. When therefore it is said in Daniel, that *one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven*, the prediction appears evidently to carry with it this import, that, at the period spoken of, the religion of Jesus will obtain a signal triumph over all its enemies, and will have a glorious prevalence. Agreeably to this, Daubuz and Lancaster conceive, that when Christ said in Mat. xxiv. 30, *they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory*; he superadded these words, *power and great glory*, as explanatory of the symbol which Daniel had employed; and it is after he had been discussing at length the established meaning of *heaven* in prophetic language, that the

¹³ Achmetis Oneirocritica, 164.

¹⁴ Vol. II. p. 283. In Isaiah, xix. 1. it is said, *behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt*.

¹⁵ In Apoc. I. 7. See this observation also made and illustrated by Brearius (*De Regno Eccl. Glor.* cap. 5). I likewise add the statement of bp. Newcome. 'I think,' says this worthy prelate and able scriptural critic, 'any signal interposition in behalf of his church, or in the destruction of his enemies, may be metaphorically called a *coming*, or a *parousia*, of Christ.' *Observations on our Lord's Conduct as a Divine Instructor*, p. 256.

¹⁶ See authorities for this in p. 136.

former of these writers says, in this prediction of our Saviour, it is plain, that *heaven* is synonymous to *powers* and *glory*¹⁷. And I must not omit to observe, that Dr. Lightfoot, who was so intimately conversant in the Jewish phraseology, thinks, that this and similar passages are indubitably not to be interpreted of Christ's actual advent. By writers of reputation the belief of his personal reign on earth is, indeed, very generally rejected¹⁸. This, however, I believe, to adopt the words of Mr. Pyle, that he shall reign in the hearts, and holy lives, and examples of his followers¹⁹.

Among others who have regarded the expression in Mat. xxiv. 30, *they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven*, as undoubtedly figurative, (I repeat

¹⁷ P. 161. See this observed by Waple on Rev. ch. i. v. 7. ‘Clouds of heaven, in the scripture-phrase, seem,’ says Dr. More in his prophetic alphabet, ‘to signify power and great glory.’ See also Taylor’s *Thoughts on the Grand Apostacy*, p. 179, where he observes, that ‘the coming of Christ in the kingdom of God does by no means intimate any kind of local motion or change of place: but merely the arrival at power and glory.— Thus we say in English, that the king came to his throne, that a man came to his estate, &c. without the least idea of local motion.’

¹⁸ Among others, it is rejected in express terms by Crellius (in Rom. xi. 23), Vitrunga (in Apoc. p. 848), Brenius (*de Regno Christi*), Dr. John Edwards (*Hist. of the Various Dispensations of Religion*, vol. II. p. 654), Peganius (on the Apoc. p. 238), Dr. Thomas Burnet (*Theory of the Earth*, vol. II. p. 308), Whitby (on the Millennium, ch. iv.), Hurd (vol. I. p. 123), and Jortin (on *Eccles. Hist.* vol. II. p. 424). Mede, speaking of this subject, says, ‘I dare not so much as imagine, that it should be a visible converse upon earth (p. 741);’ and how strongly Dr. More condemned the contrary opinion, the following citation from him will evince. ‘The personal reign of Christ upon earth and of his holy martyrs is a very rash and groundless and unsafe conceit.’ *Myst. of Godliness*, p. 181. The passage that follows is from Dr. Burnet. ‘That Christ should leave that right-hand of his Father, to come and pass a thousand years here below, living upon earth in an heavenly body: this, I confess, is a thing I never could digest.’

¹⁹ On the Rev. p. 87.

the names which have before been incidentally mentioned,) are Daubuz, Lancaster, Lightfoot, Vitrunga, Le Clerc, Brenius, Whitby, Hammond, Benson, Macknight, Campbell, and Nisbett, together with bishops Newton, Newcome, and Pearce. The *first* coming of Christ, says bp. Hurd, ‘ was then over, when he expired on the ‘ cross.’ But his *second*, observes the prelate, is of a different kind and not to be understood of a personal appearance²⁰. Indeed ‘ the word *Christ*,’ says the same writer in another place, ‘ is frequently used in the apostolic ‘ writings for the doctrine of Christ; in which sense we ‘ are said to *put on Christ*, to *grow in Christ*, to *learn* ‘ *Christ*, and in other instances²¹.’

Is it not surprising, that the very same persons, who declare, that the expression, *the coming of the Son of man in the clouds*, when it occurs in Daniel and the Evangelists, though acknowledged to be prophetic, is to be *literally* understood; when they meet with exactly similar language in St. John, universally admit that it there carries with it a *figurative* import? When Christ is represented as sitting upon a *white cloud* (xiv. 14), or described as sitting upon a *white horse*²² (vi. 2), the symbolic texture

²⁰ Vol. I. p. 123.

²¹ Vol. II. p. 11.

²² This prophecy, says Daubuz, denotes the rapid progress of the Gospel. Anciently a *horse* was not used for the convenience of riding, nor subjected to the drudgeries of agriculture. He was employed in war alone. Hence he became a symbol of conquest. To evince this, Dr. Lancaster refers to the prophecies of scripture and the oneirocritics of the East. *White*, he observes, is the symbol of prosperity; ‘ and therefore white horses were ‘ used by conquerors in their days of triumph. And it was, and still is, ‘ the custom of the Eastern nations to ride on white horses at the marriage-‘ cavalcade. White horses were also looked upon by the ancients as the ‘ swiftest.—Therefore a *white horse*, in proportion to the capacity and qua-‘ lity of his rider, is the symbol of a very speedy and great advancement, ‘ and the certain prognostic of great joy and triumph.’ On this subject Dauhuz has furnished us with a profusion of evidence (in p. 258—261, and 878).

of the passages they presume not to deny. But is not this to incur the charge of inconsistency? To undermine such an interpretation, is it not sufficient to state the palpable variations, to which its advocates are reduced? The interpretation of these symbols St. John has himself also supplied (as Daniel and our Lord have done in the quotations above); for it is added respecting Christ in the verse last cited, *and he went forth conquering and to conquer.*

But although there is not sufficient reason for believing, that Christ will descend upon earth *at the commencement of the millennium*, and a second time become its inhabitant, yet does the New Testament contain passages which decisively prove, that at *the day of judgment* he will personally appear²³.

What is the consequence of making it a rule to interpret prophecy *literally*? So completely does this method of explication, when applied to *many* of the predictions of Scripture, alter their genuine import, and such an air of wildness and improbability does it impart to them, that it is likely materially to promote the cause of infidelity. Instances of this it would be easy to accumulate. Were there not access to another mode of interpretation, the figurative and symbolic, the steadiest and most confirmed faith would be startled, and stand in suspense. What kind of plea has been advanced for perpetually recurring to the literal method of explaining prophecy, the following extract from an author of this class will shew. The prophecies, says Mr. Elhanan Winchester, that ' have been ' fulfilled already, have been accomplished in their most ' plain and obvious sense: which may serve for a rule, by ' which we may, *without danger of mistake*, interpret

²³ See particularly John v. 28, 29; Acts xvii. 31; and 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

'those that are yet to be accomplished'²⁴.' To a person, who has thought but little on the subject, this proposition sounds not unreasonable. Indeed were the statement in the premises correct, the conclusion which follows must be admitted to be fairly drawn. But, unfortunately, the preliminary observation is completely at variance with fact. The actual fulfilment of prophecies has proved, that many of them are literally, and many of them figuratively, expressed. The annotators on the apocalypse, whatever be the country in which they lived, and whatever the sect to which they attached themselves, unite in agreeing, that a multitude of its predictions have had their complete accomplishment, and yet, I believe, not one among them all has been *literally* fulfilled.

To prove that *the coming of Christ*, and *the coming of the son of man* are expressions, which signify nothing more than either the commencement of the Messiah's kingdom, or the establishment of it, I shall quote Mat. xvi. 28, and Mark ix. 1. What our Lord said on a particular occasion the first of these evangelists thus expresses: *verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* This Mark records with the following variation: *verily I say unto you there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.* The meaning is, some of those who now hear me shall live to see the Christian dispensation established: the gospel being widely propagated and having a powerful influence. It could not mean, that some should live to see him come in person, for that they had already done.

The most zealous defender of the doctrine of Christ's residence upon earth, with these two passages before him, cannot but acknowledge, however averse he may be to

*⁴ Lectures on the Prophecies, 1789. vol. I. p. 31.

make the acknowledgement, that *the coming of the kingdom of God*, and *the coming of the Son of man*, are employed by the evangelists as synonymous expressions, and that the latter is used, where it cannot possibly signify his personal advent.

In the 29th v. of the xxivth ch. of Matthew it is said, *the powers of the heavens shall be shaken*: in the 30th it is said, *they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven*. To understand the word *heavens* in the first of these contiguous clauses figuratively, and to interpret the word *heaven* in the second literally, is obviously unreasonable.

But the strongest objection against the hypothesis of Christ's actual advent, and his reign upon earth, is, I apprehend, not to be deduced from the collation of passages, nor from an application of the canons of verbal criticism. It is drawn from a consideration of those moral laws which the Deity has established, and from the nature of things. As the personal reign of Jesus would be a perpetual miracle, it would be totally opposite to the general plan of God's administration of the world, and inconsistent with that state of probation and discipline in which human-kind are placed. That the full force of this objection may be discerned, some observations of archdeacon Paley shall be transcribed. Were the proof of revelation irresistible, it 'would restrain the voluntary powers too much; would not answer the purpose of trial and probation; would call for no exercise of candour, seriousness, humility, inquiry; no submision of passions, interests, and prejudices, to moral evidence and to probable truth; no habits of reflexion; none of that previous desire to learn and to obey the will of God, which forms perhaps the test and the merit of the virtuous principle.—Irresistible evidence would confound all characters and all dispositions. Would subvert, rather

' than promote, the true purpose of the divine councils,
 ' which is not to produce obedience by a force little short
 ' of mechanical constraint (which obedience would be regu-
 ' larity not virtue, and would hardly perhaps differ from
 ' that which inanimate bodies pay to the laws impressed
 ' upon their nature), but to treat moral agents agreeably to
 ' what they are; which is done, when light and motives
 ' are of such kinds, and are imparted in such measures,
 ' that the influence of them depends upon the recipients
 ' themselves²⁵.'

There are two declarations of our Lord himself, which militate so strongly against the idea, that the signal of the proper kingdom of Christ will be his descent upon earth, and that he will then assume the character of a terrestrial monarch, that they particularly deserve to be cited. The first is his memorable saying before Pilate, *My kingdom is not of this world*²⁶. The second is his answer to the Pharisees respecting the nature of his kingdom, *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you*²⁷. 'The kingdom of the Messiah' or Christ,' says bp. Pearce, 'is not to be of that kind as ye expect, and which has outward shew and pomp to make it observable'²⁸. It is not of such a nature, says Whitby, 'that a man may be able to say from the lustre of its first appearance, Lo, it is here, or it is there.'

After again predicting in the 26th v. of ch. vii. the downfall of the papacy and antichristian monarchies of Europe, Daniel says in the following verse, *and the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the*

²⁵ *Exid. of Christianity*, vol. II. p. 368, 371.

²⁶ John xviii. 36. Our Lord does not employ here the word *αὐτὸς* but *ὑστερός*.

²⁷ Luk. xvii. 20, 21.

²⁸ In loc.

saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. That Christians are denominated, in numerous places of the New Testament, *holy*, and *a holy nation*, and *saints*, Mr. Taylor of Norwich, in his *Key to the Romans*, has satisfactorily shewn²⁹.

In St. John's account of the seventh trumpet, wherein he announces the destruction of them *which destroy the earth*, he says, THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER: words, says Mr. Lowman, which signify, that 'the true Christian religion should triumph over all opposition, and flourish with great success and prosperity throughout all the future ages of time.' To the kingdom of Christ 'the prophets,' says Jortin, 'with one voice, have promised an eternal duration. Yet St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, says that Christ's kingdom shall have an end. To reconcile which with the prophecies, we must observe that the expressions, ever-lasting, for ever, and without end³⁰, are used by sacred, as well as profane authors, in different senses, according to the subject to which they are applied. When therefore it is said, that Christ shall reign for ever, the meaning seems to be, that he shall reign as long as the world lasts; when it is said, that of his kingdom there shall be no end, the meaning is, that it shall not pass away like other kingdoms, and that there shall be no end of it, till the consummation of all things. Then cometh the end,' says St. Paul³¹ when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father, when he shall have put

²⁹ Sect. 101.

³⁰ 'The comparative degree αδιαντωτερος is used by Plato in his *Phædo* and *Sympos.*' Jortin.

³¹ I. Cor. xv. 24, 25.

‘down all rule, and all authority and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet³².’ ‘To make for ever signify any known, limited, determinate period of time is’ says Mr. Hallett, ‘contrary to nature, and to the genius of all languages.—It always does, and always must signify a duration that is unknown and uncertain among men, such as the duration of the world, of a man’s life, of a particular relation between two persons, &c. Thus, when the psalmist says, Christ’s *throne shall be established for ever as the moon*, he means to the end of the world, psalm lxxxix. 37³³.’

After foretelling the destruction of the antichristian-monarchies of Europe in ch. xvii and xix, in the next and two following chapters St. John paints, in highly figurative language, the state of the millennial happiness.

The same course, (and it is a very natural one, and has, we see, been generally followed) Christ himself also pursues. The destruction of the oppressive governments of the world he first announces, and, having done this, directly subjoins a promise of the glorious prevalence of his religion, which was then to take place. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man³⁴ in heaven: and THEN shall all the tribes*

³² Disc. on the Tr. of the Chr. Rel. 2d ed. p. 149.

³³ Notes on Several Texts of Scripture and Discourses, vol. III. p. 420. In the book of Numbers it is said (x. 8.), *the sons of Aaron shall blow with the trumpets, and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever.* The following explication of the verse is Dr. Clarke’s. ‘For ever, that is; as long as your government and establishment shall last.’ Serm. vol. I. serm. IV.

³⁴ ‘A late author (John Buxtorf) hath eased us of all our disputes about this sign, by shewing that as the sign of Jonas the prophet, Mat. xii. 39, is the sign which is Jonas the prophet; so the sign of the Son of man inquired

* alter,

tribes of the earth mourn³⁵, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory³⁶. ‘We have no reason to think,’ says Dr. Campbell, ‘that a particular phænomenon in the sky is here suggested. The striking evidences, which would be given of the divine presence, and avenging justice, are a sufficient justification of the terms.’ Let it not here escape the recollection of the reader, that the expressions, *the earth*, and *the tribes of the earth*, are sometimes symbolic, and signify those, who having inclinations altogether sordid and earthly act in direct opposition to the true interests of Christianity. Such appears to be the meaning in this place. ‘Who,’ asks Daubuz, ‘at the second coming of Christ, shall lament, but the obstinate idolaters and opposers of Christ? These, which shall remain at that coming, and persist in their enmity to Christ, shall be the subject of his judgment and vengeance; and shall therefore have occasion to lament; but others shall have no such reason. So that *the tribes of the earth* include none but Christ’s enemies³⁷.’

Our

‘after, Mat. xxiv. 3, is *the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven*. And this interpretation is confirmed, from the parallel places, Mark xiii. 26. Luk. xxi. 27.’ By Gerard Vossius (*Theses Thoel.* 1658, p. 228.), by Wolfius, and a crowd of other writers that might be alleged, this explication of the phrase has been noted and adopted.

³⁵ Πατερι αἱ φυλαι της γῆς, i. e. all the different classes of antichristian persons.

³⁶ Mat. xxiv. 29, 30.

³⁷ Verse 7 of ch. i. of the apocalypse is the parallel passage, upon which this learned writer comments. It is there said, that *they who pierced him shall see him coming with clouds*, i. e. the nation who crucified him, the Jews, who shall happen to be living at the commencement of the millennium, shall no longer be blind to the truth and evidences of the gospel, but shall be converted, and shall see it producing the most powerful effects. Of them also it may, in one sense, be said, that they shall mourn: for on their former infidelity they will look back with sorrow; and shame; and will lament, that it was

Our Lord immediately added in the words that follow, as recorded by Mark, *and then shall he send his angels³⁸, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven³⁹.* Bp. Newton, when commenting on the corresponding verse in Matthew, says, ‘this is all in the style and phraseology of the prophets, and stript of its figures meaneth only, that—Christ by his angels or ministers will gather to himself a glorious church out of all the nations under heaven⁴⁰.’ That the belief of Christianity will at length penetrate to every corner of the globe, does, indeed, appear to be the signification of the passage; and, in conformity with this interpretation, the prelate from whom I have just quoted remarks, that ‘the *elect* is a well known appellation in scripture and antiquity for the Christians⁴¹.’

by their ancestors and by their nation, that the holy Jesus was despised, and persecuted, and at length stretched upon the cross. Accordingly our Lord’s words, that *the tribes of the earth shall mourn*, if regarded not as symbolic, but as literal, must in this manner be exclusively applied, as they formerly have been, to the Jews.

³⁸ The original would have been better translated by the word *messengers*, as it is in the versions of Wakefield and Doddridge.

³⁹ Mark xiii. 27.

⁴⁰ Vol. II. p. 284. ‘By the *angels* in this clause are to be understood the ministers of the gospel.—Agreeably to this interpretation, we find the name *αγγελος*, *angel*, given to common messengers, James ii. 25, and to the ministers of the Asian churches, Rev. ii. and to prophets, II. Chron. xxxvi. 16, and to priests, Mal. ii. 7.³ Macknight in loc.

⁴¹ Vol. II. p. 254. See the same observation made by archbishop Tillotson, ser. 239. At first the title was peculiar to the Jews. After a copious allegation of instances, Dr. Whitby says, ‘thus have I traced this phrase throughout the whole Old Testament, and shewed, that it belongs not to particular persons, but to the whole Jewish church and people in general; to the bad as well as to the good.’ And, ‘in the New Testament, all Christians, called to the knowledge and belief of the faith, are styled the *elect*.’ vol. i. p. 328, and vol. ii. p. 709. He proves, that it had also, in the Fathers, a similar acceptation.

Should the writer of the present work be charged with having quoted some parts of the prophecy of Jesus with a tiresome frequency; besides observing, that in no instance has he needlessly recurred to it, he replies, that this repetition has been admitted, because our Lord's words merit more than ordinary regard, because he was solicitous that their genuine meaning might be closely scrutinized, and because no one writer has hitherto, in an explicit manner, drawn from them all those important conclusions, which are deducible from a minute and careful investigation of them. As the doctrine of Christ's actual advent upon earth, at the commencement of the millennium, has recently received the sanction of a celebrated name, this point also he has been prompted to consider at greater length, than might otherwise perhaps have been necessary.

Dr. Priestley, in one of the most recent of his sermons, declared himself decidedly an advocate for it, as well as for the opinion, that the martyrs will at that period be literally raised from the dead. The following are two of the reasons he has alleged to prove Christ's personal appearance. ‘That the great antichristian power is to be destroyed at this second coming of Christ, and not properly before, and therefore that its final destruction will be sudden, is evident from what St. Paul says, 2 Thess. ii, 8, *Then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.*⁴²’ So far from regarding this as evident, I should, I confess, apprehend, that the apostle's expressions lead to an almost opposite conclusion; and should conceive them probably to denote, that the dawn of light and knowledge would grow brighter and brighter, and that

⁴² Fall-Serm. for Feb. 28, 1791, p. 9:

the millennium, or proper kingdom of the Messiah, would be gradual in its advances. ‘ That this will be a proper kingdom, though a kingdom of righteousness, the object of which will be the happiness of the subjects of it, is,’ says Dr. Priestley,’ farther evident from the other kingdoms which are to be overthrown in order to make way for it. For had it been that purely spiritual kingdom, which some suppose, what occasion was there for the destruction of the other kingdoms; since they would not have interfered with it, but might have subsisted at the same time⁴³?’ To my mind there does not appear here a shadow of difficulty; and I should feel no hesitation in replying, that, without the supposition of Christ assuming a regal character upon earth, there was abundant occasion for the destruction of the existing governments of the European continent, and that they would not only interfere, but would be absolutely incompatible with the establishment of Christ’s kingdom. The principles of profligacy and virtue can never form an harmonious mixture: joint dominion can never be possessed by tyranny and freedom: one and the same space can never be occupied by light and darkness.

That the prophecies on this subject were once viewed by this eminent writer in a different light, the following citation from his *Institutes* will prove. ‘ Some have supposed that Christ himself will reign in person upon earth, and that the martyrs will actually rise from the dead, and live with him, but, considering the figurative language of prophecy, it is more probable, that the revival of the cause for which they suffered is, in reality, the thing denoted by it. Besides, it is contrary to the clear sense of many passages of scripture, that any persons, however distinguished by their virtues or suffer-

⁴³ Ut supra, p. 4.

ings,

' ings, should receive their reward before the great day
' of judgment, after the general resurrection. Dr. Whitby
' has also advanced other very sufficient arguments against
' the literal interpretation of the millennium⁴⁴.' And
Dr. Priestley elsewhere observes (and the observation is
very important), that 'the utter destruction of Antichrist
' —is often denominated in the scriptures by *the coming
of Christ*⁴⁵.'

The very brief remarks which have just been made in answer to the last of Dr. Priestley's arguments remind me of an objection, which may possibly have occurred, during the perusal of the present chapter, to the mind of the attentive reader. It is true, it may be said, we have seen the monarchy of France actually overturned. But how does it appear, in point of fact, that the symbolic stone described in the iid. ch. of Daniel, which *was cut out without hands*, is likely to produce any considerable effect in *smiting* the monarchical *image*, and in *breaking* into pieces *the toes of the feet* of that *image*? On the contrary, is it not apparent, that the causes, which will give birth to this great catastrophe, will arise entirely from a different source; and is there not reason to conclude, that Christianity has been scarcely at all injurious, and is not likely to be hereafter injurious, to the tyrannical monarchies of the European world? As the objection does not appear destitute of weight, and has, I believe, never been answered, it shall be considered at considerable length.

That the emblem of the symbolic stone has been generally viewed in too narrow a light, is the observation with which I commence. Christianity is a religion, which treats all men as on a footing of equality; which elevates them into candidates of the same crown of immortality;

⁴⁴ Vol. II. p. 416.

⁴⁵ Vol. II. p. 412.

which

which breathes a spirit of mildness and of mercy ; which at once teaches, inspires, and exemplifies benevolence. The symbolic stone, then, signifies not merely the peculiar doctrines, but likewise the great principles, of Christianity ; the immortal principles of benevolence⁴⁶, justice, and equality. And let it be remembered, that this part of the prophecy is only beginning to be accomplished. The several toes of the monarchical statue are still nearly entire in point of number, though somewhat shattered in point of strength. That we should be able, at present, to offer a completely satisfactory explication of the whole of Daniel's prophecy, is, therefore, far from being reasonable to expect.

If, however, it be true, that, independently of the predictions contained in the sacred writings, the New Testament does abound with precepts, which are likely eminently to contribute to the humbling of the proud and the deliverance of the oppressed, to the overthrow of all usurped power, to the establishment of mild and equitable laws, and to the general prevalence of correct ideas on the great question of justice between man and man ; it surely is no very improbable supposition, (now that the spirit of political inquiry has arisen in Europe, and the minds of men are turned with so much eagerness to the examination of the nature, and the comparative advantages, of different governments,) that the time is not far distant, when genuine Christians will in general view the existing governments of the European continent as decidedly antichristian ; and when many of them will take an active part in substituting in their place political institutions, which do not violate the rights of man and the laws of the gospel. That the decided majority of a

⁴⁶ By this shall men know, that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another. John, xiii. 35.

nation have a right to pull down an old government, and erect a new one, if they think it expedient, I conceive to be a point admitting not of dispute.

Of the abuses that exist in the world a large part arise from the tyranny of the rich over the poor, and from the extreme inequality of conditions, an evil which is aggravated, and, indeed, engendered, by the maxims and constitutions of the existing governments. Now Jesus, it may be remarked, selected his friends and disciples from among the poor, interested himself with the warmest solicitude in their behalf, connected his religion with their interests and the preservation of their rights, pointed frequently to the mischiefs which almost necessarily result from the possession of great wealth, and spoke, in language unusually strong and little limited in its application, against the vices and the conduct of the rich.

Jesus, says the present bishop of Worcester, first and principally preached the Gospel to the poor. ‘Our Lord’s whole ministry seems uniformly directed to this end of beating down the insolence of all worldly distinctions, which had too much vilified and degraded human nature.’ In truth, ‘he seems studiously to have bent his whole endeavours, to vindicate the honour of depressed humanity⁴⁷. ’

Hostile to all claims of human authority in matters of conscience and of opinion, Christianity is *on that account* favourable to liberty and to knowledge, and is of course adverse to the ecclesiastical part of the modern governments⁴⁸.

An author of more than usual merit, after declaring that war is ‘a state in which it becomes our business to

⁴⁷ Bp Hurd’s Serm. preached at Lincoln’s-Inn. vol. III. p. 153, 154.

⁴⁸ See the quotations which occur in p. 234, 239—243, and 253—255 of the present work.

‘ hurt and annoy our neighbour by every possible means; ‘ instead of cultivating, to destroy; instead of building, to ‘ pull down; instead of peopling, to depopulate; a state ‘ in which we drink the tears, and feed upon the misery, ‘ of our fellow-creatures;’ briefly comments on the methods, by which the European governments have contrived to associate it with the religion of Jesus. Their prayers, says this ingenious writer, ‘ if put into plain language, would run thus: God of love, father of all the families of the earth, we are going to tear in pieces our brethren of mankind, but our strength is not equal to our fury, we beseech thee to assist us in the work of slaughter. Go out, we pray thee, with our fleets and armies; we call them Christian, and we have interwoven in our banners, and the decorations of our arms, the symbols of a suffering religion, that we may fight under the cross upon which our Saviour died. Whatever mischief we do, we shall do it in thy name; we hope, therefore, thou wilt protect us in it. Thou, who hast made of one blood all the dwellers upon the earth, we trust thou wilt view us alone with partial favour, and enable us to bring misery upon every other quarter of the globe⁴⁹.’ Whether supplications, which have ideas similar to these for their genuine import, and which the members of the different hierarchies are so often compelled to utter, are, or are not in direct opposition to the benign spirit and the pacific precepts of the gospel, are questions which its most unlettered reader can feel no embarrassment in answering.

Of the regular governments of Europe war is one of the most favourite practices. But ‘ that the general tendency of the gospel is to extinguish the spirit of conten-

⁴⁹ *Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation; ora Discourse for the Fast, appointed on April 19, 1793, by a Volunteer, p. 26, 31.*

'tion need not,' says a learned prelate, 'be proved; ' its ancient adversaries were so sensible of this, that they ' turned, what should have been its commendation, into ' a matter of reproach, and reprobated it, because it gave ' many precepts to avoid the commission of injuries, and ' injunctions to forgive them, but none to avenge them.— ' Christianity, in its regards, steps beyond the narrow ' bounds of national advantage in quest of universal good; ' it does not encourage particular patriotism in opposition ' to general benignity.' Indeed ' were all the nations of ' the earth converted to the Christian religion, and the ' individuals of those nations not nominal merely but real ' Christians, it would be utterly impossible for a state of ' war ever to have a beginning amongst them⁵⁰.'

An ingenious defender of the Christian religion, happening to have been a Lord of Trade, and a member of the British senate, does, naturally enough, entertain views on the subject of government, which are dark and distorted. Plainly perceiving, that, as at present conducted, it is completely at variance with the precepts of the gospel, he has fallen into the error of supposing, that these precepts are inconsistent with all government. ' Government,' says he, ' cannot be managed without certain degrees of violence, corruption, and imposition; yet are all these strictly forbid. Nations cannot subsist without wars, nor war be carried on without rapine, desolation, and murder; yet are these prohibited under the severest threats⁵¹.'

The influence of Christianity, with respect to the overthrow of the antichristian monarchies, may be placed also in another point of view. Though the religion of Jesus is far from possessing that powerful efficacy, which it may be

⁵⁰ Bp. Watson's Sermons and Tracts, 1788, p. 109, 111, 113.

⁵¹ View of the Intern. Evid. of the Chr. Rel. p. 134.

expected hereafter to exert in more favourable circumstances; yet it cannot be doubted by any man, acquainted with human nature and with history, that its effects are great and invaluable. Now I maintain, that Christianity, by having made a large proportion of the inhabitants of Europe either partially or in the main virtuous, has on that account powerfully disposed them to entertain sentiments hostile to those oppressive systems of government which at present subsist; and, when a proper occasion calls for their assistance, and the great interests of mankind are at stake, to exercise that degree of activity, and personally to encounter those dangers, which cannot but be attendant on the establishment of a new order of things. He who is acquainted with the deplorable state of morals in the heathen world, at the æra of Christ's appearance, and with the imbecillity of the efforts which philosophy had employed to check the growth of vice, cannot, I think, but suspect, that, had that religion never been revealed, there would not have been a sufficient portion of virtue, disinterestedness, and public spirit now existing among mankind, to accomplish those important changes in the political world, of which reason and scripture authorize us to cherish such pleasing hopes. On this subject I cannot transcribe any passage more in unison with my ideas, than the following sentiments of one of the most elevated members of the English hierarchy. 'True Christianity will produce true patriotism and public spirit. ' By its commanding influence over the soul, it will keep ' under, and bring into subjection, all those irregular pas- ' sions which render men rapacious, sordid, selfish, and ' corrupt, indifferent and inattentive to the public, de- ' voted solely to the pursuit of some favourite object, or ' the gratification of some implacable resentment, to which ' they are at any time ready to prostitute their consciences, ' and sacrifice the true interest of their country. From all
these'

' these vile impediments to the discharge of our duty,
' Christianity sets us free, and substitutes in their room
' the noblest and most generous sentiments. It gives that
' dignity and elevation of soul, which is superior to every
' undue influence, either of popularity or of power. It
' lays down, as the foundation of all disinterested con-
' duct, that great evangelical virtue, self-denial : it teaches
' us to deny, to renounce ourselves ; to throw entirely
' out of our thoughts, our own prejudices, interests, and
' passions ; and, in every public question, to see nothing,
' to regard nothing, but the real welfare of our country.
—It extends our prospect beyond the present scene of
things, and sets before us the recompences of a future
life ; which, as they make us *richer*, enable us to be
more *generous*, than other men. They whose views
are wholly centered in this world will too often prefer
the emoluments of it to every other consideration : but
they, who look towards an inheritance in another state of
existence, can *afford* to give up to the general welfare,
a few advantages in this⁵².

From the regular practice of Christianity courage also
will be likely to result. ' A consciousness of having dis-
charged our duty, of being at peace with God, and of
living under his gracious superintendence, will give us
a spirit, a firmness, and intrepidity of soul, which no-

⁵² The following is the statement of another writer, the ingenious Dr. Duchal. ' The selfish spirit of this world stands in direct opposition to charity ; as the one prevails, the other must give way. He that thinks and acts as if he were made only for himself ; as if he were alone in the midst of the earth ; as if he were to take care of nothing but his own interest, and regard his neighbours no otherwise than as they may be the means of promoting it ; who thus acts as if he had no principle but self-love in him, and therefore as to his moral frame is really monstrous ; such an one, I say, must be an utter stranger, as to true charity, so to the Christian spirit.' Christianity, indeed, ' strikes at the very root of this temper.' Dr. Duchal's Sermons, vol. I. p. 96.

'thing else can inspire. Supposing all other circumstances equal, the sincere Christian will have many incitements to face danger with a steady countenance, which the irreligious cannot have. Under the defence of the Most High, he has less cause to fear the worst, and more reason to hope the best, than those that live without God in the world. *The wicked, therefore, flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion*⁵³. Even death itself has, to the real Christian, no terrors.—Instead of being to him, as it is to the worldly man, the extinction of his hopes, it is the consummation of them, and puts him in possession of those heavenly treasures on which his heart is fixed. He, therefore, goes on with cool undaunted composure to the discharge of his duty, whatever difficulties, whatever dangers may stand in his way; conscious that he is acting under the eye of an Almighty Being, who can both protect and reward him; who has commanded him, if it be necessary, to lay down his life for his brethren⁵⁴; and who will never suffer him to be a loser in the end, even by that last and greatest sacrifice to the public good⁵⁵.

Thus then it appears from the testimony of a prelate who stands high in royal favour, that Christianity, by implanting in the bosoms of its genuine followers disinterestedness and courage, eminently qualifies them for taking an active and zealous part in the subversion of every profligate government, and in the erection of a new and more benevolent system. Nor let it be supposed, that the precepts of Jesus, which enjoin the practice of patience and the forgiveness of injuries, prohibit our resistance to the tyranny of princes. On this point another of our prelates, who is also distinguished by the

⁵² Prov. XXVIII. 1.

⁵³ 1 John III. 16.

⁵⁴ Bp. Porteus's Sermon, p. 261, 265;

Smiles of royalty and an aversion to French principles, may safely be listened to. ‘The use of the natural passion of resentment is not,’ says the bishop of Worcester, ‘superceded by the law of Jesus. For the legitimate use of this passion is to quicken us in repelling such injuries, as would render human life wholly burthensome and uneasy to us, not of those petty affronts and discourtesies, which afflict us much less by being dissebled and forgotten, than by being resented and returned. Now Christianity does not require us to renounce the right of nature in repelling injuries of the former class. The law in question, as explained by our Lord himself, does not, we have seen, import thus much: and for the rest the appeal is open to the principles of nature and common sense.—The practice of the apostles (the best comment on the law) shews, too, that, on certain critical and urgent occasions, they scrupled not to take advantage of those principles. So that universally, as it would seem, where the ends of self-preservation, or of prepotent public utility, require and justify resistance in other men, there it is left free for Christians, likewise, *to resist evil*; the purpose of their divine legislator being, in this instance, to explain the law of nature, and to guard it from the abuse of our hasty passions, not to abrogate, or suspend it.’ The gospel ‘allows men to assert their essential civil interests by every reasonable exertion of firmness and courage; nay, inculcates those principles of a disinterested love for mankind, and what is properly called a public spirit, which make it their duty to do so. And they will not do it with the less effect, for waiting till the provocation given appear to all men to be without excuse. *The fury of a patient man* is almost proverbial; and, particularly, in this case, it is to be expected, that, when the natural incitement to resistance, long repressed and moderated, comes at length

‘ to be authorised by necessity, and quickened by a sense
 ‘ of duty, it will act with a force and constancy, not a
 ‘ little formidable to those, against whom it is directed.
 ‘ There is no danger, then, that true patriotism should
 ‘ suffer by the meek principles of peace⁵⁶.’

The following is the statement of an enlightened man, who was himself alike distinguished by a spirit of piety and a spirit of patriotism. ‘ In vain shall we expect to
 ‘ meet with an heart, truly animated with zeal for its coun-
 ‘ try’s cause, in a breast which is destitute of piety to God.
 ‘ Let history unfold her instructive page; her records will
 ‘ establish the truth of this great, this important maxim,
 ‘ that there is no reliance upon that steady persevering
 ‘ virtue, which true patriotism requires, where the prin-
 ‘ ciples of religion and of public spirit are not inseparably
 ‘ united.—The beneficial efficacy of religion, in control-
 ‘ ling that selfish principle, to which all the disorders of
 ‘ human life are to be referred, is so apparent, that the
 ‘ worst of men have frequently been induced to assume
 ‘ the appearance of it, though their hearts are strangers to
 ‘ its real power and practice⁵⁷.’

In order to estimate, *to what extent* Christianity will be serviceable to the cause of civil liberty, on any important crisis, by predisposing men to stand forward in the rank of its defenders, and enabling them worthily to support the character, there are some other circumstances, to which it will be necessary briefly to advert. Let it be remembered, that, in the present state of the European governments, now that they are arrived at an unexampled pitch of corruption, when they are guarded by an immense number of interested supporters, who are so powerful from their wealth, their functions, and the mul-

⁵⁶ Hurd’s Serm. preached at Lincoln’s Inn, vol. III. p. 288, 293.

⁵⁷ Dr. Jebb’s Works, vol. II. p. 44, 49.

titude of their dependants; a more than ordinary proportion of virtue and of firmness seems requisite in the community, in order to effect a reform of abuses and to accomplish a change in the system. In some countries, the struggle is likely to be obstinately contested; *and a small matter, perhaps, would be sufficient to turn the scale.* Never were the holders of loans, the fulfillers of contracts, and the expectants of places, equally numerous; with respect to those, who reap emolument from stations in the army, the navy, or the church, together with those who fill legal, financial, and municipal situations, never did they constitute throughout Europe a body of persons, so averse to reformation, and devoted to the cause of tyranny. In this situation of things, it cannot then be doubted, that, at the period when the happiness of all is about to succeed to the oppressions of the few, every friend of his country, who combines activity with virtue, must prepare to make numerous sacrifices.

But whatever sacrifices it may be necessary to make, whatever dangers it may be necessary to encounter, it cannot be doubted, that there are circumstances, in which it would be criminal not to oppose, in the most open manner, the plunderers of mankind. The following extract is from a dignitary of the church, whose literary productions are highly estimated in our universities, and whose opinions are listened to by the clergy with great attention and respect. ‘ It may be as much a duty, at one time, to resist government, as it is, at another, to obey it; to wit, whenever more advantage will, in our opinion, accrue to the community, from resistance, than mischief.’ If, says the same sagacious writer in another place, I should be accosted by a person, ‘ with complaints of public grievances, of exorbitant taxes, of acts of cruelty and oppression, of tyrannical encroachments upon the ancient or stipulated rights of the people, and should be

consulted, whether it were lawful to revolt, or justifiable to join in an attempt to shake off the yoke by open resistance;—I should reply, that if public expediency be the foundation, it is also the measure, of civil obedience; that the obligation of subjects and sovereigns is reciprocal; that the duty of allegiance, whether it be founded in utility or compact, is neither unlimited nor unconditional; that peace may be purchased too dear; that patience becomes culpable pusillanimity, when it serves only to encourage our rulers to increase the weight of our burthen, or to bind it the faster; that the submission which surrenders the liberty of a nation, and entails slavery upon future generations, is enjoined by no rational morality: finally, I should instruct him to compare the peril and expence of his enterprize with the effects it was expected to produce, and to make choice of the alternative, by which not his own present relief or profit, but the whole and permanent interest of the state, was likely to be best promoted⁵⁸. Now the time is probably not very remote, when, in different countries of the European continent, a decided majority of the inhabitants will be of opinion, that ‘the permanent interest of the state,’ and that of the whole of the people, will be best promoted by the overthrow of the existing governors, though the attendant convulsion should expose multitudes to the hazard of suffering, for a time, considerable inconveniences and calamities.

Of those, in whose bosoms joy beats the highest, on account of the great and glorious events which produced

⁵⁸ Archdeacon Paley's Principles of Mor. and Pol. Phil. 7 ed. vol. II. p. 144, 155. Were this a place proper for the discussion, or were the lawfulness of resisting the tyranny of princes a question which admitted of a shadow of doubt, it would be easy to accumulate the names of celebrated persons who have asserted it. Such are Milton, Grotius and Buchanan, Sydney and Locke, lords Russel and Somers, judge Blackstone and lord Camden.

the French revolution, a large part, we know in point of fact, were persons attached to religion and zealous for its interests. I think it also probable, that there will be many sincere believers in Christianity among those distinguished political writers, who will undoubtedly, after a time, arise in France⁵⁹, and who will, it is apprehended, through the medium of literature, and by the weapons of argument, undermine the subsisting tyrannies, which the armies and valour of their countrymen had before so openly attacked and so materially endangered.

There is also another point of view, in which Christianity is serviceable to Civil Liberty. ‘The temple,’ says one of the most elegant writers in our language, ‘is the only place where human beings, of every rank and sex and age, meet together for one common purpose, and join together in one common act. Other meetings are either political, or formed for the purposes of splendor and amusement; from both which, in this country, the bulk of inhabitants are of necessity excluded. This is the only place, to enter which nothing more is necessary than to be of the same species: the only place, where man meets man not only as an equal but a brother; and where, by contemplating his duties, he may become sensible of his rights. So high and haughty is the spirit of aristocracy, and such the increasing pride of the privileged classes, that it is to be feared, if men did not attend at the same place here, it would hardly be believed they were meant to go to the same place hereafter. It is of service to the cause of freedom therefore,

⁵⁹ To the probability of this position many of my readers will probably refuse to assent. Should the author of the present work publish a pamphlet, which is in a great degree written, and which treats on the effects which the French Revolution is likely ultimately to produce with respect to Christianity, he will there state the grounds of the opinion which he has hazarded in the text,

‘ no less than to that of virtue, that there is one place,
‘ where the invidious distinctions of wealth and titles are
‘ not admitted; where all are equal, not by making the
‘ low, proud, but by making the great, humble. How
‘ many a man exists who possesses not the smallest pro-
‘ perty in this earth of which you call him lord; who, from
‘ the narrowing spirit of property, is circumscribed and
‘ hemmed in by the possessions of his more opulent neigh-
‘ hours, till there is scarcely an unoccupied spot of ver-
‘ dure on which he can set his foot to admire the beauties
‘ of nature, or barren mountain on which he can draw
‘ the fresh air without a trespass. The enjoyments of life
‘ are for others, the labours of it for him. He hears those
‘ of his class spoken of collectively, as of machines, which
‘ are to be kept in repair indeed, but of which the sole use
‘ is to raise the happiness of the higher orders. Where,
‘ but in the temple of religion, shall he learn that he is of
‘ the same species? He hears there (and were it for the
‘ first time it would be with infinite astonishment), that all
‘ are considered as alike ignorant and to be instructed; all
‘ alike sinful and needing forgiveness; all alike bound by
‘ the same obligations, and animated by the same hopes.
‘ In the intercourses of the world the poor man is seen,
‘ but not noticed; he may be in the presence of his su-
‘ periors, but he cannot be in their company. In every
‘ other place it would be presumption in him to let his
‘ voice be heard along with theirs; here alone they are
‘ heard together, and blended in the full chorus of praise.
‘ In every other place it would be an offence to be near
‘ them, without shewing in his attitudes and deportment
‘ the conscious marks of inferiority; here only he sees the
‘ prostration of the rich as low as his, and hears them
‘ both addressed together in the majestic simplicity of a
‘ language that knows no adulation. Here the poor man
‘ learns, that, in spite of the distinctions of rank, and the
‘ apparent

' apparent inferiority of his condition, all the true goods
' of life, all that men dare petition for when in the pre-
' sence of their maker, a sound mind, a healthful body,
' and daily bread, lie within the scope of his own hopes
' and endeavours ; and that, in the large inheritance to
' come, his expectations are no less ample than theirs.
' He rises from his knees, and feels himself a man. He
' learns philosophy without its pride, and a spirit of li-
' berty without its turbulence. Every time social wor-
' ship is celebrated, it includes a virtual declaration of the
' rights of man ⁶⁰.'

And what was the character of the great personage, whose actions are recorded in the gospel-narratives, to be admired and to be imitated ? Surely it was not such, as should deter men from cherishing an ardent fondness for their country, or from undertaking the honourable office of a reformer. Christ, says the accomplished writer, whom I have just quoted, ' was the Great Reformer, the inno-
' vator of his day ; and the strain of his energetic elo-
' quence was strongly pointed against abuses of all
' kinds ⁶¹. '

⁶⁰ Mrs. Barbauld's Rem. on Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Enq. into the Expediency and Propriety of Social Worship, p. 43.

⁶¹ Mrs. Barbauld's Rem. ut supra, p. 31.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXX.

ON THE EFFECTS CHRISTIANITY HAS PRODUCED, IN FAVOUR OF FREEDOM, LEARNING, AND VIRTUE.

AS an inquiry into the effects favourable to freedom, which the spirit and the principles of Christianity have produced, and are likely to produce, is an investigation

gation of importance, and adapted to lessen the prejudices against Christianity ; as I know no writer by whom it has been discussed at any considerable length ; as it will furnish a number of additional facts and arguments in confirmation of those, which have been recently urged in reply to the objection, *with what propriety can the symbolic stone in Daniel be said to overthrow the ten toes of the monarchical statue* ; as it will communicate to the mind of the reader some faint idea of the glorious changes, which Christianity will accomplish in that happy period (the nature of which it has been the design of the preceding chapter briefly to unfold), when that divine religion shall be authenticated by the fulfilment of innumerable prophecies, shall be undisgraced by its connexion with the civil power, shall rise superior to the attacks of infidelity, and be understood with a degree of correctness unknown in former times ; I shall scarcely think an apology necessary for introducing into the present appendix a numerous assemblage of extracts.

That the great principles of Christianity are the principles of philanthropy, justice, and equality, and that it is altogether incompatible with those systems of oppression and injustice, which at present darken the face of the European world, is the argument on which I would lay principal stress in replying to the objection which has been just recited.

The argument which asserts that Christianity has promoted the interests of freedom, by promoting the interests of literature and knowledge, I confess, is less direct, less decisive, and more liable to objection. That it is not, however, without its weight, the following facts and observations will evince.

Few persons are, I believe, apprized, how great was the danger, that every work of Grecian and Roman literature would have been destroyed in the dark ages, a long and

and melancholy period ; when the Barbarians of the North and the East, and the equally illiterate Mahometans of the South, issuing from the morass, or the forest, or the desert, laid waste and subdued every province and every city of the Roman empire, excepting Constantinople and its immediate environs. Independently also of the calamitous effects, resulting from a permanent anarchy and perpetual wars⁶², the state of society and manners strongly tended to precipitate the inhabitants of the Western world into a total ignorance of letters. Scarcely was there any middle rank of citizens. Now knowledge, it is well known, is least cultivated by those in the highest and those in the lowest ranks of life : and the want of it, says Dr. Henry, ‘ was occasioned by the extreme dissipation of the former, who spent almost all their time, when they were not engaged in war, in rural diversions or domestic riots; and by the no less extreme depression of the latter, who were doomed to perpetual servitude and hard labour⁶³. ’ If,’ says a Scottish historian of greater celebrity and greater genius, ‘ men do not enjoy the protection of regular government, together with the expectation of personal security, which naturally flows from it, they never attempt to make progress in science. —In less than a century after the barbarous nations settled in their new conquests, almost all the effects of the knowledge and civility, which the Romans had spread through Europe, disappeared.—The barbarous nations were not only illiterate, but regarded literature with contempt. They found the inhabitants of all the provinces of the empire, sunk in effeminacy, and averse to war. Such a character was the object of scorn to an high-spirited and gallant race of men.—This degeneracy of

⁶² On the depredations of the barbarians see from p. 409 to 422 of the present work.

⁶³ Hist. of Great Britain; 8vo. vol. VI. p. 169,

manners

‘manners illiterate barbarians imputed to their love of learning. Even after they settled in the countries which they had conquered, they would not permit their children to be instructed in any science; “for (said they) instruction in the sciences tends to corrupt, enervate, and depress the mind; and he who has been accustomed to tremble under the rod of a pedagogue, will never look on a sword or spear with an undaunted eye⁶⁴”.— ‘The whole history of the middle ages makes it evident, that war was the sole profession of gentlemen, and the only object attended to in their education⁶⁵. ’

Literature is now superior to contingencies. To annihilate it, is equally beyond the power of barbarians and the efforts of princes. But, from the beginning of the vth to the conclusion of the xiith century, its existence was precarious and insecure. Indeed, even at the commencement of this period, when no great number of books had been destroyed, they were comparatively scarce, as paper was not invented, nor the art of printing discovered. In England for instance, so many books, says Dr. Henry, had been carried away, or they had been ‘so entirely destroyed by the Scots, Piets, and Saxons, that it is a little uncertain, whether there was so much as one book left in England before the arrival of Augustin.’ And ‘we are,’ says Dr. Henry, ‘assured by the illustrious Roger Bacon, that there were not above four persons among the Latins, in his time, who understood Greek⁶⁶. ’

After regretting the fate of the ‘libraries which have been involved in the ruin of the Roman empire,’ Mr. Gibbon says, ‘when I seriously compute the lapse of

⁶⁴ Procopius de Bello Gothor. lib. I. p. 4.

⁶⁵ Dr. Robertson’s View of the Progress of Society in Europe, 8vo. p. 21, 234, 385.

⁶⁶ Hist. of Great Britain, vol. IV. p. 20, 81; vol. VIII. p. 188.

ages,

‘ages, the waste of ignorance, and the calamities of war,
‘our treasures, rather than our losses, are the object of my
‘surprise.—We should gratefully remember, that the mis-
‘chances of time and accident have spared the classic
‘works to which the suffrage of antiquity had adjudged
‘the first place of genius and glory:—the teachers of an-
‘cient knowledge, who are still extant, had perused and
‘compared the writings of their predecessors; nor can
‘it fairly be presumed, that any important truth, any
‘useful discovery in art or nature, has been snatched
‘away from the curiosity of modern ages⁶⁷.’

But what was the cause, that so many invaluable re-
mains of the literature of Greece and Rome were rescued
from destruction, amidst the demolition of cities, the
downfall of nations, and the overthrow of arts and lan-
guages? Of the writings and the languages of Egypt and
Carthage scarcely the faintest vestige is now any where
to be found; though they were two of the states most dis-
tinguished in ancient times for population and power,
for opulence and civilization. The latter have perished,
and the former have been preserved; and Christianity
has been the cause of their preservation. Let us trace
its history, and that of the institutions to which it gave
birth; and we shall, though aware of the lasting and
widely diffused depredations of the barbarous nations,
cease to feel with Mr. Gibbon any surprise at the extent
of our literary treasures.

‘The keys of learning,’ says Dr. Jortin, ‘are the
‘learned languages, and a grammatical and critical skill in
‘them.—The New Testament, being written in Greek,
‘caused Christians to apply themselves to the study of
‘that most copious and beautiful language.’ In order to
enable them to confute their adversaries, and ‘to expose

‘ the absurdities of Jewish Traditions, the weakness of Paganism, and the imperfections and insufficiency of Philosophy,—Jewish and Pagan literature were necessary, and what we call philology, or classical erudition⁶⁸. And thus the Christians became in learning superior to the Pagans.’ In the ‘ third century, the Latin language was much upon the decline; but the Christians preserved it from sinking into absolute barbarism; and of the Latin Fathers in this and the following ages, it may be affirmed, that most of them wrote as well, at least, as their Pagan contemporaries, and some of them better; for this is a fair way of trying their abilities, and it is not reasonable to expect of them that they should equal Cæsar or Livy, Sallust or Cicero.’

Pernicious as were many of the effects which flowed from monastic institutions, they were not without their benefits. The monks have ‘ transmittted to us those Latin and Greek Classics, which we now possess, and which would have perished, had it not been for their labours, and for the libraries contained in the monasteries⁶⁹. To them

⁶⁸ ‘ The Christian fathers studied the writings of the ancients, first, to furnish themselves with weapons against their adversaries; next, to support the Christian doctrine, by maintaining its consonancy to reason, and its superiority to the most perfect systems of Pagan wisdom; and lastly, to adorn themselves with the embellishments of erudition and eloquence. Basil wrote a distinct treatise, upon the benefits which young persons might receive from reading the writings of heathens. His pupil, Gregory Thaumaturgus, in his panegyric on Origen, insists largely upon the same topic; highly commanding him for having, after the example of his preceptor Clemens Alexandrinus industriously instructed his pupils in philosophy.’ Dr. Enfield’s Hist. of Philosophy, drawn up from Bucker’s *Historia Critica Philosophiae*, vol. II. p. 276.

⁶⁹ Similar is the statement of Mosheim. Speaking of the sixth century, he says, ‘ the liberal arts and sciences would have been totally extinguished, had they not found a place of refuge, such as it was, among the bishops and the monastic orders.’ To the monasteries ‘ we owe the preservation and

' them we owe copies of the Roman Law, of the Theodosian and Justinian Codes; and the Roman laws being adopted, more or less, in Christian nations, and the study of them being honourable and profitable, conduced greatly to the preservation of literature in general, and of the Latin language in particular.'

Had Christianity been suppressed at its first appearance, and no traces of it been left, 'it is,' says Dr. Jortin, 'extremely probable, that the Latin and Greek tongues would have been lost in the revolutions of empire, and the irruptions of Barbarians in the East and in the West; for the old inhabitants would have had no *conscientious*

and possession of all the ancient authors sacred and profane.' Eccl. Hist. vol. I. p. 437, 438.

' About the beginning of the tenth century, books had,' says Denina, ' become so scarce in Spain, that one and the same copy of the bible, St. Jerome's epistles, and some volumes of rules, offices, and etymologies often served several monasteries.' Denina's Ess. on the Revolutions of Literature, p. 73. ' One example,' says Dr. Henry, ' will be sufficient to give the reader some idea of the price of books in England in the seventh century. Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery of Weremouth in Northumberland, made no fewer than five journeys to Rome to purchase books, vessels, vestments, and other ornaments, for his monastery; by which he collected a very valuable library; for one book out of which (a volume on cosmography), king Alfred gave him an estate of eight hides, or as much land as eight ploughs could labour.' Hist. of Gr. Br. vol. IV. p. 20. The following facts are from Dr. Robertson (View of the Progress of Society, &c. p. 281). ' Lupus, abbot of Ferrieres, in a letter to the pope, A. D. 855, beseeches him to lend him a copy of Cicero de Oratore and Quintilian's Institutions, "for," says he, "although we have parts of those books, there is no complete copy of them in all France."—' The counts of Anjou paid for a copy of the Homilies of Haimon, bishop of Halberstadt, 200 sheep, 5 quarters of wheat, and the same quantity of rye and millet.—Even so late as the year 1471, when Louis XI. borrowed the works of Rasis, the Arabian physician, from the faculty of medicine in Paris, he not only deposited in pledge a considerable quantity of plate, but was obliged to procure a nobleman to join with him as surety in a deed, binding himself under a great forfeiture to restore it.'

' and religious motives to keep up their languages. And ' then, together with the Latin and Greek tongues, the ' knowledge of antiquities, and the ancient writers, would ' have been destroyed. You may see something of this ' kind in the present state of Afric, where the Latin ' tongue is absolutely unknown, although in the fifth cen- ' tury it was spoken there as in Italy. Idolatry and su- ' perstitution, in some shape or other, would have been the ' religion of the populace, and the upper sort would have ' been for the most part Sceptics or Atheists, with a mix- ' ture of some Deists.'

After urging various other circumstances, Dr. Jortin concludes his observations by asserting, ' that the learning ' which now exists is, if not solely, yet principally to be ' ascribed to Christianity; and that its Divine Author said ' most justly of himself, in this sense also, *I am the light
of the world*⁷⁰.'

' The Christian religion,' says Mr. Coxe, tended in Russia, ' as well as in most other countries in Europe, to ' preserve some small remains of literature in the schools ' and seminaries of the several monasteries.' Thus each of these mansions of superstition became an asylum for the preservation of knowledge⁷¹. To the monks of Russia, and to those of the other countries of Europe, we are also almost exclusively indebted for our knowledge of the history of the middle ages.

Where, but in monasteries, says a female writer of splendid talents, ' could the precious remains of classical ' learning, and the divine monuments of ancient taste, ' have been safely lodged amidst the ravages of that age of ' ferocity and rapine, which succeeded the desolation of

⁷⁰ See a Charge, delivered May 3, 1765, annexed to the end of vol. VII.

⁷¹ Jortin's Sermons, p. 353—377.

⁷² Travels into Poland, Russia, &c. 8vo. vol. III. p. 292.

' the Roman empire, except in sanctuaries like these,
' consecrated by the superstition of the times beyond
' their intrinsic merit? The frequency of wars, and the
' licentious cruelty with which they were conducted, left
' neither the hamlet of the peasant, nor the castle of the
' baron, free from depredation; but the church and mo-
' nastery generally remained inviolate.—Some of the bar-
' barous nations were converted before their conquests,
' and most of them soon after their settlement in the coun-
' tries they over-ran. Those buildings, which their new
' faith taught them to venerate, afforded a shelter for those
' valuable manuscripts, which must otherwise have been
' destroyed in the common wreck. At the revival of
' learning they were produced from their dormitories.
It was in the monasteries that most of the classics were dis-
covered; ' and to this it is owing, to the books and learn-
' ing preserved in these repositories, that we were not
' obliged to begin anew, and trace every art by slow and
' uncertain steps from its first origin. Science, already
' full grown and vigorous, awaked as from a trance,
' shook her pinions, and soon soared to the heights of
' knowledge.'

The monks, besides being ' obliged by their rules to
' spend some stated hours every day in reading and study,'
were ' almost the sole instructors of youth. Towards the
' end of the 10th century there were no schools in Eu-
' rope but the monasteries, and those which belonged to
' episcopal residences; nor any masters but the Benedic-
' tines.' The frequent intercourse of the monks ' with
' Rome must have been peculiarly favourable to these
' Northern nations; as Italy for a long time led the way
' in every improvement of politeness or literature: and,
' if we imported their superstition, we likewise imported
' their manufactures, their knowledge, and their taste.'

‘ Forbidding the vulgar tongue in the offices of devotion, and in reading the scriptures, though undoubtedly a great corruption in the Christian church, was of infinite service to the interests of learning. When the ecclesiastics had locked up their religion in a foreign tongue, they would take care not to lose the key. This gave an importance to the learned languages; and every scholar could not only read, but wrote and disputed in Latin, which without such a motive would probably have been no more studied than the Chinese. And, at a time when the modern languages of Europe were yet unformed and barbarous, Latin was of great use as a kind of universal tongue, by which learned men might converse and correspond with each other.’ In the present age, when learning is diffused through every rank, we can scarcely conceive, ‘ how totally all useful learning might have been lost amongst us, had it not been for an order of men, vested with peculiar privileges, and protected by even a superstitious degree of reverence’²². It must have been of service also ‘ to the cause of liberty, to have a set of men, whose laws, privileges, and immunities the most daring kings were afraid to trample on; and this, before a more enlightened spirit of freedom had arisen, might have its effect in preventing the slaves

²² Scarcely any of the laity, it is to be recollectcd, knew how to write. Materials for writing were also,’ says Dr. Henry, ‘ very scarce and dear, which made few persons think of learning that art.’ Accordingly great estates were often transferred from one owner to another by a mere verbal agreement, and the delivery of earth and stone, before witnesses, without any written deed. Parchment, in particular, on which all their ‘books’ were written, was so difficult to be procured, that many of the MSS. of the middle ages, which are still preserved, appear to have been ‘written on parchment from which some former writing had been erased.’ Hist. of Great Britain, vol. IV. p. 81. Montfaucon, indeed, affirms, that from the greater part of the manuscripts on parchment, which he had seen, some former treatise had been erased. See Jortin on Eccl. Hist. vol. IV. p. 250.

‘ of Christendom from falling into such entire slavery as
the Asiatics.’

‘ Let it be considered too, that when the minds of men
began to open, some of the most eminent reformers
sprung from the bosom of the church, and even of the
convent. It was not the laity who began to think. The
ecclesiastics were the first to perceive the errors they had
introduced. The church was reformed from within,
not from without’³.

The effects Christianity has produced in the different countries of Europe, in the diffusion of knowledge, may be illustrated by a recital of some of the beneficial alterations it created in our own island. They are taken from Dr. Henry, one of the most accurate and best informed of our British historians.

‘ The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity,
in the course of the 7th century, contributed not a little
to enlighten their minds, and promote the interest of
learning.—Before that event, there was no such thing
as learning, nor any means of obtaining it, in that part
of Britain which they inhabited.’ Their ancient religion
had a tendency to inspire them with nothing but a brutal
contempt of death, and a savage delight in war. As
long, therefore, as they continued in the belief and
practice of that wretched superstition, they seem to have
been incapable either of science or civility; but, by their
conversion to Christianity, they became accessible to
both.’ Besides, ‘ such of the first Anglo-Saxon con-
verts as designed to embrace the clerical profession (of
which there were many), were obliged to apply to some
parts of learning, to qualify themselves for that office;
and it became necessary to provide schools for their in-
struction. The truth of these observations is confirmed

³³ Miscellaneous Pieces, in Prose, by J. and A. L. Aikin, p. 91—118.

‘ by many unquestionable facts, which prove that the English began to pay some attention to learning (which they had before neglected), as soon as they were converted to Christianity’⁴. The first Christian king in England was the first English legislator who committed his laws to writing. Sigbert, king of the East-Angles, immediately after his conversion, founded a famous school for the education of youth in his dominions, A. D. 630.—In a word, some of the English clergy, in the end of this and the next century, became famous for their learning, and were admired by all Europe as prodigies of erudition. So great and happy a change did the introduction of Christianity, though not in its purest form, produce in the mental improvements of our ancestors.’

To descend to particulars, it may be added, that Theodore, who was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, being advanced to the archbishopric of Canterbury A. D. 668, and being ‘ informed of the gross and general ignorance of the English,’ resolved to promote the interest of useful learning amongst them, as the most effectual means of promoting that of true religion. With this view he brought with him from Rome a valuable collection of books, and several professors of the sciences, particularly abbot Adrian, to assist him in the education of the English youth. This scheme, as we learn from Bede, was crowned with the greatest success. “ These two great men (Theodore and Adrian), excelling in all parts of

⁴ At a later period the conversion of the Normans produced similar effects. ‘ The reception of Christianity had,’ says Molheim, ‘ polished and civilized, in an extraordinary manner, the rugged minds of the valiant Normans; for those fierce warriors, who, under the darkness of paganism, had manifested the utmost aversion to all branches of knowledge and every kind of instruction, distinguished themselves, after their conversion, by their ardent application to the study of religion and the pursuit of learning.’ Eccl. Hist. vol. II. p. 249.

" sacred and civil learning, collected a great multitude of
" scholars, whom they daily instructed in the sciences,
" reading lectures to them on poetry, astronomy, and
" arithmetic, as well as on divinity and the holy scrip-
" tures⁷⁵." And Dr. Henry, speaking of a later period,
says, ' there was a school more or less famous in almost
every convent. We may form some idea of the num-
ber added to the schools of England by this means, if
we consider, that there were no fewer than 557 religious
houses of different kinds founded in it between the con-
quest and the death of king John.—In the schools of all
the larger monasteries, besides the necessary parts of
learning, several other sciences were taught, as rhetoric,
logic, theology, medicine, with the civil and canon law.'
With respect to the period intervening between the year
1066 and 1216 the historian also says, ' though the circle
of the sciences was enlarged, and learning was cultivated
with greater assiduity in this than in the former period;
yet this was chiefly, or rather almost only, by the clergy.'

The erection of so many monasteries in England ' may
be reckoned among the causes of the revival of learning,
by increasing the number both of teachers and students,
by multiplying the inducements to pursue, and the op-
portunities to acquire, knowledge, but chiefly by mak-
ing books much more common and attainable than they
had been in any former period.—The government of
these religious houses was commonly bestowed on men
of learning; and, being attended with considerable de-
grees of power and dignity, afforded strong incentives
to study. A library was then esteemed so essential to a
monastery, that it became a proverb, " A convent
without a library is like a castle without an armory."
Some of these monastic libraries were very valuable.

⁷⁵ ' Bed. Hist. Eccles. L. 4. c. 2.'

Though the abbey of Croyland was burnt only twenty-five years after the conquest, its library then consisted of 900 volumes, of which 300 were very large. To provide books for the use of the church, and for furnishing their libraries, there was in every monastery a room called the *Scriptorium*, or writing-chamber, in which several of the younger monks were constantly employed in transcribing books; and to which, in some monasteries, considerable revenues were appropriated. A noble Norman, who was a great encourager of learning, left his own library to that of the abbey of St. Albans, A. D. 1086, and granted two thirds of the tithes of Hatfield, and certain tithes in Redburn, to support the writers in the scriptorium of the abbey. Where there were no fixed revenues for defraying the expences of procuring books for the library, the abbot, with the consent of the chapter, commonly imposed an annual tax on every member of the community for that purpose. The monks of some monasteries, in this period, were bitterly reproached for the extravagant sums they expended on their libraries⁷⁶.

Thus it appears, that Christianity, and the institutions which arose out of it, have greatly contributed to the preservation of knowledge, and to its subsequent diffusion, throughout the whole of Europe, and in England in particular⁷⁷. Nor will its progress in the latter country be

⁷⁶ Henry's Hist. of Great Britain, 8vo. vol. IV. p. 8—13; vol. VI. p. 118, 121, 164.

⁷⁷ Dr. Priestley, after observing, that ‘ religion has often operated powerfully in favour of the best interests of mankind, independently of, and in contradiction to, the views of the civil magistrate,’ says, ‘ it is an observation of Mr. Hume’s, that the precious sparks of liberty were kindled and preserved by the puritans in England, and that “ it is to this sect, whose principles appear so frivolous, and whose habits so ridiculous, that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution.” Lect. on Hist. 4to. p. 436.

regarded as having been of small consequence to the cause of Civil Liberty. France in particular has been greatly benefited by the propagation of knowledge in England.

Thus in the eighth century it was under essential obligations to that enlightened Englishman, the abbot Alcuin, the favourite of Charlemagne. Cave, speaking of him, says, ‘ for all the polite learning of which France boasted in that and the following ages, she is wholly indebted to him. The universities of Paris and Tours, of Fulden and Soissons, and many others, owe to him their origin and increase ; with respect to which, if he did not personally preside over them, or if he did not lay their foundations, he at least enlightened them by his learning, directed them by his example, and enriched them by the benefits which he obtained for them from Charlemagne’¹².

That, for a considerable time previously to the æra of their revolution, the French imitated not only the manners, but assiduously studied the writings, of the English, cannot be doubted. Nor could the perusal of such writings as those of Harrington and Milton, Sydney and Locke, fail to produce a powerful effect in exciting a love of liberty, and a searching spirit of political inquiry, in the philosophers of France ; and, without the literary productions of the latter, the French revolution would not have been accomplished. The following is the statement of Voltaire. With respect to England, the concluding part cannot but be thought too complimentary. The Italians, says he, ‘ are afraid to think ; the French have thought but half-way ; and the English, who have soared to heaven, because their wings have not been clipped, are become the preceptors of the world. We

¹² *Historia Literaria*, ed. 1740, vol. I. p. 637.

are

are indebted to them for every thing, from the primitive laws of gravitation, the account of infinity, and the precise knowledge of light so vainly opposed, down to the new-invented plow, and the practice of inoculation, which are still subjects of controversy⁷⁹.

The political principles, which were finally productive of the American revolution, were originally transplanted to the New world from the British soil. Now the mighty benefits, in favour of freedom, originating in the establishment of liberty on the North American continent, it is impossible to calculate. To the French revolution in particular it was eminently conducive; and it was so in two important respects. When the officers and the soldiers, who, on the other side of the Atlantic, had fought

⁷⁹ Translation of a piece of Voltaire's, published in the *Grand Magazine*, vol. II. p. 414. In a speech delivered in the year 1789, in the Patriotic Society of Dijon, M. Navier made the following declaration. 'Why should we be ashamed to acknowledge, that the Revolution, which is now establishing itself in our own country, is owing to the example given by England a century ago? It was from that day we became acquainted with the political constitution of that island, and the prosperity with which it was accompanied; it was from that day our hatred of despotism derived its energy. In securing their own happiness, Englishmen have prepared the way for that of the universe. Whilst, on all sides, tyrants were attempting to extinguish the sacred flame of liberty, our neighbours with intrepid watchfulness and care cherished it in their bosoms. We have caught some of these salutary sparks; and this fire, enflaming every mind, is extending itself over all Europe.' In their address to the Revolution Society of London, the members of the *Patriotic Union* of the city of Lille have expressed similar sentiments. 'It must be owned, that in politics as in philosophy, you are the instructors and examples of the whole world. It is among you; yes, it is in your favoured isle, that liberty, every where attacked, and trampled upon by despotism, has found a sacred asylum, and, if France should obtain that invaluable blessing, she will perhaps be more indebted for it to your nation than to herself; for, if we had not been encouraged by your example and enlightened by your experience, we might yet perhaps have been unable to break our chains.' *Correspondence of the Revolution Society with the National Assembly, &c. p. 12, 18.*

successfully in the land of insurrection and under the banners of freedom, returned to their own country and to the bosom of their families, they failed not to kindle some of that political zeal, and to circulate some of those important truths, which they had imbibed during their abode in the other hemisphere. When, from the expences of the war entered into by the French government, in support of American independence, the national debt of France was swelled to an exorbitant height; when, in consequence of this ill-judged interference, the provision for its payment baffled the efforts of ministerial ingenuity, and transcended the limits of ordinary rapacity; the monarch and his ministers were under the mortifying necessity of successively summoning the assembly of the *Notables* and of the States-General of the kingdom; and thus a flame was involuntarily lighted up by them in France, which all their subsequent exertions were unable to smother and to suppress, and which has remained unextinguished, notwithstanding the persevering hostilities of so large a proportion of the priests, the princes, the placemen, and the soldiers, of Europe.

After introducing so many remarks on the utility of the monasteries of the West in a literary view; it is proper for me to acknowledge, in justice to the Greek exiles of Constantinople, that, in the 15th century, they were very conspicuous instruments in the revival of letters. But these refugees were themselves greatly indebted for the portion of knowledge which they possessed to the Grecian and Oriental monasteries, the repositories of ancient literature. After ‘the extinction of the schools of Alexandria and Athens, the studies of the Greeks,’ says Mr. Gibbon, ‘insensibly retired to some regular monasteries, and above all to the royal college of Constantinople.’ But, in the reign of Leo the Isaurian, the library, belonging to that college, containing more than

36,000 volumes, was destroyed by fire; the college itself was abolished; ‘and a savage ignorance and contempt of letters—disgraced the princes of the Heraclean and Isaurian dynasties⁸⁰,’ It may be added, that the library of the Greek emperors, which was afterwards collected, was secured by Mahomet the II^d, when he obtained possession of the capital of the Byzantine monarchy, and that it was destroyed, according to Dr. Jortin, by Amurath the IVth, as late as the seventeenth century⁸¹. But though the two royal libraries of Constantinople were devoted to destruction, there is reason to believe, that those of the Oriental monks were seldom violated by their Turkish masters. And this was a circumstance not a little favourable to literature.

Of the attempts made in the Eastern world to obtain the lost works of the ancients, one effort was attended with such splendid success, as to merit particular mention. Janus Lascaris, the active missionary of Lorenzo de Medicis, sailed to Constantinople and the East in search of ancient manuscripts; and, having the good fortune to be assisted in his researches by sultan Bajazet the II^d, he returned to Italy with a cargo of 200 manuscripts, 80 of which were before unknown to Europe. This treasure, we are informed by Aldus, as quoted in a note by Mr. Gibbon, was found in Thrace, upon Mount Athos⁸².

That

⁸⁰ Gibbon, vol. X. p. 156.

⁸¹ Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. IV. p. 493.

⁸² Gibbon, vol. XII. p. 136. To the monks of Mount Athos Russia also is indebted for the richest of its literary treasures. In the library of the Holy Synod at Moscow, we are informed by Mr. Coxe, there are 502 Greek manuscripts, of which the greater part were collected from one of the monasteries of Mount Athos, by the monk Arsenius, and at the suggestion of that eminent promoter of Russian literature, the patriarch Nicon. Besides several important manuscripts of the Septuagint and the New Testament, there are in this collection valuable manuscripts of Homer

That they were discovered in some of the monasteries, which are so thickly scattered in the recesses of that mountain⁸³, cannot be doubted. Perhaps, then, the cause of literature is as much indebted to the monasteries of the East, as to those of the Western world.

It has already been observed in an extract, that of those who reformed the church some of the most eminent belonged to it. This, indeed, was the fact with respect to all the most celebrated of the reformers, unless perhaps Melancthon be excepted. Switzerland produced Zwinglius; Bohemia, John Huss; Germany, Bucer, Oecolampadius, and Luther; France, Calvin and Beza; Italy, Savanarola and Peter Martyr; Holland, Erasmus; Scotland, John Knox⁸⁴; and England, Wickliffe, Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer. Now all these had been ecclesiastics in the church of Rome. To a large proportion of the most distinguished authors of the revival of letters the same observation may be extended. In the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries appeared the following eminent restorers of learning and promoters of knowledge; and they were all ecclesiastics, either during the whole or during a part of their lives. The Greek empire produced Theodore Gaza and cardinal Bessarion; Ireland, archbishop

Homer and Hesiod, of Aeschylus and Sephocles, of Demosthenes and Aeschines, of Plutarch, Pausanias, and Strabo. It was not till the year 1780, that an accurate catalogue of these manuscripts was published at Petersburgh. *Travels into Poland, Russia, &c.* 8vo. vol. II. p. 50—54.

⁸³ In his passage over Mount Athos, which entirely belongs to the Monks, and on that account is called the *Holy Mountain* both by the Greeks and the Turks, Dr. Pococke visited no less than nineteen monasteries. *Descript. of the East*, fol. vol. II. part II. p. 144.

⁸⁴ The earl of Buchan, speaking of Knox's contemporary and countryman George Buchanan, says, he was 'the father of that system, which will one day verify the prophecies of the Christian scriptures, to the abasement of kings, and the destruction of priesthood.' *Essays on the Lives and Writings of Fletcher of Saltoun and the Post Thoson*, p. 33.

Usher; England, Grocyn, Linacer, cardinal Wolsey, and dean Colet; Holland, Erasmus⁸⁵; Spain, Arias Montanus, Mariana, and cardinal Ximenes; Denmark, Tycho Brahe; Germany, Copernicus; France, Vatablus, Thuanus, Mark Anthony Muretus, and Peiresc; and Italy gave birth to Petrarch, Barlaam, Boccace, Hermolaus Barbaro, John of Ravenna, Laurentius Valla, Sadolet, Hieronymus Vida, Poggius, Angelo Politian, Father Paul, Sixtus the IVth, and Leo the Xth. But Nicholas the Vth deserves to be separately noticed. As a patron of learning, he stands perhaps unrivalled⁸⁶. ‘The fame of Nicholas the fifth has not,’ says Mr. Gibbon, ‘been adequate to his merits. From a plebeian origin, he raised himself by his virtue and learning: the character of the man prevailed over the interest of the pope; and he sharpened those weapons which were soon pointed against the Roman church. He had been the friend of the most eminent scholars of the age: he became their patron.—The influence of the holy see pervaded Christendom; and he exerted that influence in the search, not of benefices, but of books. From the ruins of the Byzantine libraries, from the darkest monasteries of Germany and Britain, he collected the dusty manuscripts of the writers of antiquity; and wherever the original could not be removed, a faithful copy was transcribed and transmitted for his use. The Vatican,

⁸⁵ After having observed, that ‘the protection and encouragement the Clergy afforded to the exiled Greeks’ was one of the chief causes, which produced the revival of learning; Warburton, speaking of the promotion of learning, says, there was one among the Clergy in particular, meaning Erasmus, who did ‘more in this service than all the Laity of that age together.’ Warburton’s Works, vol. V. p. 193.

⁸⁶ Lord Bolingbroke, speaking of Nicholas V and other pontiffs, says, ‘the popes proved worse politicians than the mystics.—The magicians themselves broke the charm, by which they had bound mankind for so many ages.’ Let, on Hist. 1752, vol. I. p. 206.

the old repository for bulls and legends, for superstition and forgery, was daily replenished with more precious furniture; and such was the industry of Niccholas, that in a reign of eight years he formed a library of five thousand volumes. To his munificence, the Latin world was indebted for the versions of Xenophon, Diodorus, Polybius, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Apian; of Strabo's geography, of the Iliad, of the most valuable works of Plato and Aristotle, of Ptolemy and Theophrastus, and of the fathers of the Greek church⁸⁷. That the study of the classics has been eminently favourable to freedom, cannot be doubted.

' Before the revival of classic literature, the barbarians in Europe were,' says Mr. Gibbon, ' immersed in ignorance; and their vulgar tongues were marked with the rudeness and poverty of their manners. The students of the more perfect idioms of Rome and Greece were introduced to a new world of light and science; to the society of the free and polished nations of antiquity; and to a familiar converse with those immortal men, who spoke the sublime language of eloquence and reason. Such an intercourse must tend to refine the taste, and to elevate the genius, of the moderns.' For a time, however, it produced only a race of imitators. ' But, as soon as it had been deeply saturated with the celestial dew, the soil was quickened into vegetation and life; the modern idioms were refined: the classics of Athens and Rome inspired a pure taste and a generous emulation; and in Italy, as afterwards in France and England, the pleasing reign of poetry and fiction was succeeded by the light of speculative and experimental philosophy. Genius may anticipate the season of maturity; but in the education of a people, as in that of an individual, memory must be exercised, before the powers of reason and fancy can be expanded; nor may the artist hope to equal

' equal or surpass, till he has learned to imitate, the works
' of his predecessors⁸⁸ ;

After observing, that the writings of the most celebrated physicians, philosophers, and mathematicians of Greece were translated by the Arabs, and studied by them with ardor; but that ' there is no example of a poet, an orator, or even an historian, being taught to speak the language of the Saracens;' Mr. Gibbon says, ' The philosophers of Athens and Rome enjoyed the blessings, and asserted the rights, of civil and religious freedom. Their moral and political writings might have gradually unlocked the fetters of Eastern despotism⁸⁹, diffused a liberal spirit of inquiry and toleration, and encouraged the Arabian sages to suspect, that their caliph was a tyrant, and their prophet an impostor⁹⁰. '

But it is proper to notice an objection against Christianity. To the spread of the religion of Jesus the decline of learning has in a great degree been imputed; and the following statement, it is probable, will appear to many to contain a formidable objection to the beneficial influence which has been ascribed to it. At the æra of the promulgation of Christianity, arts, science, and literature flourished: as soon as it was embraced by a great majority of the inhabitants of the Roman world, they

⁸⁸ Vol. XII. p. 134.

⁸⁸ Vol. XII. p. 138.

⁸⁹ Hobbes, in enumerating the causes which excited such a determined spirit of opposition against Charles I. says, ' there were an exceeding great number of men of the better sort, that had been so educated, as that in their youth, having read the books written by famous men of the ancient Grecian and Roman Common-wealths, concerning their polity and great actions; in which books the popular government was extolled by that glorious name of liberty, and monarchy disgraced by the name of tyranny, they became thereby in love with their forms of government.' *Behemoth, the Hist. of the Causes of the Civil Wars of England*, 1682, p. 5.

⁹⁰ Vol. X. p. 51. ' The age of Arabian learning continued about 500 years, till the great eruption of the Moguls.' p. 44.

drooped and declined. But the fact is, that the great causes which produced *the decline* of learning were entirely unconnected with the propagation of our religion; and there is a known cause, totally independent of Christianity, to which we may justly attribute the danger it afterwards experienced of total *extinction*, namely, the irruption of the barbarous nations.

As this objection is not destitute of plausibility, and is so injurious to Christianity, some extracts shall be introduced of a considerable length, which contain a reply to it.

Christianity, depressed and persecuted in the three first centuries, and the beginning of the fourth, *cannot* be supposed, at that time, to have had much influence in checking the attainment of useful knowledge, and the prosecution of scientific pursuits, among the learned Pagans, or to have accelerated among them the decay of the arts and the decline of taste. Now an appeal to authentic history, and an examination of the writers of the time, will inform us, as a matter which admits not of the smallest dispute, that the arts and literature and public taste were all greatly on the decline, antecedently to the toleration of Christianity; and that the fatal causes were already begun powerfully to operate, which were destined to subvert the Roman empire, and to open a way for the admission of the savage conquerors of Scandinavia and Scythia, and for the consequent establishment of ignorance and barbarism.

The immortal writers of Greece and Rome, it should be remembered, had been educated, either under the free spirit of Republican governments, or *a short time after the overthrow of liberty*, when the maxims and the institutions, when the freedom of inquiry and the ardour of curiosity, which it had created, still continued to subsist, and were productive of the happiest effects.

The following quotations, at the same time that they disprove the forecited objection, will disclose both the radical and the immediate causes of the decline and dissolution of the Roman empire, one of the most interesting objects of historic research. I have, also, been the less disposed to curtail them, because they display, with the greatest strength of evidence, the mighty evils which inevitably flow from despotism, whatever be the personal character of the prince who is invested with government.

The reign of Trajan commenced A. D. 98 : that of the younger Antonine ended A. D. 180. In describing their reigns, and those of the intervening princes, Hadrian and the elder Antonine, Mr. Gibbon says, ‘ it was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption.’ The ‘ long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated.—The most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit.’ Yet, ‘ if we except the inimitable Lucian, an age of indolence passed away without producing a single writer of genius who deserved the attention of posterity.—The beauties of the poets and orators, instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile imitations: or, if any ventured to deviate from those models, they deviated at the same time from good sense and propriety. The name of poet was almost forgotten; that of orator was usurped by the sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.’

Seventeen years after the death of the younger Antonine, Severus was acknowledged emperor of the Roman world. ‘By gratitude, by misguided policy, by seeming necessity, Severus was induced to relax the nerves of discipline. The vanity of his soldiers was flattered with the honour of wearing gold rings; their ease indulged in the permission of living with their wives in the idleness of quarters. He increased their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and soon to claim, extraordinary donatives on every public occasion of danger or festivity. Elated by success, encrusted by luxury, and raised above the level of subjects by their dangerous privileges, they soon became incapable of military fatigues, oppressive to the country, and impatient of a just subordination.—Posterity, who experienced the fatal effects of his maxims and example, ‘justly considered’ Severus ‘as the principal author of the decline of the Roman empire.’

In delineating the administration of Caracalla, the son of Severus, the historian says, the successive augmentations of the pay of the soldiers ‘ruined the empire, for with the soldier’s pay their numbers too were increased. —As long as Rome and Italy were respected as the centre of government, a national spirit was preserved by the ancient, and insensibly imbibed by the adopted, citizens. The principal commands of the army were filled by men, who had received a liberal education, were well instructed in the advantages of laws and letters, and who had risen, by equal steps, through the regular succession of civil and military honours. To their influence and example we may partly ascribe the modest obedience of the legions during the two first centuries of the imperial history. But, when the last enclosure of the Roman constitution was trampled down by Caracalla,—the rougher trade of arms was abandoned

' to the peasants and barbarians of the frontiers, who
' knew no country but their camp, no science but that
' of war, no civil laws, and scarcely those of military
' discipline. With bloody hands, savage manners, and
' desperate resolutions, they sometimes guarded, but much
' oftener subverted, the throne of the emperors.'

' The last three hundred years,' says Mr. Gibbon, he
is speaking of the year 248, ' had been consumed in appa-
' rent prosperity and internal decline. The nation of
' soldiers, magistrates, and legislators, who composed the
' thirty-five tribes of the Roman people, was dissolved
' into the common mass of mankind, and confounded
' with the millions of servile provincials, who had re-
' ceived the name, without adopting the spirit, of Ro-
' mans.—To the undiscerning eye of the vulgar, Philip
' appeared a monarch no less powerful than Hadrian or
' Augustus had formerly been. The form was still the
' same, but the animating health and vigour were fled.
' The industry of the people was discouraged and ex-
' hausted by a long series of oppression. The discipline
' of the legions, which alone; after the extinction of every
' other virtue, had propped the greatness of the state, was
' corrupted by the ambition, or relaxed by the weakness,
' of the emperors. The strength of the frontiers, which
' had always consisted in arms rather than in fortifica-
' tions, was insensibly undermined; and the fairest pro-
' vinces were left exposed to the rapaciousness or ambi-
' tion of the Barbarians, who soon discovered the de-
' cline of the Roman empire.'

Such was the state of the empire in the year 248, when the great secular games were solemnized by Philip. But far worse was the situation into which it was plunged immediately subsequent to that year. From this celebration of the secular games, says Mr. Gibbon, ' to the death of the emperor Gallicanus, there elapsed twenty years of
shame

' shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period,
' every instant of time was marked, every province of
' the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders
' and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to
' approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution.'
The distracted reign of Gallienus produced no less than
nineteen pretenders to the throne. ' The election of these
' precarious emperors, their power and their death, were
' equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The
' price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to
' the troops, by an immense donative, drawn from the
' bowels of the exhausted people. However virtuous was
' their character, however pure their intentions, they
' found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of sup-
' porting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and
' cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and pro-
' vinces in their fall.' The bravest usurpers also ' were
' compelled by the perplexity of their situation, to con-
' clude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to
' purchase with oppressive tributes the neutrality or fer-
' vices of the Barbarians, and to introduce hostile and in-
' dependent nations into the heart of the Roman mo-
' narchy.'

' It is almost unnecessary to add,' says Mr. Gibbon,
speaking of a somewhat later period, of the æra of the
abdication of Dioclesian, ' that the civil distractions of
' the empire, the licence of the soldiers, the inroads of the
' Barbarians, and the progress of despotism, had proved
' very unfavourable to genius and even to learning. The
' succession of Illyrian princes restored the empire, with-
' out restoring the sciences.—The voice of poetry was si-
' lent. History was reduced to dry and confused abridg-
' ments, alike destitute of amusement and instruction. A
' languid and affected eloquence was still retained in the
' pay and service of the emperors, who encouraged not

' any arts, except those which contributed to the gratification of their pride, or the defence of their power.'

That the fine arts were in a fallen state during the reign of Dioclesian, and at the elevation of Constantine, the following observations will prove. Mr. Gibbon, speaking of the magnificent palace of the former of those princes, says, we are informed, by a ' recent and very judicious traveller'⁵¹, that the awful ruins of Spalatro ' are not less expressive of the decline of the arts, than ' of the greatness of the Roman empire, in the time of ' Dioclesian.' And the triumphal arch of Constantine, raised on account of the victory which he gained over Maxentius in the year 312, ' still remains a melancholy ' proof of the decline of the arts, and a singular testimony ' of the meanest vanity. As it was not possible to find ' in the capital of the empire a sculptor, who was ca- ' pable of adorning that public monument; the arch of ' Trajan, without any respect either for his memory or ' for the rules of propriety, was stripped of its most ele- ' gant figures.—The new ornaments, which it was ne- ' cessary to introduce between the vacancies of ancient ' sculpture, are executed in the rudest and most unskilful ' manner⁵².

' There is also another cause, not yet alluded to, but perhaps deserving of notice, which discouraged the pur- suit of knowledge, and promoted the destruction of books. ' About the beginning of the second century,' says Dr. Enfield, ' astrologers, Chaldeans, and other ' diviners, disgraced the profession of philosophy by as- suming the title of mathematicians. By this name they ' were commonly known, and this signification of the ' term was in general use for several centuries. In

⁵¹ The Abate Fortis (*Viaaggio in Dalmazia*).

⁵² Decl. and Fall of the Rom. Emp. Evo vol. I. p. 90, 198, 203, 221, 258, 323, 345, 415, 419, 451; vol. II. p. 181, 224.

' the Justinian code we find a chapter under this title,
' *De Maleficiis et Mathematicis*, "On Sorcerers and
" Mathematicians;" and one book of the Theodosian
code prescribes the banishment of mathematicians out
of Rome, and all the Roman cities, and the burning of
their books. Impostors, who passed under this appella-
tion, rendered themselves exceedingly obnoxious to
princes and statesmen by the influence which their
arts gave them over the minds of the vulgar; and it was
thought necessary, for the safety of the state, to subject
them to rigorous penalties⁹³.

Those frivolous studies, and those perplexing inquiries, in which such multitudes engaged during the fourth and so many succeeding centuries, have been falsely attributed to the genius of Christianity and to the New Testament. But it holds out no encouragement to the prosecution of such questions. Accordingly they may fairly be attributed to that decline of learning, and that prevalence of false taste, which have, in a considerable degree, been accounted for in the preceding extracts; and a very large proportion of those fruitless disputationes and intricate subtelties, which occasioned so great a waste of time and intellect, did immediately result from the fashionable treatises on logic and metaphysics, and particularly from the perusal of Plato and Aristotle, and the numerous commentators written upon them in the Greek, the Latin, and the Arabic tongues. As theologians were almost the only persons who applied to letters, of course it was from theology that *many* of their speculations were derived. To have prevented this, a perpetual miracle must, indeed, have been exerted; and, if Christianity had not existed, an infinite number of idle disquisitions would have been deduced from the writings, whatever they

⁹³ Hist. of Philosophy, vol. II, p. 328.

might be, in which the reigning religion was deposited⁹⁴.

It was not to the religion of Jesus that the fondness for obtruse speculations owed its growth. It was the fault of the times. It operated upon men of every sentiment. For some time antecedent to the establishment of Christianity, it was carried to a greater height in the schools of the philosophers than among the fathers of the church. ‘The declining age of learning and of mankind is marked,’ says Mr. Gibbon (he is speaking of the period which preceded the abdication of Dioclesian), ‘by the rise and rapid progress of the new Platonicians. The school of Alexandria silenced those of Athens; and the ancient sects enrolled themselves under the banners of the more fashionable teachers, who recommended their system by the novelty of their method and the austerity of their manners. Several of these masters, Ammonius, Plotinus, Amelius, and Porphyry, were men of profound thought and intense application; but, by mistaking the true object of philosophy, their labours contributed much less to improve, than to corrupt, the human understanding. The knowledge that is suited to our situation and powers, the whole compass of moral, natural, and mathematical science, was neglected by the new Platonicians: whilst they exhausted their strength in the verbal disputes of metaphysics, attempted to explore the secrets of the invisible world, and studied to reconcile Aristotle with Plato, on subjects of which both these philosophers were as ignorant as the rest of mankind⁹⁵.’ The minds of the philosophers of this and of a somewhat later period

⁹⁴ ‘The Musulmans,’ says Volney, enumerate ‘seventy-two sects; but I read, while I resided among them, a work which gave an account of more than eighty.’ *Volney’s Ruins; or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires*, p. 343.

⁹⁵ Vol. II. p. 182.

were likewise darkened by the illusions of fanaticism⁹⁶. They abused, says Mr. Gibbon, ‘the superstitious credulity of mankind;’ and the Grecian mysteries were ‘supported by the magic or theurgy of the modern Platonists. They arrogantly pretended to controul the order of nature, to explore the secrets of futurity, to command the service of the inferior dæmons, to enjoy the view and conversation of the superior Gods, and, by disengaging the soul from her material bands, to re-unite that immortal particle with the Infinite and Divine mind’⁹⁷.

As barbarism advanced, and the knowledge of almost all the illustrious writers of antiquity was gradually lost, the pretended votaries of philosophy were more and more benighted in the clouds of metaphysics⁹⁸, and pursued its fleeting shadows with growing eagerness. ‘The general prevalence of this taste for subtle speculations, among the Scholastics, is,’ says Dr. Enfield, ‘certainly to be accounted for, chiefly from the want of more important objects to occupy the leisure of monastic life, and to furnish occasions of generous and useful emulation among those who devoted their days to study. But the particular direction which this idle humour took was owing to the universal authority, which, after Augustine, Aristotle—by degrees acquired in the Christian schools. The reverence, almost religious, which the Scholastics paid to the Stagyrite, naturally led them to

⁹⁶ See Dr. Enfield’s Hist. of Philosophy, vol. II. p. 63—101.

⁹⁷ Vol. IV. p. 74.

⁹⁸ The metaphysical disputants of the middle ages, it may, however, be observed, surpassed not the Pagan Platonists in obscurity. Dr. Priestley, indeed, speaking of them, and particularly of Proclus, Plotinus, and Jamblichus, says, ‘the writings of the schoolmen, which have been so much ridiculed, on account of their obscurity, and idle distinctions, are day-light compared to those of these Platonists.’ Hist. of the Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ, vol. I. p. 399.

“ follow implicitly his method of philosophising, and to “ embrace his opinions, as far as they were able to discover “ them. “ There are,” says Vives, “ both philosophers “ and divines, who not only say, that Aristotle reached “ the utmost boundaries of science, but that his syllo- “ gistic method of reasoning is the most direct and cer- “ tain path to knowledge; a presumption, which has led “ us to receive, upon the authority of Aristotle, many “ tenets as fully known and established, which are by “ no means such; for why should we fatigue ourselves “ with farther inquiry, when it is agreed that nothing “ can be discovered beyond what may be found in his “ writings. Hence has sprung up in the mind of man “ an incredible degree of indolence; so that every one “ thinks it safest and most pleasant to see with another’s “ eyes, and believe with another’s faith, and to examine “ nothing for himself.” There cannot be a clearer proof “ of the extravagant height to which this *Αριστοτελομανική*, “ rage for Aristotle, was carried, than the fact complained “ of by Melancthon, that in sacred assemblies the ethics of “ Aristotle were read to the people instead of the gospel⁹⁹. ”

From these facts and these observations it does, then, appear, that the decline of knowledge, and the progress of a vitiated taste, are to be ascribed to causes, altogether different from the publication and the spread of Christianity.

It has been asserted, that this religion, by rendering men more virtuous and benevolent than they otherwise would have been, has at the same time prepared their minds, for making substantial sacrifices in behalf of mankind, and for feeling a fixed detestation of every system of political oppression and injustice. A few extracts and remarks, relative to the influence it has had upon morals, shall, therefore, be introduced.

⁹⁹ Hist. of Philosophy, vol. II. p. 389.

That

That Christianity, at the æra of its promulgation, produced the most excellent effects on the lives of its professors, that it altered, greatly and beyond all former example, the characters of millions, and that it occasioned the growth of the most permanent and most exalted virtues, every man, who has studied the early part of ecclesiastical history, is perfectly apprized¹⁰⁰. On this point there is no controversy. But, in each following age, the religion of Jesus, being united by a forced alliance to the state, and, from the thirst of gain, the lust of power, and the prevalence of fanaticism, being grossly perverted in its doctrines and its precepts; it has, as might be expected, under these circumstances, had its energies enfeebled; and has not produced those extensive and magnificent revolutions in the moral world,

¹⁰⁰ Christ's disciples, says a learned inquirer into ecclesiastical history, were examples of fervent zeal for the welfare of mankind, of an inoffensive behaviour, of disinterestedness and self-denial, of indefatigable industry, of the most extensive charity, of patience and courage and constancy, and of a regular practice of all that they taught. The first Christians resembled their teachers in these good qualities, and it was no small advantage to them in their apologies for themselves and their religion to be able to appeal boldly to their innocence and integrity. That we may have a right sense of this, we should consider what it was to be a Christian in those days, lest we be deceived by the vulgar use of the word, and by the notion which we at present entertain about it. To be a Christian at that time was to be an example of well-tried virtue, of true wisdom, and of consummate fortitude; for he surely deserves the name of a great and a good man, who serves God, and is a friend to mankind, and receives the most ungrateful returns from the world, and endures them with a calm and composed mind, who dares look scorn and infamy and death in the face, who can stand forth unmoved and patiently bear to be derided as a fool and an ideot, to be pointed out for a madman and an enthusiast, to be reviled as an atheist and an enemy to all righteousness, to be punished as a robber and a murderer. He who can pass through these trials is a conqueror indeed, and what the world calls courage scarce deserves that name, when compared to this behaviour.' Jorin's Disc. on the Tr. of the Chr. Rel. p. 113.

which

which seemed to have been promised and ensured by the strength of its proofs, the clearness of its laws, and the weight of its sanctions. But, depressed and disguised as it has been, destitute till the 15th century of the important aid it would have derived from the art of printing, and for a long time locked up in an unknown tongue, it has, under all this opprobrium and under all these disadvantages, had a very powerful effect in promoting purity of heart and rectitude of conduct.

‘ Christianity,’ says archdeacon Paley, ‘ in every country in which it is professed, hath obtained a sensible, although not a complete influence, upon the public judgment of morals. And this is very important. For, without the occasional correction which public opinion receives, by referring to some fixed standard of morality, no man can foretell into what extravagancies it might wander.—In this way, it is possible, that many may be kept in order by Christianity, who are not themselves Christians. They may be guided by the rectitude which it communicates to public opinion. Their consciences may suggest their duty truly, and they may ascribe these suggestions to a moral sense, or to the native capacity of the human intellect, when in fact they are nothing more, than the public opinion reflected from their own minds; an opinion, in a considerable degree, modified by the lessons of Christianity.’

The influence of this religion ‘ must be perceived, if perceived at all, in the silent course of private and domestic life. Nay more; even *there* its influence may not be very obvious to observation. If it check, in some degree, personal dissoluteness, if it beget a general probity in the transaction of business, if it produce soft and humane manners in the mass of the community and occasional exertions of laborious or expensive benevolence in a few individuals, it is all the effect which can offer

offer itself to external notice. The kingdom of heaven is within us. That which is the substance of the religion, its hopes and consolations, its intermixture with the thoughts by day and by night, the devotion of the heart, the controul of appetite, the steady direction of the will to the commands of God, is necessary invisible. Yet upon these depend the virtue and the happiness of millions. This cause renders the representations of history, with respect to religion, defective and fallacious, in a greater degree than they are upon any other subject. Religion operates most upon those of whom history knows the least; upon fathers and mothers in their families, upon men servants and maid servants, upon the orderly tradesman, the quiet villager, the manufacturer at his loom, the husbandman in his fields. Amongst such its influence collectively may be of inestimable value, yet its effects in the mean time little upon those, who figure upon the stage of the world. They may know nothing of it; they may believe nothing of it; they may be actuated by motives more impetuous than those which religion is able to excite. It cannot, therefore, be thought strange, that this influence should elude the grasp and touch of public history; for what is public history, but a register of the successes and disappointments, the vices, the follies, and the quarrels, of those who engage in contentions for power¹⁰¹?

After quoting this passage, I would briefly observe, that the observations, contained in the three last sentences of the archdeacon, are perfectly true with respect to the ordinary transactions registered in historic annals, but apply not to a great national revolution, undertaken against civil tyranny, and in vindication of the rights of man. In the accomplishment of such an event, the principles of

¹⁰¹ Evid of Chr, 2 ed. vol. II. p. 376, 382.

Christianity cannot but operate, though they may, indeed, secretly operate. For by whom is such a revolution effected? Not by mere men of ambition; not by that class of persons, who commonly figure upon the stage of the world; not by the venality of mercenary senators and the blind obedience of mercenary soldiers. That mighty change, which terminates in the overthrow of tyranny, and the restoration of a people to their rights, must be undertaken by the farmer, the tradesman, and the manufacturer, and particularly by those who constitute the middle ranks of society, that is to say, by those very persons who are most attentive to the duties, and best acquainted with the principles, of religion.

Nor has the religion of Jesus operated beneficially, merely in the preservation of literature, and in the promotion of virtuous morals in private life. Its effects have extended farther. It has had a sensible influence on laws and public institutions.

But as it hath likewise been objected against Christianity, that it has been the frequent cause of persecuting statutes and destructive wars, it is proper, previously to an enumeration of the benefits it has produced, to introduce an extract in reply to this objection; and to consider whether it has been the proper and primary causes of events which ought so sincerely to be deplored. ‘ Christianity,’ says archdeacon Paley, ‘ is charged with many consequences for which it is not responsible. I believe, that religious motives have had no more to do, in the formation of nine-tenths of the intolerant and persecuting laws, which in different countries have been established upon the subject of religion, than they have had to do in England with the making of the game laws. These measures, although they have the Christian religion for their subject, are resolvable into a principle, which Christianity certainly did not plant (and which

‘ Christianity

‘ Christianity could not universally condemn, because it
‘ is not universally wrong), which principle is no other
‘ than this, that they who are in possession of power do
‘ what they can to keep it. Christianity is answerable
‘ for no part of the mischief, which has been brought
‘ upon the world by persecution, except that which has
‘ arisen from *conscientious* persecutors. Now these per-
‘haps have never been, either numerous, or powerful.
‘ Nor is it to Christianity that even *their* mistake can
‘ fairly be imputed. They have been misled by an error,
‘ not properly Christian or religious, but by an error in
‘ their moral philosophy. They pursued the particular,
‘ without adverting to the general, consequence. Be-
‘ lieving certain articles of faith, or a certain mode of
‘ worship, to be highly conducive, or perhaps essential,
‘ to salvation, they thought themselves bound to bring all
‘ they could, by every means, into them. And this they
‘ thought, without considering what would be the effect
‘ of such a conclusion, when adopted amongst mankind
‘ as a general rule of conduct. Had there been in the
‘ New Testament, what there are in the Koran, precepts
‘ authorizing coercion in the propagation of the religion,
‘ and the use of violence towards unbelievers, the case
‘ would have been different. This distinction could not
‘ have been taken, or this defence made.—If it be ob-
‘ jected, as I apprehend it will be, that Christianity is
‘ chargeable with every mischief, of which it has been the
‘ occasion, though not the *motive*; I answer, that, if the
‘ malevolent passions be there, the world will never want
‘ occasions. The noxious element will always find a
‘ conductor. Any point will produce an explosion. Did
‘ the applauded intercommunity of the Pagan theology
‘ preserve the peace of the Roman world? Did it prevent
‘ oppressions, proscriptions, massacres, devastations? Was
‘ it bigotry that carried Alexander into the East, or
‘ brought

‘ brought Cæsar into Gaul? Are the nations of the world, into which Christianity hath not found its way, or from which it hath been banished, free from contentions? Are their contentions less ruinous and sanguinary? Is it owing to Christianity, or to the want of it, that the finest regions of the East, the countries *inter quatuor maria*, the peninsula of Greece, together with a great part of the Mediterranean coast, are at this day a desert? or that the banks of the Nile, whose constantly renewed fertility is not to be impaired by neglect, nor destroyed by the ravages of war, serve only for the scene of a ferocious anarchy, or the supply of unceasing hostilities? Europe itself has known no religious wars for some centuries, yet has hardly ever been without war¹⁰². ’

Besides, it was during the dark ages, and particularly in the early part of the 13th century, that persecution was carried on with the greatest violence, in the name of Christianity. Now, says bp. Porteus, ‘ at a time when military ideas predominated in every thing, in the form of government, in the temper of the laws, in the tenure of lands, and even in the administration of justice itself, it could not be matter of much surprize, that the church should become military too¹⁰³. ’

That Christianity has been the cause of various benefits to mankind, no infidel, who is possessed of tolerable candour and historical information, and who is desirous to maintain the reputation of good sense and impartiality, will presume to deny. The remarks that follow from Mr. Gibbon have not only a reference to the political state of nations, as influenced by the propagation of the gospel, but also to the topics which have already been considered, namely, its effects upon knowledge and upon

¹⁰² Evid. of Chr. 2d. ed., vol. II. p. 384—387.

¹⁰³ Serm. p. 285.

morals. But the testimony they contain is so honourable to Christianity, that I cannot reconcile my mind to their omission.

In the 5th century, ‘Christianity was embraced by almost all the Barbarians, who established their kingdoms on the ruins of the Western empire.’ It ‘introduced an important change in their moral and political condition. They received, at the same time, the use of letters, so essential to a religion, whose doctrines are contained in a sacred book, and, while they studied the divine truth, their minds were insensibly enlarged by the distant view of history, of nature, of the arts, and of society. The version of the Scriptures into their native tongue, which had facilitated their conversion, must excite, among their clergy, some curiosity to read the original text, to understand the sacred liturgy of the church, and to examine, in the writings of the fathers, the chain of ecclesiastical tradition. These spiritual gifts were preserved in the Greek and Latin languages, which concealed the inestimable monuments of ancient learning. The immortal productions of Virgil, Cicero, and Livy, which were accessible to the Christian Barbarians, maintained a silent intercourse between the reign of Augustus, and the times of Clovis and Charlemagne. The emulation of mankind was encouraged by the remembrance of a more perfect state; and the flame of science was secretly kept alive, to warm and enlighten the mature age of the Western world. In the most corrupt state of Christianity, the Barbarians might learn justice from the *law*, and mercy from the *gospel*: and, if the knowledge of their duty was insufficient to guide their actions, or to regulate their passions, they were sometimes restrained by conscience, and frequently punished by remorse. But the direct authority of religion was less effectual, than the holy communion which

' united them with their Christian brethren in spiritual
 ' friendship. The influence of these sentiments contri-
 ' buted to secure their fidelity in the service, or the
 ' alliance, of the Romans; to alleviate the horrors of war,
 ' to moderate the insolence of conquest, and to preserve,
 ' in the downfal of the empire, a permanent respect for
 ' the name and institutions of Rome.—The sacred cha-
 ' racter of the bishops was supported by their temporal
 ' possessions; they obtained an honourable seat in the
 ' legislative assemblies of soldiers and freemen; and it
 ' was their interest, as well as their duty, to mollify, by
 ' peaceful counsels, the fierce spirit of the Barbarians¹⁰⁴.

‘ The

¹⁰⁴ Thus ‘ in the year 990, several bishops in the South of France as-
 sembled, and published various regulations, in order to set some bounds
 to the violence and frequency of private wars; if any person in their dio-
 ceses should venture to transgres, they ordained, that he shalld be ex-
 cluded from all Christian privileges during his life, and be denied Chris-
 tian burial after his death.—A council was held at Limoges, A. D. 994.
 ‘ The bodies of the saints, according to the custom of those ages, were
 carried thither; and by these sacred reliques men were exhorted to lay
 down their arms, to extinguish their animosities, and to swear that they
 would not for the future violate the public peace by their private hosti-
 lities.—Several other councils issued decrees to the same effect.’ In
 France a general peace and cessation from hostilities took place A. D.
 1032, and continued for seven years, in consequence of the methods which
 the bishop of Aquitaine successfully employed to work upon the super-
 stition of the times. ‘ And a resolution was formed, that no man should
 in times to come attack or molest his adversaries, during the seasons set
 apart for celebrating the great festivals of the church, or from the evening
 of Thursday in each week, to the morning of Monday in the week er-
 suing, the intervening days being considered as particularly holy, our
 Lord’s Passion having happened on one of these days, and his Resurrec-
 tion on another. A change in the dispositions of men so sudden, and
 which produced a resolution so unexpected, was considered as miracu-
 lous; and the respite from hostilities, which followed upon it, was called
 ‘ the Truce of God.—This, from being a regulation or concert in one king-
 dom, became a general law in Christendom, was confirmed by the au-
 thority of several popes, and the violators were subjected to the penalty of
 excommunication.

‘The perpetual correspondence of the Latin clergy, the frequent pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, and the growing authority of the Popes, cemented the union of the Christian republic: and gradually PRODUCED the similar manners, and common jurisprudence, which have distinguished, from the rest of mankind, the independent, and even hostile, nations of modern Europe.’ And the historian observes in another place, that, ‘in all the pursuits of active and speculative life, the emulation of states and individuals is the most powerful spring of the efforts and improvements of mankind. ‘The cities of ancient Greece,’ he remarks, ‘were cast in the happy mixture of union and independence, which is repeated on a larger scale, but in a looser form, by the nations of modern Europe: the union of language, religion, and manners, which renders them the spectators and judges of each other’s merit: the independence of government and interest, which asserts their separate freedom, and excites them to strive for pre-eminence in the career of glory.’

‘In the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries of the Christian æra, the reign of the gospel and of the church was extended over Bulgaria, Hungary, Bohemia, Saxony,

‘excommunication.—A cessation from hostilities during three complete days in every week allowed such a considerable space for the passions of the antagonists to cool, and for the people to enjoy a respite from the calamities of war, as well as to take measures for their own security, that, if the *Truce of God* had been exactly observed, it must have gone far towards putting an end to private wars.’ But ‘the violent spirit of the nobility could not be restrained by any engagements. The complaints of this were frequent; and bishops, in order to compel them to renew their vows and promises of ceasing from their private wars, were obliged to enjoin their clergy to suspend the performance of divine service and the exercise of any religious function within the parishes of such as were refractory and obstinate.’ Dr. Robertson’s View of the Progress of Society in Europe, &c. p. 335.

‘ Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Poland, and Russia¹⁰⁵.—Truth and candour must acknowledge, that the conversion of the North imparted many temporal benefits both to the old and the new Christians.—The admission of the Barbarians into the pale of civil and ecclesiastical society delivered Europe from the depredations, by sea and land, of the Normans, the Hungarians, and the Russians, who learned to spare their brethren and cultivate their possessions¹⁰⁶. The establishment of law and order was promoted by the influence of the clergy; and the rudiments of art and science were introduced into the savage countries of the globe. The liberal piety of the Russian princes engaged in their service the most skilful of the Greeks, to decorate the cities and instruct the inhabitants.—The Sclavonic and Scandinavian kingdoms, which had been converted by the Latin missionaries, were exposed, it is true, to the spiritual jurisdiction and temporal claims of the popes; but they were united, in language and religious worship, with each other, and with Rome; they imbibed the

“ ‘ The first introduction of literature into Russia must,’ says Mr. Coxe, ‘ be ascribed to Ulomir the Great, upon his conversion to Christianity in 988: that sovereign even instituted schools, and passed a decree to regulate the mode of instructing youth in his dominions. His son Yaroslof, who ascended the throne in 1018, invited many learned priests from Constantinople; and caused various Greek books to be translated into the Russian tongue.—He established a seminary at Novogorod for 300 Students; and gave to that republic the first code of written laws.’ Travels into Poland, Russia, &c. vol. III. p. 291.

“¹⁰⁶ The following is a note of Mr. Gibbon. ‘ Listen to the exultations of Adam of Bremen (A. D. 1080), of which the substance is agreeable to truth: *Ecce illa ferocissima Danorum, &c. natio—jamdudum novit in Dei laudibus Alleluia resonare.—Ecce populus ille piraticus—suis nunc finibus contentus est. Ecce patria horribilis semper inaccessa propter cultum idolorum—prædicatores veritatis ubique certatim admittit. &c. (de Situ Danie, &c. p. 40, 41. edit. Elzevir: a curious and original prospect of the North of Europe, and the introduction of Christianity).*’

‘ free

' free and generous spirit of the European republic, and gradually shared the light of knowledge which arose on the western world¹⁰⁷.'

Thus then it appears, that Christianity, besides promoting in past times the progress of the arts and of civilization, has been a principal cause, that the nations of Europe, partially enlightened as it must be admitted they are, are, however, honourably distinguished among the countries of the globe by the love of freedom and the capability of improvement.

That the clergy have had a beneficial influence, not merely in furnishing many of the principal reformers of religion and restorers of learning, but in several other important respects, the preceding extracts from Mr. Gibbon are sufficient to shew. This is a truth to which it is the more necessary to advert, in forming a true judgment of the effects they have upon *the whole* produced, because it cannot be denied, that, in the centuries recently elapsed, the efforts of the established clergy, as a body, have been decidedly detrimental to the cause of civil freedom. But it is not to Christianity, that these efforts are to be attributed. They are resolvable into a principle already noticed in the words of archdeacon Paley, 'that they who are in possession of power do what they can to keep it;' or, to state it somewhat more broadly, they originate in an eagerness to obtain possession of riches and of power, and in a desire, when possessed of them, to maintain and to augment them. Had Christianity, then, never been propagated, still, as another religion would have existed, and as this eagerness after wealth and authority would still have prevailed, the clergy of that religion would not have failed to aid the attempts of the prince and the noble in the depression of liberty. Of all religions the Chris-

¹⁰⁷ Vol. VI, p. 272, 275, vol. X, p. 163, 242, 243.

tian is the worst adapted to promote the sordid views of kings and priests.

The clergy, it may be added, were the cause, that the canon law was framed. Now although that law operated unquestionably, in some respects, in a manner unfavourable to civil liberty; yet those ideas on the subject of government, and those regulations in the distribution of justice, which prevail among the European nations, and which are so superior in point of correctness to those which are current in most other countries of the world, may be partly ascribed to the introduction of the canon law into Europe. The clergy, says a masterly delineator of the progress of society in Europe, ‘alone were accustomed to read, to inquire, and to reason. Whatever knowledge of ancient jurisprudence had been preserved, either by tradition, or in such books as had escaped the destructive rage of barbarians, was possessed by them. Upon the maxims of that excellent system, they founded a code of laws consonant to the great principles of equity. Being directed by fixed and known rules, the forms of their courts were ascertained, and their decisions became uniform and consistent.—It is not surprising, then, that ecclesiastical jurisdiction should become such an object of admiration and respect, that exemption from civil jurisdiction was courted as a privilege, and conferred as a reward. It is not surprising, that, even to rude people, the maxims of the canon law should appear more equal and just than those of the ill-digested jurisprudence, which directed all proceedings in civil courts. According to the latter, the differences between contending barons were terminated, as in a state of nature, by the sword; according to the former, every matter was subjected to the decision of laws. The one, by permitting judicial combats, left chance and force to be arbiters of right and wrong, of truth

' truth or falsehood ; the other passed judgment with respect to these by the maxims of equity, and the testimony of witnesses.' It may be added, that 'many of the regulations, now deemed the barriers of *personal security*, or the safeguards of *private property*, are contrary to the spirit, and repugnant to the maxims, of the civil jurisprudence known in Europe during several centuries, and were borrowed from the rules and practice of the ecclesiastical courts¹⁰⁸.'

It is to the general security of life, of liberty, and of property in this quarter of the globe, when contrasted with the customary violation of these great rights of man in the Asiatic and African kingdoms, that we must principally attribute the higher pitch of prosperity, the superior energy and activity of character, and the more advanced state of the arts and of knowledge, which are to be found in the European nations. If, therefore, it be admitted, that the introduction of the canon law by the clergy has materially contributed to create a greater regard to persons and to property, than would otherwise have prevailed in the Western world; Christianity must be acknowledged, in this respect, to have been of signal service to the cause of freedom and the temporal interests of mankind.

' Christianity has,' says Dr. Priestley, 'bettered the state of the world in a civil and political respect, giving men a just idea of their mutual relations and natural rights¹⁰⁹, and thereby gradually abolishing slavery, with the servile ideas which introduced it, and also many

¹⁰⁸ Dr. Robertson's View of the Progress of Society in Europe, 8vo. p. 76.

¹⁰⁹ 'The Christian religion,' says Montesquieu, 'in spite of the extent of the empire and the influence of the climate, has hindered despotic power from being established in Æthiopia.' Spirit of Laws b. XXIV. c. 3.

‘ cruel and barbarous customs¹¹⁰.’ ‘ It would,’ says Dr. Leechman, ‘ be a work for a treatise,—to trace out the civil laws which took their rise from the spirit of Christianity, and to delineate their happy effects on society, through a course of ages¹¹¹.’ ‘ The Christian religion,’ says archdeacon Paley, ‘ acts upon public usages and institutions, by an operation which is only secondary and indirect. Christianity is not a code of civil law. It can only reach public institutions through private character. Now its influence upon private character may be considerable, yet many public usages and institutions, repugnant to its principles, may remain. To get rid of these, the reigning part of the community must act, and act together. But it may be long, before the persons who compose this body be sufficiently touched with the Christian character, to join in the suppression of practices, to which they and the public have been reconciled by causes, which will reconcile the human mind to any thing, by habit and interest. Nevertheless, the effects of Christianity, even in this view, have been important. It has mitigated the conduct of war, and the treatment of captives. It has softened the administration of despotic, or of nominally despotic governments. It has abolished polygamy. It has restrained the licentiousness of divorces. It has put an end to the exposure of children, and the immolation of slaves. It has suppressed the combats of gladiators¹¹², and the impurities of

¹¹⁰ Instit. of Nat. and Rev. Rel. vol. I. p. 378.

¹¹¹ The Wisdom of God in the Gospel-Revelation, a serm. preached at the Gen. Assembly of the Ch. of Scotland.

¹¹² Bp. Porteus, speaking of the exposure of infants, the shows of gladiators, and the usage of slaves, as practised by the ancients, says, ‘ These were not the accidental and temporary excesses of a sudden fury, but were legal, and established, and constant methods of murdering and tormenting mankind, encouraged by the wisest legislators, and affording amusement to the tenderest and most compassionate minds. Had Christianity

' of religious rites. It has banished, if not unnatural vices, at least the toleration of them. It has greatly meliorated the condition of the laborious poor, that is to say, of the mass of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly rest. In all countries, in which it is professed, it has produced numerous establishments for the relief of sickness and poverty¹¹³; and, in some, a regular and general provision by law. It has triumphed over the slavery established in the Roman empire: it is contending, and, I trust, will one day prevail, against the worse slavery of the West Indies¹¹⁴. Now the knowledge of Christianity having produced effects thus powerful on laws, political regulations, and national customs, will justify us in carrying our views still farther, and in concluding, that it will not fail to accom-

' Christianity done nothing more than brought into disuse (as it confessedly
' has done) the two former of these inhuman customs entirely, and the
' latter to a very great degree, it had justly merited the title of the Bene-
' volent Religion.—Lipsius affirms (Saturn. l. I. c. 12.) that the gladiato-
' rial shows sometimes cost Europe twenty or thirty thousand lives in a
' month; and not only the men, but even the women of all ranks, were
' passionately fond of these shows.'

These happy changes may, says the bishop of London, perhaps be attributed to literature and to philosophy. But were not Greece and Rome the very fountains of every thing that was sublime and excellent in human wisdom and polite literature, from whence they were distributed in the purest streams over the rest of the world, and descended to all succeeding ages? Were they not carried, in those great schools, to a degree of elegance and perfection, at which it is at least doubtful whether the moderns have yet arrived, or ever will? And yet in these very places, at a time when all the arts and sciences were in their full strength and maturity, it was then that those various inhumanities, which are by Christians held in the utmost abhorrence, were publicly authorized.' Serm. p. 311.

¹¹³ ' Examine the annals of all the heathen nations of antiquity; peruse the modern accounts of Africa, India, China, and all the other parts of the globe, where Christianity is not received, and you will in vain look for such monuments of mercy, such fruits of Christian charity, as may be met with in every part of Christendom.' Bp. Watson's Serm. and Tracts, p. 173.

¹¹⁴ Evid. of Chr. 2d ed. vol. II. p. 379.

plish changes of no small magnitude with respect to government in general. Indeed if we may believe the present bishop of London, Christianity has already ‘insensibly worked itself into the inmost frame and constitution of civil states’¹¹⁵. I differ from his lordship only as to the time. That it is calculated to do this, and will hereafter effect the greatest changes in this respect, is a statement to which I am perfectly ready to subscribe.

On the effects Christianity has produced upon war and domestic slavery the celebrated author of the History of Charles the Vth has treated at greater length. ‘It is not,’ says he, ‘the authority of any single detached precept in the gospel, but the spirit and genius of the Christian religion, more powerful than any particular command, which hath abolished the practice of slavery through the world.’ Wherever, indeed, such opinions as those contained in the New Testament ‘prevail, no human creature can be regarded as altogether insignificant and vile’¹¹⁶; even the meanest acquire dignity; exterior distinctions disappear; and men approach nearer to that original equality in which they were at first placed, and are still viewed, by their impartial Creator.—Is no admiration due to the generous spirit of that religion, which restored liberty, not to one nation or society alone, but rescued from the worst servitude far the greater number of the human race, and acquired for them that happy freedom which they still enjoy? When we behold Christianity making its progress through the world, and working every where such an important alteration in the condition of mankind, we may well apply to a temporal deliverance what the prophet spoke concerning a spiritual salvation; *Behold, the acceptable*

¹¹⁵ Porteus’s Serm. p. 310.

¹¹⁶ See the observations in p. 362 and 363 of the present work.

' year of the Lord is come! Liberty is proclaimed to the
' captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are
' bound. They shall rest from their sorrow, and from their
' fear, and from the hard bondage wherein they were
' made to serve '¹¹⁷.'

These observations are general. The same judicious writer elsewhere considers the subject with more minuteness of detail. 'The gentle spirit,' says he¹¹⁸, 'of the Christian religion, the doctrines which it teaches concerning the original equality of mankind, its tenets with respect to the divine government, and the impartial eye with which the Almighty regards men of every condition, and admits them to a participation of its benefits, are all inconsistent with servitude. But in this, as in many other instances, considerations of interest, and the maxims of false policy, led men to a conduct inconsistent with their principles. They were so sensible, however, of this inconsistency, that to set their fellow-christians at liberty from servitude was deemed an act of piety highly meritorious and acceptable to heaven. The humane spirit of the Christian religion struggled long with the maxims and manners of the world, and contributed more than any other circumstance to introduce the practice of manumission.— A great part of the charters of manumission, previous to the reign of Louis X. are granted *pro amore Dei*, *pro remedio animæ*, et *pro mercede animæ*.—The formality of manumission was executed in a church, as a religious solemnity. The person to be set free was led round the great altar with a torch in his hand, he took hold of the horns of the altar, and there the solemn words conferring liberty were pronounced.—Manumis-

¹¹⁷ Is. lxi. 1. xiv. 3. *The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*: a sermon, by W. Robertson, D. D. preached before the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge, Jan. 6. 1755.

¹¹⁸ View of the Progress of Society in Europe, &c. p. 322—325.

‘ sion was frequently granted on a death-bed or by latter-
 ‘ will. As the minds of men are at that time awakened
 ‘ to sentiments of humanity and piety, these deeds pro-
 ‘ ceeded from religious motives, and were granted *pro
redemptione animæ*, in order to obtain acceptance with
 ‘ God.—Another method of obtaining liberty was by en-
 ‘ tering into holy orders, or taking the vow in a monas-
 ‘ tery.—Conformably to the same principles, princes, on
 ‘ the birth of a son, or upon any other agreeable event,
 ‘ appointed a certain number of slaves to be enfranchised,
 ‘ as a testimony of their gratitude to God for that benefit.
 ‘ There are several forms of munumission published by
 ‘ Marculfus, and all of them are founded on religious
 ‘ considerations, in order to obtain the favour of God, or
 ‘ to obtain the forgiveness of their sins.’

Now, it may be observed, that without the abolition of domestic servitude, political freedom could never have stood on a right basis. Indeed without this preparatory revolution, it is not possible to conceive, how a declaration of the Rights of Man could have been adopted, or a fair representative government could ever have been constructed.

‘ The abolition of domestic slavery was,’ says Dr. Robertson, ‘ the occasion of another change in the man-
 ‘ ners of men, which is no less remarkable. Captives
 ‘ taken in war were, in all probability, the first persons
 ‘ subjected to perpetual servitude: and when the neces-
 ‘ sities or luxury of mankind increased the demand for
 ‘ slaves, every new war recruited their number, by
 ‘ reducing the vanquished to that wretched condition.
 ‘ Hence proceeded the fierce and desperate spirit, with
 ‘ which wars were carried on among ancient nations.
 ‘ While chains and slavery were the certain lot of the
 ‘ conquered, battles were fought, and towns defended,
 ‘ with a rage and obstinacy, which nothing but horror at
 ‘ such

' such a fate could have inspired : but by putting an end
' to the cruel institution of slavery, Christianity extended
' its mild influence to the practice of war ; and that bar-
' barous art, softened by its humane spirit, ceased to be
' so destructive¹¹⁹.'

Having endeavoured, by the aid of extracts, to display the important influence Christianity has had upon literature and knowledge, upon morals, and upon laws and political institutions ; I shall insert one or two quotations relative to the Protestant Reformation, which, though extremely incomplete, may nevertheless be regarded as a republication of the scriptures and of Christianity. Had not Christianity existed, and produced the effects it did, it has been seen, that the restoration of ancient learning could hardly ever have taken place. Now it was to the revival of learning, that the authors of the Reformation were indebted for the boldness of their inquiries and their comparative freedom from prejudice, for the preservation of their lives and the accomplishment of that important revolution which they effected¹²⁰; and it is to the Reformation, that civil liberty is greatly indebted for the progress it has made.

Experience shews, says Dr. Blair, ' that, in proportion as religious knowledge diffuses its light, learning flourishes, and liberal arts are cultivated and advanced. Just conceptions of religion promote a free and manly spirit. They lead men to think for themselves ; to form their principles upon free inquiry ; and not to resign their conscience to the dictates of men. Hence they naturally inspire aversion to slavery of every kind ; and promote a taste for liberty and laws. Despotic governments have generally taken the firmest root among nations that were blinded by Mahometan or

¹¹⁹ Dr. Robertson's serm. ut supra.

¹²⁰ In p. 33 see another cause stated, which originated in Christianity, and greatly promoted the Protestant Reformation.

‘ Pagan darkness ; where the throne of violence has been supported by ignorance and false religion In the Christian world, during those centuries in which gross superstition held its reign undisturbed, oppression and slavery were in its train. The cloud of ignorance sat thick and deep over the nations ; and the world was threatened with a relapse into ancient barbarism. As soon as the true *knowledge of the Lord* revived, at the auspicious æra of the Reformation, learning, liberty, and arts, began to shine forth with it, and to resume their lustre¹²¹. ’

Another of the most elegant writers of Scotland, his majesty’s late historiographer for that country, after asserting, that the Reformation ‘ produced a revolution in the sentiments of mankind, the greatest, as well as the most beneficial, that has happened since the publication of Christianity ;’ says, ‘ the human mind, which had continued long as tame and passive, as if it had been formed to believe whatever was taught, and to bear whatever was imposed, roused of a sudden, and became inquisitive, mutinous, and disdainful of the yoke to which it had hitherto submitted.—Nor was this spirit of innovation confined to those countries which openly revolted from the pope¹²² : it spread through all Europe, and broke

¹²¹ Blair’s Sermons, vol. II. p. 451.

¹²² Dr. Robertson says in another place, ‘ The desire of equalling the reformers in those talents which had procured them respect, the necessity of acquiring the knowledge requisite for defending their own tenets, or refuting the arguments of their opponents, together with the emulation natural between two rival churches, engaged the Roman Catholic clergy to apply themselves to the study of useful science, which they cultivated with such assiduity and success, that they have gradually become as eminent in literature, as they were in some periods infamous for ignorance.’ Hist. of Charles V. vol. IV. p. 325. It may be added, that some of the most celebrated politicians whom France has produced, and who most contributed to the French revolution by their writings, belonged to the Romish church. Such are the abbés Mably and Raynal, Gregoire and Sieyès.

'out in every part of it with various degrees of violence.
'It penetrated early into France, and made quick progress
'there.—The Reformation, wherever it was received,
'increased that bold and innovating spirit to which it
'owed its birth. Men, who had the courage to over-
'turn a system, supported by every thing which can
'command respect or reverence, were not to be over-
'awed by any authority, how great or venerable soever.
'After having been accustomed to consider themselves
'as judges of the most important doctrines in religion, to
'examine these freely, and to reject, without scruple,
'what appeared to them erroneous, it was natural for
'them to turn the same daring and inquisitive eye to-
'wards government, and to think of rectifying whatever
'disorders or imperfections were discovered there. As
'religious abuses had been reformed in several places
'without the permission of the magistrate, it was an easy
'transition to attempt the redress of political grievances
'in the same manner¹²³.'

There is a short passage in Dr. Hartley so much to my present purpose, that I cannot avoid quoting it, though a *part* of it has already been inserted in a *note*. 'All the known governments of the world have the evident principles of corruption in themselves. . They are composed of jarring elements, and subsist only by the alternate prevalence of these over each other. The splendour, luxury, self-interest, martial glory, &c. which pass for essentials in Christian governments, are totally opposite to the meek, humble, self-denying spirit of Christianity? and whichsoever of these finally prevails over the other, the present form of the government must be dissolved¹²⁴.'

¹²³ Reign of Charles V. 8 vo. vol. II. p. 104, 335; vol. IV. p. 320.

¹²⁴ On Man, 1749, vol. II. 366,

• Christianity,' says Mr. Wakefield, in a passage from which I have before given a short extract in a note, ' is • no other, than the cause of liberty, and the consequent • happiness of the human race: a liberty and hap- • piness only to be raised on the foundation of that • equality ascertained by the laws of our creation, and • ratified by the gospel in every page, which acknowleges • no distinction of *bond or free*. Interest may oppose, • and sophistry may cavil; but *Equality*, in its rational • acceptation, as relating to civil privileges and impar- • tial laws, is interwoven with *Christianity* itself: they • must live or perish together. But they will live; and • modern governments, with every appendage of wick- • edness and corruption, will in time disappear before • them, as beasts of prey hasten to their dens of rapine • and darkness from the rising sun¹²⁵.'

Having quoted from so large an assemblage of able writers, I shall dismiss the subject, as soon as I shall have briefly recapitulated, and drawn towards a point the two principal arguments, which may be urged in reply to the objection stated in the sequel of the last chapter, and which are corroborated by the facts and reasonings of the present appendix.

Christianity has been the principal cause of preserving the knowledge, and encouraging the study, of the learned languages. The study of the learned languages has occasioned the resurrection of letters, the resurrection of letters has occasioned the diffusion of knowledge, and the diffusion of knowledge has been the grand cause of the fall of the Gallic monarchy, and will at length be fatal to the other European despotisms.

The existing governments of the continent of Europe are constructed and administered on principles opposite to the moral laws contained in the New Testament. A

¹²⁵ *Spirit of Christianity compared with the Spirit of the Times*, p. 26.
large

large part of the people of Europe derive their notions directly or indirectly from that sacred volume. The existence of governments ultimately depends upon opinion¹²⁶. And I, therefore, infer, reasoning upon these three propositions, that the principles of Christianity will powerfully contribute to the overthrow of the tyrannies of Europe.

That Christianity, by communicating to the mind a spirit of benevolence and a spirit of fortitude, forcibly impells men to embrace the cause of civil liberty, and eminently qualifies them, when an adequate occasion arises, to stand forward as its most intrepid supporters, were two of the important propositions, which, at the close of ch. xxx, I undertook to prove by the aid of two powerful auxiliaries, the present bishops of London and Worcester. After the whole of the work, which precedes the present page, was printed, I met with some observations, which contain so much solid sense, and are so powerfully corroborative of the arguments alleged in favour of these propositions; that I have been induced, notwithstanding their length, and notwithstanding the subject was brought to a conclusion, to determine in favour of their insertion. They are taken from two Sermons, written by Dr. Leechman, late Principal of the College of Glasgow, and founded on those words of St. Paul, that *God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*¹²⁷.

After observing, that ‘love, in the New Testament,

¹²⁶ ‘Let civil governors—be admonished, that the physical strength resides in the governed; that this strength wants only to be felt and roused, to lay prostrate the most ancient and confirmed dominion; that civil authority is founded in opinion; that general opinion therefore ought always to be treated with deference, and managed with delicacy and circumspection.’ Paley’s Principles of Mor. and Pol. Phil. 7th ed. vol. II. p. 125.

¹²⁷ 2 Tim. I. 7.

'when spoken of in general, usually signifies *the love of our brethren*,' and 'that the genius of Christianity is love;' professor Leechman says, 'when we attend to the preceptive and sentimental parts of the gospel, we find, that the spirit of love breathes in all of them. That the precepts of Christianity tend to restrain and suppress all the malevolent passions, and to promote the culture and improvement of the kind and friendly ones, can admit of no doubt.' Now it is love, 'which leads men to relieve the necessities, to sympathise with the sorrows, and to share in the joys, of all mankind.' It inspires the soul with generous and noble designs.— Those heroic actions, which are recorded in history, and which we read with admiration, have, for the most part, been the effects of the love of one's country, of particular friendship, or of an ardent zeal for some important interests of mankind. Thus heroism, the truest heroism, derives its chief excellence and strength from the spirit of love.—Farther, the points of light, in which Christianity places our fellow-men, are such as are suited to affect us in the most powerful and tender manner. We are all, whether high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, equally the children of the same great family, and equally under the protection, and at the disposal, of the almighty and all-wise providence of the same great Parent of all. We are all fellow-travellers through this state of pilgrimage, in which we are all exposed to the like wants, dangers, and distresses. We have all the like imperfections and infirmities, equally liable to fail in our duty to one another, and therefore equally standing in need of forgiveness at one another's hands.' For our hopes, also, we are equally dependent. 'These views of our brethren of mankind are certainly fitted to bring down the most lofty looks, and to convince the proudest of the sons of men, that, notwithstanding all the distinctions and pre-

' preeminences on which they value themselves, they
' are, in reality, on a level in the most important re-
' spects with the poorest and lowest of the human race.'

' If we may form a judgment of the spirit of Christi-
' anity from *the spirit of its author*, we must acknow-
' ledge it to be a spirit of courage and boldness.—For it
' appears, in the most incontestible manner, from the
' whole history of our Saviour's life, that, while he sup-
' ported the best of all causes, he set himself, though sin-
' gle, in a most intrepid manner, in opposition to a whole
' nation.—His first *disciples*, in like manner, discovered
' a spirit of the most active and determined courage. We
' read in the fourth chapter of the *Acts* of the Apostles,
' that when the Jewish Sanhedrim, the supreme council
' of the nation, called the Apostles Peter and John be-
' fore them, and commanded them, verse 18, *not to*
' *teach in the name of Jesus*; verse 19, *they answered*
' *and said unto them, whether it is right in the sight of*
' *God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge*
' *ye; for we cannot but speak the things we have seen*
' *and heard:* and they accordingly went out from the
' council, and preached the gospel with all boldness. And
' we read in the same chapter, that even their enemies
' were struck with admiration, when they beheld the
' firmness of their resolution: verse 13, *when the mem-*
' *bers of the council saw the boldness of Peter and John,*
' *and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant*
' *men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them,*
' *that they had been with Jesus;* that is, they perceived
' they had learned boldness and intrepidity in his school.
' If your time would allow us to trace the spirit of Chris-
' tianity, as it appeared in *the primitive Christians*, we
' should find, that persons of all ranks, sexes, and ages,
' shewed such unshaken firmness and fortitude, under
' the severest trials, even death itself, as filled their very
' enemies and persecutors with astonishment.'

' If we may judge of the spirit of the Gospel from the strain of its precepts, we must also conclude it to be a spirit of resolution and fortitude.'

' The unfeigned belief and sincere practice of the Christian religion has,' likewise, an obvious tendency to inspire zeal and courage in every virtuous cause. This will be evident, if we consider, 1st, that ' Christianity is the best preservative from all those things, which damp the vigour of the mind, and enervate its active powers ; and, 2dly, that it supplies the most powerful incitements to act every worthy part in life in the firmest and most vigorous manner.'

By guarding against base and unworthy behaviour, it will preserve the mind from being fearful and irresolute. ' Every one knows, that guilt is, in its own nature, the source of self-condemnation and of dread of deserved punishment ; that it naturally fills the countenance with shame, and the heart with terror ; and that, when the mind is under the influence of these enfeebling passions, it must be timid and dejected, and incapable either of forming or of executing any manly and worthy design. It is likewise obvious to every one, that those, who have imbibed the spirit of Christianity, will be preserved from those presumptuous sins, which strike terror into the conscience ; and, that they will have such trust in the promises of the Gospel for the pardon of their involuntary failings, as will establish them in peace of mind, and in the humble hope of the favour and acceptance of God. In this peaceful state of mind, they will be in full possession of their active powers¹²⁸, and ready

¹²⁸ Dr. Leechman's conduct through life, and on the approach of death, corresponded to the sublime views which he has drawn of the christian character. During the last six weeks of his life, when he was confined to his bed, ' he exhibited,' says his biographer, Dr. Wodrow, ' a spectacle not

• ready to exert them, whenever and wherever duty
• calls.—Again; that unmanly habits of indulgence in
• pleasure soften and enervate men's minds, and make
• them fly from every scene, where labour and fatigue,
• where activity or boldness are required, has ever been
• admitted as a certain truth.' Now these habits are strictly prohibited by Christianity.

So far from acknowledging, that Christianity furnishes powerful incitements to perform every honourable part in life in a vigorous and undaunted manner, Rousseau, on the contrary, ' alleges, that the true Christian's faith of another world, and a better life, extinguishes all concern in him for this present world, and this present life, or, at least, that it renders him incapable of any brave and courageous efforts to preserve or promote any advantages, that relate only to such a transitory state. But he has given no reason, that can convince any unprejudiced person, that a Christian, though of the most elevated and heavenly turn of mind, must have a less warm and delicate sense of the liberties, or of any of the just privileges, of mankind, or must have less zeal for the interests of his country, his family, or friends, merely on the account of his lively hopes of not of compassion or regret, but worthy of admiration, a great soul in a manner without a body; for his bodily powers were all gone, except the power of speech, and this sometimes scarcely audible. But his mind retained its wonted vigour.—When some of us could not help expressing some surprize at his singular composure and fortitude, he confessed, he had often been a coward for pain, and perhaps was so still; but added, that he never had been afraid of death. His generous and kind affections too continued to flow with their usual vigour. He entered with spirit into anything connected with the cause of religion and learning.—To the few very intimate friends, who had the happiness to converse with him on his death-bed, his mind appeared—quite transported with the unbounded and endless prospects of Divine goodness that were before him.' Life of Dr. Leechman, prefixed to his Sermons, p. 88—
90.

'another and better life beyond the grave. Besides,
'when we reflect, that a main part of the duty of a
'Christian, according to the principles of his religion,
'lies in doing good, in promoting the happiness of others
'to the utmost of his power; it is not easy to conceive,
'how his firm hopes of immortality should render him
'indifferent to his duty, and incapable of all vigorous
'and manly efforts to discharge it.'

'It seems to be a more natural conclusion, that the
'firm hopes of a future glorious life would animate the
'real Christian to discharge his duty with the utmost
'faithfulness; and, particularly, would dispose him to
'labour with the utmost vigour to do good to his bre-
'thren of mankind; though it should be at the expense
'of a transient and uncertain life, that is soon to be suc-
'ceeded by a permanent and eternal one.'

'Every one, who has attended to the finer and nobler
'workings of the human heart,—must be convinced, that
'a warm love of that moral excellence, which is the chief
'glory of the divine nature itself, earnest breathings after
'nearer approaches to the perfection of it, a lively sense
'of duty, a full conviction that the doing that duty is
'the will of God, and strong impulses of the friendly
'and public affections, are, without all doubt, the most
'powerful and commanding principles in the human
'breast. When they unite their force, and operate with
'all their strength, nothing can withstand them. If we
'attend to what passes in life, we shall see the most con-
'vincing proofs of this: for, whenever a mind, under
'the influence of these great principles, has its views fixed
'upon some great or good end, in the prosecution of
'which opposition, difficulty, or danger is foreseen, then
'holy Christian resolution exerts itself with its whole
'strength; and, indeed, becomes in a manner invincible,
'so that hardly any difficulty or danger can stand before
it.

‘ it. And we may easily conceive, how it should be so, ‘ when we reflect upon the illustrious and mighty sup- ‘ ports, which our worthy resolutions receive from the ‘ exercise of Christian faith and piety. The full as- ‘ surance of divine approbation and aid must ever inspire ‘ the soul with confidence and alacrity, in acting that part ‘ which truth and integrity require. It is impossible, ‘ even in imagination, to conceive any thing better cal- ‘ culated for emboldening the huinan mind, and support- ‘ ing its most determined resolutions, than the firm per- ‘ fusion, that the Divine administration is ever on the ‘ side of righteousness, and that the righteous man shall ‘ be most amply and gloriously rewarded for whatever he ‘ may have suffered for his adherence to it.—Conscious ‘ of his honest endeavours to do his duty, though amidst ‘ many weaknesses and infirmities, he solaces himself with ‘ the modest but triumphant hope, through the mercy of ‘ God in Jesus Christ, that all his good intentions, all his ‘ secret acts of goodness, all his silent sufferings and ‘ struggles, and all his services, are recorded, and shall ‘ be one day published, honoured, and rewarded, on the ‘ grandest of all theatres; before an assembled world. ‘ These hopes cheer and gladden, and at the same time ‘ strengthen, his heart, in the hour of danger, in the day ‘ of distress, and in the prosecution of every virtuous ‘ design.’

‘ And, wherever this superiority to the fear of man, ‘ and the fear of temporal evils and dangers, flows from ‘ the principles of the Gospel, it will be accompanied ‘ with a noble freedom and independence of soul, that ‘ can never dwell with mean and slavish principles. Men, ‘ though in the lowest station of life, who have a just ‘ sense of the dignity of huinan nature, and of those ‘ Christian virtues which dignify it, will discover, on ‘ proper occasions, a strength and greatness of mind,

' which will make them disdain every thing, that approaches in any degree to meanness, cowardice, or slavery; fear.' It may also be added, ' that a courage, derived from these principles and motives,—will be more rational and vigorous, more firm and permanent, than that which flows merely from animal spirits, from external accidents, from the love of glory, or from what the world calls a sense of honour.'

Some perhaps will object, ' that the tendency of Christianity is only to form men to a kind of passive courage or patience under sufferings ; but that it has no tendency to form them to that active courage, which distinguishes the hero from the confessor. Let it suffice to answer to this objection, that that unremitting zeal and activity, which prompted the apostle Paul, for instance, to spend thirty years in journeys by land, voyages by sea, amidst numberless difficulties, dangers, and sufferings, to propagate Christianity, would have operated in the same manner, and excited to the like indefatigable labours and efforts, if Providence had called him to defend his country, to support the rights and privileges of mankind, or to prosecute any other worthy undertaking. It seems natural to conceive, that a magnanimity and activity of mind, which were manifested in such an uniform and conspicuous manner through the whole of the apostle's life, in promoting one great cause, would have displayed themselves in a similar way, if he had been engaged in any other important cause, which reason, religion, and the good of mankind, would justify and recommend¹²⁹. '

¹²⁹ Dr. Leechman's Sermons, 1789, vol. I. p. 351—391.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON THE TRUE NATURE OF THE MILLENNIUM.

THAT men of sense and reflexion, who have not made the doctrine of THE MILLENNIUM particularly an object of their inquiries, should often have entertained it with doubt, or rejected it with boldness, is no ground of surprize. Of the writers, on the book of revelation, and the other prophecies of scripture, extremely few have had any comprehensive views on the magnitude of those improvements, which, there are just grounds for expecting, will hereafter be accomplished, with respect to the situation, the opinions, and the conduct of mankind. The mighty influence of political institutions, and the complete revolution in the state of society, which will gradually be produced by justly constructed governments, have scarceely ever been the subjects of their speculation. Hence *many of them* have been hastily led to conclude, that the great changes in favour of mankind, foretold in scripture, must either relate to a future and eternal world; or that they must point to a state of things on this globe, which will not take place, until some of the primary laws of nature shall have been suspended, and the earth shall have supernaturally received an altered form. And, indeed, I am not acquainted with *a single English author* who has written at any length on the millennium, who appears to have entertained notions, which, in my estimation, would deserve to be entitled at once correct and elevated. Such a picture of the millennial period may, however,

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I am persuaded, be drawn, as is alike rational and encouraging, alike agreeable to the predictions of scripture and to the expectations of philosophy.

Of those who have treated of the millenary period at considerable length, no writer perhaps has excited so much attention as Dr. Thomas Burnet¹. Like Milton, indeed, he possessed an imagination in a high degree fervid and adventurous, which loved to wander in paths which had never before been trodden, and to quit this world², in order to visit others, inhabited by different beings, and subject to different laws. He has accordingly erected a sublime, though false³, Theory. By dexterity in confounding the events of different periods, by the mixture of probability with fiction, by the joint aid of argument and of authority; by the allegation of a number of circumstances really foretold in the pages of prophecy, he has strongly arrested the attention, and has sometimes conquered the incredulity, of his readers. Still, however, whilst he has had many to admire, he has had but few to follow, him.

¹ This eminent Scotchman received his education at Clare Hall, in Cambridge. He was admitted there in the year 1651; but he did not publish the two first books of his *Telluris Theoria Sacra* till the year 1680, nor the two remaining books till the year 1689.

² ‘The Spheres of men’s understandings,’ says Dr. Burnet, ‘are as different, as prospects upon the earth; some stand upon a rock or a mountain, and see far round about; others are in a hollow, or in a cave, and have no prospect at all. Some men consider nothing but what is present in their temples; others extend their thoughts both to what is past, and what is future.—I know not by what good fate, my thoughts have been always fixed upon things to come, more than upon things present.’ *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, vol. II, p. 5, 179.

³ With respect to those parts of Dr. Burnet’s Theory, which relate to the laws of motion and the principles of natural philosophy, I cite the words of an able mathematician. ‘None of these wonderful effects, which he endeavours to explain, could have proceeded from the causes he assigns.’ Keill’s *Exam. of Dr. Burnet’s Theory*, 1698. Intr. p. 26.

Of Dr. Burnet's ideas, relative to the future history of the globe, the five following paragraphs contain some of the principal outlines.

When the existing state of society terminates, and the prophecies relative to the kings of the earth are about to receive their complete fulfilment; when Antichrist receives his final overthrow, and Satan is divested of the power of executing any farther plans of mischief; the period for the burning of the globe will arrive. The great agents of nature will combine to prepare the way for this great catastrophe. The work of destruction will not be difficult; nor is the mode, by which it will be accomplished, altogether inexplicable. The earth is furnished with abundant stores of nitre and sulphur, and with all the materials of the volcano and the earthquake. The antediluvian earth was regular and close in all its parts; without caverns and without mountains. But that which we inhabit contains the ruins only of what it once was: and these ruins, which, at the memorable period of the deluge, were recovered from the water, when the earth's exterior covering fell into the central abyss, are not only unequal at their surface, but within also are hollow, loose, and incompact. Innumerable, therefore, are its outlets, and it is in most places capable of ventilation, and pervious to fire. Previously also to the general conflagration, there will, it may be expected, long be a cloudless sky and a heated air: in consequence of which the springs and rivulets will be dried up; the ground will be overspread with fissures; the grass and the turf, the shrub and the forest, will be easily convertible into fuel; and the oily parts of bodies, together with the scattered portions of fire, which lie imprisoned in many hard substances, will undergo the process of separation, and in a great degree be set afloat.

At this period, and antecedently to the commencement of the millennium, Christ will descend upon earth, the lustre of the sun being veiled, and the heavens involved in gloom. On his approach, the summits of the mountains will smoke, the earth will shake, the sea will retire within its deepest recesses, the clouds will be the seat of thunder and pointed lightnings, the air will gleam with the coruscations of innumerable meteors, and, from the number, magnitude, or proximity of the comets which will be visible, the higher regions of the sky will assume a new and terrific aspect. When our Saviour, sitting in a flaming chariot, and surrounded by an infinite host of angels and arch-angels, draws near to the earth, its inhabitants will see, will tremble, will be astonished.

On an appointed signal, the destroying and the tutelary angels execute their instructions. To the care of the latter, there is reason to hope, will be intrusted virtuous manhood and upright old age, the feebleness of infancy and the innocence of childhood. The treasuries of fire in earth and in heaven are opened; and shortly the saddest spectacles, which eye can behold, present themselves on every side. The cities of the earth are in one universal blaze. Innumerable millions of either sex and of every rank sink under the agonies of death, in its most frightful forms. Rivers of sulphur rush into the sea, and encounter the fury of its waters; wreaths of fire, and pillars of smoke, are every where combined; hills are hurled into the air; and ten thousand volcanoes at once discharge their flames. By the force of one element, all the works of art, all the labours of man, all the varieties of nature, are annihilated. Whatever was distinguished by utility, or by elegance, or by magnificence, is obliterated. Where are now the powerful empires of the world, and their great Imperial cities? Where do their pillars

pillars and their trophies stand; or where is the proud inscription, or the victor's name? Fire is a cruel enemy, who makes no distinction. Rome itself, *eternal* Rome, the Empress of the world, whose dominion in ancient and modern times constitutes an ample portion of its history, is overthrown and utterly subverted, notwithstanding the depth of her foundations and the strength of her palaces. The conflagration at length reaches beyond the external shell of the earth, and grows more intense. The rocks and loftiest mountains, which have sustained the artillery of heaven for so many ages, are torn from their foundations. *Here* stood the Alps, a prodigious range of rugged mountains, which extended their arms from the shores of the ocean to the banks of the Black Sea. Now this mighty mass of stone is loosened, and melts away, as a tender cloud softens into rain. *Here* stood the African mountains, and Atlas, with his head above the clouds. *There* was frozen Caucasus, and Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Asia. And *yonder*, towards the North, stood the Riphæan hills, cloathed in ice and snow. All these are vanished, like the snow upon their summits, and swallowed up. The sea itself is gradually consumed; and the whole exterior frame of the earth is dissolved in a deluge of fire. But, whilst all the solid parts near the surface are thus reduced into a glittering orb of fluid fire; the lighter and more volatile, such as smoke, watery vapour, and the earthly particles, which the power of heat is capable of supporting, will float in the agitated air, and constitute a thick region of darkness, encompassing the flaming globe.

During the space of some years, it will remain a dreadful spectacle to the neighbouring planets; an awful monument of the divine wrath against disloyal and disobedient creatures. At length, however, the flames will
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be extinguished. At length the surrounding darkness will be dispelled. For, when the force of fire ceases to operate, the particles of earth and air and water, which fill the surrounding chaos, will, according to their different degrees of gravity, successively descend, and arrange themselves on the smooth surface of the liquified world. As accessions are thus perpetually made to it from all the heights and regions of the air, it will become by degrees firm and immoveable, will be able to support itself and a new race of inhabitants, and, being possessed of all the principles of a fruitful soil, as well for the production of animals as of plants, will want no property belonging to an habitable earth. The new orb will be level and regular; and, as the ocean will be shut up in its centre, its surface will be alike destitute of mountains and of seas.

Nor will it long remain without inhabitants; for the virtuous of mankind, and the martyrs of Jesus, and, among others, the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles, will rise from the dead, and exclusively enjoy the privileges of a prior resurrection. The face of nature will be eminently beautiful; and the earth will be endowed with spontaneous fertility. The axis of the globe will be parallel to the axis of the Ecliptic; and there will be perpetual serenity, and a perpetual spring, free from the vicissitudes of the seasons, and the inconveniences of heat and of cold. The newly created animals will be mild and tractable. The lamb and the kid will associate, on terms of familiar intimacy, with the wolf, the lion, and the leopard, who will retain no thirst for blood, no fondness for prey. The sons of the first resurrection will possess bodies similar in shape to those, which they had in their former life; but they will be superior to the attacks of disease. The new creation will be enlightened by the divine presence in an extraordinary manner. All

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evil will be extirpated. All mischievous passions will be extinguished. There will be no marriage; and, as infants will not be born, no part of their time will be occupied in the nursing of children or in the education of youth. As they will be elevated to a life of uninterrupted freedom and of joyful inactivity, day will glide after day, and year will succeed after year, in the alternate fruition of the impassioned transports of devotion and the calmer pleasures of contemplation. After having thus enjoyed a thousand years of the highest terrestrial felicity, the glories of a celestial world will dawn upon them; and they will be transported through the sky to meet our Saviour in the clouds, when he comes to visit the earth a third time, at the period of the final resurrection and the general judgment.

Without stopping to combat the peculiarities of Dr. Burnet's Theory, objections to which will spontaneously occur in the mind of the intelligent reader, I shall proceed to the farther developement of my own expectations and conjectures.

The idea of a millennium, it will perhaps be urged, is irrational, because we are told by different commentators, as by bishop Newell⁴ and Mr. Lowth⁵, that, on the arrival of this period, all earthly governments are to terminate. But of the texts, which authorise them to draw this conclusion, I am yet to be informed. That the destruction of the present European governments is predicted, I certainly am not disposed to question: but it surely does not, therefore, follow, that there are to be no governments at all. Very different was the opinion of Jurieu. 'All those vain titles,' says he, 'which now serve for ornament and pride, shall then be vanished. Brotherly love shall make all men *equal*; not that all

⁴ Vol. I. p. 492.

⁵ On Dan. VII. 26.

'distinction,

' distinction, and all dignities among men, shall cease.
 ' This kingdom is no anarchy; there shall be some to
 ' govern, and others to obey. But government shall
 ' then be without pride and insolence, without tyranny
 ' and without violence⁶.' It is Christianity, says Dr.
 Maclaine, which ' confirms by positive precepts, encou-
 ' rages by sublime promises, and enjoins, under pain of
 ' the most tremendous evils, those virtues of piety, can-
 ' dour, gratitude, temperance, and benevolence, that
 ' strengthen all the bonds of civil government'. Mr.
 Stephens, a diligent student of the apocalypse, long ago
 observed, that '*the kingdom of Christ* is not contrary to
 ' governments, powers, and authorities, purely as such;
 ' but only to governments as idolatrous, as tyrannical, as
 ' contrary to the laws of Christ⁷.' And it will shortly
 be seen, that there actually are passages in Daniel and in
 John, which lead us to expect, that governments will
 continue to exist in the millennium, though administered
 by persons of a very different character from those, who
 are at present invested with power.

The whole of the apocalypse may, says a late writer,
 ' be considered as a number of scenic pictures⁸.' Thus
 the material images, occurring at the entrance of the xxth
 chapter, are similar to those employed at the close of the
 xixth. We are there told, that the ten-horned *beast*
was taken, and with him the false prophet, and that *these were both cast alive into a lake of fire*: that the over-
 throw of the antichristian monarchies of Europe is fore-
 told in this, as well as in other passages, has already been
 seen. But the succeeding verses in ch. xx proceed a

* Vol. II. p. 379.

⁷ Lett. addressed to S. Jenyns, Esq. on his view of the Intern. Evid. of Chr. p. 123.

⁸ Calculation of the Number of the Beast, &c. p. 300.

⁹ 'The Revelation is wholly dramatical.' Daubuz, p. 154.

step farther. Another symbolic personage, *the dragon*, is there described, as appearing to St. John in the prophetic vision, and being bound with a chain, till the thousand years be fulfilled. Conformably to what was stated in ch. vi.¹⁰ and in agreement with its proper symbolic import, I observe, that *the dragon*, as it cannot here denote the tyranny of the Roman emperors, appears to be put for monarchical despotism in general.

Now 'to bind,' says Dr. Lancaster, 'is to forbid, or 'to restrain from acting.' Therefore *the binding of the dragon for a thousand prophetic years* seems manifestly to signify, that the fury of monarchical tyranny shall during that period be restrained¹¹. The angel of the vision is described (v. 1), as having not only a great chain, to bind this figurative personage, but also τὸν κλειδὸν τῆς αἰγαίου, *the key of the sea*, by means of which the symbolic sea may be shut up. 'Our translation,' says Daubuz, 'turns the whole thus, *the key of the bottomless pit*; but 'αἰγαῖος signifies always the deep or great sea, in opposition to little waters or seas¹².'

Whilst it is remarked by this able commentator, that *a key* is an emblem of that which binds and shuts up; he declares, in correspondence with a passage formerly cited from him, that *αἰγαῖος*, or *the sea*, is an established symbol for *a state of war*. That a complete stop will now be put to this unnatural state of things, is accordingly the interpretation, which he annexes to this clause of the prophecy¹³.

In the verse which follows the account of the symbolic dragon (v. 4), the prophet says, *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto*

¹⁰ In p. 75—77.

¹¹ In the symbolic diction of prophecy a 'chain' signifies hindrance from action. So. Artemidorus, lib. III. c. 35.' Dr. Lancaster,

¹² P. 397.

¹³ See Daubuz, p. 917.

them: and I saw the souls of them, that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived¹⁴ and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

After observing from Dr. Lancaster, that a throne is the symbol of government or power, I shall again cite the first clause of the verse, as translated by Mr. Wakefield: *and I saw thrones, to the sitters on which judgment was given.* ‘What can this mean,’ says Dr. Lightfoot, ‘but power and authority to be magistrates and judges.¹⁵’ To the same purport Mr. Lowman. This ‘figurative description seems to intimate order and government in this kingdom of Christ, that some were to have judgment given unto them, or to be raised to the authority of magistrates in it. This, as all other governments, was to be made up of governors and governed.’ *Judgment was given unto them.* ‘By judgment,’ says Vitringa, ‘here without doubt is understood the office and dignity of a judge. John hath imitated the expression of Daniel, who says, *the judgment sat*¹⁶: i. e. judges were invested with the power of pronouncing sentence, and adorned with the dignity and office of judges.—But judgment involves and carries with it the idea of government, as De Launay has very well observed on this place; for to judge in the style of the Old Testament is to govern.’ Who the persons are, who hereafter shall govern, is not, however, stated by St. John; and the reason is this, says Vitringa: he expected, that his readers would compare what he says with the parallel place in Daniel, from

¹⁴ Mr. Wakefield translates, *and they came to life.*

¹⁵ Vol. II. p. 1058.

¹⁶ VII. 10.

whom we learn, that government will at length be administered by men of religion and of probity.

The parallel places occur in ch. vii. Some of them have already been brought forward, and shall not be repeated; but verses 18 and 22 have not yet been alleged. That *the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever*, is the declaration of Daniel in v. 18; and in v. 22 he says, *judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came, that the saints possessed the kingdom*. Still more perspicuous is v. 27, where it is said, that *DOMINION shall be given unto the people of the saints of the most High*. At length Europe, and afterwards the world at large, will be governed and inhabited by men of pure morals and uncorrupted Christianity. Such at least will be the character of a decided majority. To these passages of Daniel St. Paul, says Vitrina, manifestly refers, where he says, *do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world*¹⁷. That is, says Dr. Lightfoot, ‘know ye not, ‘that there shall be a Christian magistracy?’ This is probably the true interpretation: but what particular period, and what description of persons, does the reader conceive, the doctor regards as here designated by the apostle?—The princes and other men in power, who have plundered, or governed, the European world for these last fourteen or fifteen centuries¹⁸!

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¹⁷ 1. Cor. VI. 2.

¹⁸ See Lightfoot's Works, vol. II. p. 1058. This is from a complementary sermon preached at the Hertford-Assizes. A passage or two from it may not be unentertaining. ‘And now, my Lords and Gentlemen, ‘you may see your own picture in the glass of the text; for you are of ‘the number of those of whom it speaketh. In it, you may see yourselves, ‘imbued, commissioned, and your work put into your hands.’ A little farther he asks, ‘what sober man does or can deny, kingship and ‘magistracy to be of Christ's ordaining;’ but he discreetly declares himself

In the xith chapter of the apocalypse we peruse the account of the figurative resurrection of the inhabitants belonging to the *Tenth Part* of the symbolic city. In ch. xx. we read of the resurrection of those, who had been oppressed and persecuted by the beast¹⁹, which description differs from the other, in being of a general kind, and unrestricted to any particular country. That this also is figurative, Dr. Whitby has largely, and, in my opinion, decisively proved. I repeat the words of St. John, *And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ A THOUSAND YEARS.*

It has, says Mr. Lowman, been correctly observed, ‘that all these expressions may very well be understood in a figurative sense. *The souls of them, which were*

unwilling, to undervalue the judgment of any in the congregation so far, as to think, this great and important truth needs any proof, to him.’ In his catalogue of the principal gospel-mercies, he accordingly omits not to insert Christian kings and rulers; and, in evidence of the fact, appeals to that patriotic prince and pious Christian, Charles II; who accordingly, with exquisite propriety, has been recently placed (in a well-executed statue), in the centre of the Royal Exchange, as at once an apt specimen of the past kings of England, and an exemplary model for their future imitation. ‘We need not,’ says Dr. Lightfoot, ‘go far for proof of this.—The universal joy and acclamations of all the nation, upon the happy restoring of his sacred majesty, speaks the sense and at testation of the whole nation, nay of the three nations, unto the truth, and their sensibleness of this mercy. The shout of a king, of a most christian king, was among them.’ But, in justice to this celebrated rabbinical doctor, it should be observed, that this discourse was preached in 1660, the year of Charles’s elevation to the throne.

¹⁹ Johnston of Holywood, speaking of these two passages, and against the literal resurrection of the martyrs, asks, whether it is ‘not contrary to all the rules of just criticism, to understand two similar descriptions in the same book, in opposite, or even not in similar senses?’

‘beheaded

'beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and which had not worshipped the beast, may easily, according to the manner of prophetic language, signify persons of like spirit and temper with them; of like faith, patience, constancy, and zeal.—It is a very easy and natural figure, as well as very common in this book of prophecy, to describe persons by the names of such, whose tempers and characters they imitate and follow. Thus the names of *Sodom*, *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, are so often ascribed to Rome, on account she nearly resembled them in corruption, pride, and cruelty.' 'The true meaning of this symbolical representation,' says Dr. Johnston of Holywood; 'is this: at that period, the world shall be peopled with men of the same spirit and character, with the real martyrs of Christ; with men, who, like them, shall call no man on earth master in matters of religion; who, free from the fetters of superstition and idolatry, and regarding the sacred rights of conscience, shall regulate their faith, worship, and conduct, by the infallible standard of the word of God. Men of this character shall in succession live on earth, and enjoy a state of great purity and joy.' The martyrs may also be said to live and reign with Christ, 'on account of the very high but unsuperstitious respect, which the inhabitants of that age shall pay to their memories, and the warm gratitude, which they shall feel for those good and undaunted men, who, adhering to the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, at the expence of their fame, fortunes, liberty and lives, were the intelligent and voluntary instruments, in the hand of God, of transmitting to them—that divine religion, which they enjoy in such purity, peace, and plenty.' With respect to the prophet's expression, says Mr. Lowman, that they shall *reign with Christ*, it 'may well be understood in a figurative sense, as we are said to be *crucified with Christ*,

* Christ, and to live with him; or as Christ himself is said to live in us, Gal. ii. 20.'

Without citing any more passages from the xxth chapter of the apocalypse, or alleging any more extracts illustrative of the words which were last quoted, I shall refer those, who may be disposed minutely to examine this part of the prophecy, to Lowman and Johnston, to Brenius²⁰, Vitringa, and Whitby, whose opinions on the figurative import of this prediction coincide, and are expressed at considerable length: and I shall here only add what has already been stated²¹, that a symbolic resurrection, according to the Old Testament, and to the Oriental Oneirocritics, ' signifies a recovery of such rights and liberties as have been taken away²². '

From the xxth chapter of the apocalypse, I pass on to the first verse of the succeeding chapter, which contains symbols of a well-known import, and is thus expressed: *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea*²³.

Previously to entering into an inquiry on the signification of the several symbols, we are struck with the general air of this passage as expressive and beautiful. A remark of the celebrated Crellius upon it may with this view be quoted. ' If,' says he, ' after the most severe

²⁰ In Apoc. and in his treatise *De Regno Eccl. Glor.* P. 1. c. 10.

²¹ See p. 121—123.

²² Dr. Lancaster. Mat. Henry, in agreement with this, says, that the 4th verse of the xxth ch. of the apocalypse, if figuratively interpreted, signifies, ' they were in a civil and political sense dead, and had a political resurrection; their liberties and privileges were revived and restored.'

²³ That this passage is to be figuratively understood, and applied to the future state of the world, has long been a received opinion. Among other early writers, who maintained it, and who might be specified, were Joachim of Calabria in the twelfth, and Ubertius in the fourteenth, century.

' servitude, by which the human race has been oppressed, golden liberty should follow; if, after the thickest darkness of ignorance, the clearest light of truth should arise; if, after a mighty contest, and calamities not to be calculated, great joy and a most happy state of mankind should succeed; then the face of all things will appear changed, and, whilst before they seemed to mourn, they will afterwards appear to smile, so that *the heaven and the earth* will seem to have undergone a change, and to have assumed a different countenance²⁴.

' *The earth*, it has been observed, (I am quoting the words of Sir Isaac Newton) signifies 'the inferior people²⁵;' and the reason, as assigned by Dr. Lancaster, is this, 'In the symbolical language, the natural world represents the political: the heaven, sun, and luminaries, represent the governing part, and consequently *the earth* must represent the part governed, submitting, and inferior.' Of this passage the meaning is plain and unequivocal. *The old heaven*, the old governments, are removed away; and, what is the natural consequence of this, the old earth also passes away, i. e. the great body of the people, which were involved in ignorance, penury, and wretchedness, are gradually changed, and, at length, succeeded by those of a far different character²⁶. And as the latter change cannot be accomplished without a wise system of education be-

²⁴ Crellii Opera, 1656, vol. II. p. 373.

²⁵ P. 16. See the same observation in Mede, p. 761; and in Vitringa in Apoc. VI. 14.

²⁶ That *the earth* is a symbol, having two significations, has before been remarked. The Fordid and antichristian part of mankind it sometimes signifies. Which of these meanings is to be chosen, the context, therefore, must, in every case, determine. However, at the period spoken of in this passage, the symbolic earth will pass away in both senses.

ing adopted, this is necessarily presupposed. So clear does the meaning of this interesting verse appear to be, that I shall, perhaps, be charged with the unnecessary introduction of the following quotation. It is, however, from a writer of very high authority. ‘*The old heaven and earth*,’ says Daubuz, ‘are removed to make way to a new heaven and new earth, that is, to a NEW GOVERNMENT²⁷ and a NEW PEOPLE²⁸, as we have shewn before these symbols signify. Now I say, that the removal of the *old heaven and earth*, and the introduction of the *new heaven and earth*, are symbols of a prophecy, which has not its accomplishment in a sudden revolution, or moment, but in progress of time.—

When the Holy Ghost represents any thing by some single and entire sign or symbol, it is most usual and proper to do it in its full extent and entire settlement: So that this does not exclude the beginnings thereof, whilst it seems not perfect, but supposes them.’ Does there not, then, seem reason to conclude, that the Revolution in the northern continent of America is a beginning of the *new symbolic heaven* and the *new symbolic earth*; and that that of France, when it shall rise superior to the intrigues and turbulence of domestic factions, and produce its genuine effects, under the mild influence of peace, and amid the consciousness of national security, will, at length, deserve to be viewed in

²⁷ That the reader may be the more certain of this interpretation, I refer him to the following passages in the book of Revelation, where the word *heaven* occurs, to ch. VI. 13; 14; VIII. 10; IX. 1; XI. 12; XII. 1, 4, 7, 8; XIII. 13; XVI. 21; and XIX. 17. That in all these places it has a symbolic and political sense, and refers to the government in the state, may be seen in Daubuz. This, indeed, through the ancient world, was the established acceptation of this symbol; and this is the import annexed to it in the Oriental oneirocritics.

²⁸ The words of Isaiah, *and the earth shall remove out of her place*, cited in p. 446 and 448, have a similar import.

the same favourable light? Faint is the dawn, which ushers in the day, and often deformed by dense and widely extended mists. So also, in almost every human good, of a complicate and extensive kind, the beginnings are necessarily defective, and often clouded by a large mixture of evil. They do not, however, on that account, cease to be highly valuable; and to him, who turns his eye from the present scene of momentary good or evil, and traces effects from their causes, they do not, on that account, cease to be a ground of congratulation and rejoicing.

But I return to Daubuz. ‘*And there was no more sea.*’ The sea²⁹, as has been frequently observed before, signifies multitudes in commotion and war.—Thus this symbol signifies here, that in this *new heaven and earth*, or *kingdom of Jesus Christ* now completed, there shall be no tyranny, oppression, violence, war, shedding of blood, or any other turbulent wickedness.’

The predictions of the Jewish and the Christian prophets mutually illustrate each other. Leaving, therefore, for the present, those which occur in the book of revelation, I shall pass on to some of those, which are found in the Old Testament, and delineate in perspicuous or in glowing language the same happy period.

From the concluding chapter of Joel a passage has already been quoted³⁰, in which it is foretold, that the symbolic *sun*, and *moon*, and *stars* shall be darkened; and I now give a part of the verse which follows, as explained by Dr. Wells. ‘*And it shall come to pass in*

²⁹ The expression is plainly symbolic: and, not to mention the extreme improbability of the *sea* in a literal sense being annihilated, or disappearing, at the commencement of the millennium, we read of it (XX. 13) as long afterwards existing, even at the *Day of Judgment*, and as then giving up the dead which were in it.

³⁰ See p. 302, 303, 583, 584.

* that

' that day, or during the happy state of the millennium, ' the saints on earth shall enjoy the greatest plenty of all ' things requisite to this life, insomuch that the vines ' even on the mountains shall yield such plenty of wine ' yearly, that it may be said, *the mountains shall* in a ' manner *drop down new wine* yearly, and the cattle that ' feed even on the hills shall give so much milk, that it ' may be said that *the hills flow with milk*³¹.' To the same purpose speaks Mr. Lowth.

In a similar strain is one of the concluding verses of the prophet Amos, which verses, says Mr. Lowth, ' ought to be understood of the happy state of the millennium.' *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt*³². Here also I cite the paraphrase of Dr. Wells. '*Behold the days of the millennium or reign of Christ and his saints on earth come, saith the Lord, when there shall be such plenty, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, i. e. they shall not get in all their harvest, till just before it be time to plow again for the next year; and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed, i. e. by the time they have sown the winter corn seed, their vintage shall be ready: and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt*³³, or flow with milk.'

Laetantius, having these passages among others in his eye, and interpreting them according to the letter, says, ' the earth will open its fertility, and produce fruits spontaneously and in the greatest abundance; the rocks of

³¹ III. 18.³² IX. 13.

³³ This word is, however, susceptible of a different interpretation. The Chaldee Paraphrase, the Septuagint, and Vulgar Latin, understand the Hebrew verb, translated *melt*, of being cultivated, the stony ground being made softer by plowing and manuring.' Mr. Lowth.

' the mountains will sweat with honey ; wines will run down in rivulets ; and the rivers will flow with milk. ' In short, the world itself will rejoice, and the whole face of nature be glad.—Lions and calves will stand together at the stall : the wolf will not seize upon the sheep, nor the dog follow the chace : hawks and eagles will be come harmless, and the infant will play with the serpent.³⁴' The rhetorician of Nicomedia, having uttered these and similar expectations, then quotes those exquisite lines of the Roman poet, which follow, as if impressed with the belief of their future literal accomplishment.

Cedet et ipse mari vector ; nec nautica pinus
 Mutabit merces ; omnis feret omnia tellus.
 Non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem.
 Robustus quoque jam tauris juga solvet arator.
 Tunc etiam molli flavescat campus arista ;
 Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva ;
 Et duræ quercus sudabunt roscida mella.
 Nec varios discet mentiri lana colores ;
 Ipse sed in pratis aries jam suave rubentis
 Murice, jam croceo mutabit vellera luto.
 Sponte sua sandyx pascentes vestiet agnos.
 Ipsæ lacte domum referent distenta capellæ
 Ubera ; nec magnos metuent armenta leones.

Though the reader is doubtless of opinion, that Lactantius has wandered sufficiently far from probability ; yet he will soon see, that, upon this very subject, and by an earlier writer, he has been far out-stripped in the marvellous, Irenæus assures us, that ' the days shall come, ' in which there will be vines, each bearing ten thousand branches ; and on every one of these branches there will be ten thousand lesser branches ; and on every

³⁴ Lib. VII, c. 24.

' one of these ten thousand twigs; and on every one of
 ' these twigs ten thousand clusters of grapes; and on
 ' each separate cluster ten thousand grapes; and every
 ' one of these grapes, when pressed, will yield twenty
 ' five metretæ³⁵ of wine. And when any one shall take
 ' hold of one of these sacred boughs, another will cry out,
 ' I am a better bunch, take me, by my means bless the
 ' Lord³⁶.'

But, though there is no reason for believing, that plants and fruit-trees will become supernaturally prolific; yet it may justly be expected, that the arts of agriculture and gardening will be improved beyond the conception of present times; and that, in consequence, all the more valuable productions of the vegetable world will surpass such as are now cultivated, with respect to beauty or flavour, size or quantity.

By Micah also the arrival of this happy period is foretold. *In the last days it shall come to pass*, says the prophet, that the strong nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it³⁷. Were there no prediction at all in the prophets of the destruction of the antichristian monarchies that now exist, from this single passage of Micah it might, I think, safely be inferred. Whilst they subsist, is it possible, that wars should cease throughout the world?

'That tranquility and security, that mildness, humanity, and concord, which will hereafter flow from the amended

³⁵ That is, says Dr. Whitby (on the Mill. ch. I.), according to the most moderate computation, 275 gallons.

³⁶ Lib. V. c. 32.

³⁷ IV. 1. 2. 4.

morals of mankind, are beautifully represented by the evangelical prophet, when he says (xi, 6), that *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 a little child shall lead them*³⁸. Lest any one, says Vitringa, should stupidly annex to this a literal acceptation, the prophet has himself supplied us with a key for interpreting it³⁹, adding immediately after in v. 9. *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain*⁴⁰; *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

The lxvth chapter also of Isaiah relates not only to the future improved state of the Jewish nation, but also to the millennium⁴¹ and the state of the world in general. That the conclusion of it paints in the most beautiful and in the strongest colours the felicity of future times, and their exemption from despotism and from war, the following extracts from that part of the chapter will shew.
Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former ones they shall not remember, nor shall they come into their minds any more: but they shall rejoice and exult in the age to come, which I create.—No more shall there be an infant short-lived; nor an old man who shall not have fulfilled his days: for he, who shall die at a hundred years, shall die a boy; and the sinner, who shall die at a hundred years, shall be deemed accursed. And they shall build houses, and shall inhabit them: and they shall plant vineyards, and shall eat the fruits of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not

³⁸ Among the early commentators, who have observed that these words are to be figuratively understood, are Grotius, Munsterus, and Forerius.

³⁹ See the same observation in Mr. Lowth in loc.

⁴⁰ ‘That is’, says Dr. Lancaster, ‘in all the kingdom of the Messiah, which shall then reach all over the world.’

⁴¹ See this observed by Mr. Lowth, Mat. Henry, Dr. Wells, and Vitringa.

plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree, shall be the days of my people: and they shall wear out the works of their own hands. My chosen shall not labour in vain; nor shall they generate a short-lived race.—The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; and the lion shall eat straw as the ox: but, as for the serpent, dust shall be his food. They shall not hurt, nor shall they destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah⁴².

A few observations, illustrative of this important passage, it will be proper to add.

As the prophet employs the word *chosen*, it may not be inexpedient to introduce the following extract from Mr. Taylor of Norwich. ‘ The state, membership, ‘ privileges, honours, and relations, of professed Christians, particularly of believing Gentiles, are expressed ‘ by the same phrases with those of the ancient Jewish ‘ church; and, therefore, unless we admit a very strange ‘ abuse of words, must convey the same general ideas of ‘ our present state, membership, privileges, honours, ‘ and relations to God, as we are professed Christians. ‘ For instance, as God chose his ancient people the Jews, ‘ and they were his chosen and elect; so now the whole ‘ body of Christians, Gentiles as well as Jews, are admitted to the same honour; as they are selected from ‘ the rest of the world, and taken into the kingdom of ‘ God, for the knowledge, worship, and obedience of ‘ God, in hopes of eternal life⁴³. ’

As

⁴² LXX. 17, 18, 20, 22, 21, 23, 25. This is from Mr. Dodson’s amended Translation of Isaiah, which, in these verses, varies but little from that of bp. Lowth.

⁴³ Among other similar passages, which Mr. Taylor cites as illustrative of the assertion in the text, are the following. ‘ Rom. VIII, 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s ELECT? Eph. I. 4. According as he hath CHOSEN us (Gentiles, chap. II. 11) in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Col. III. 12, Put on, therefore, as the ELECT of God, holy and beloved, bowels of

As this world will still be a state of trial, it will consequently be still chequered with some shades of vice and some remains of infelicity. Accordingly Isaiah says, *and the sinner, who shall die at a hundred years, shall be deemed accursed.*

Dr. Jolin Edwards, a learned divine of the English church, after declaring, that it ‘is not to be doubted of, ‘that there shall be bodily strength and vigour, in an unusual degree’, to those who live in the millenary period, adds, ‘the people of those times shall be long-lived: which I gather from Isai. lxv. 20. *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days*⁴⁴.’ That is, says Mr. Lowth, ‘from thence, or from that time, there shall be no untimely deaths, either of infants who are abortive, or never grow up to man’s estate; or of old men who do not live out the full term of life⁴⁵.’ This proposition, it appears reasonable to understand, as being a general one, and liable to exceptions; for, though premature deaths may hereafter be of rare occurrence, the law of our nature forbids that they should not sometimes happen.

The clause, which occurs in the subsequent part of the same verse, does, however, when viewed through the medium of our common translation, strongly countenance the idea, that this law *will* be suspended, and that the human frame will hereafter be differently constituted. But this medium is, I apprehend, false and

‘of mercies, 2. Thes. II. 13. *But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth Tit. I. 1. Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect.*’ Taylor on the Romans, Intr. p. 31.

⁴⁴ Hist. of all the Dispens. of Relig. vol. II. p. 743.

⁴⁵ See the same observation in Dr. Wells.

fallacious. That *the child shall die an hundred years old*⁴⁶, is the incoherent language of the prophet, according to that version. That *he, who shall die at a hundred years, shall die a boy*, is the improved translation of Mr. Dodson⁴⁷. But the words, I conceive, should have been rendered, *he, who shall die at a hundred years, shall die a young man*⁴⁸; and the meaning is, so great will be the age to which men will frequently attain in the millennial period, that he, who dies at a hundred years old, will be regarded but as a person arrived at maturity⁴⁹. The expressions of the Jewish prophets, it may here be remarked, are not always to be understood in their strict and literal sense. Thus the prediction in the concluding verse of the present chapter, that *the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, that the lion shall eat straw as the ox, and that, as for the serpent, dust shall*

⁴⁶ The following is a method of evading the difficulty, but it is not satisfactory. 'Some,' says Mat. Henry, 'understand it of children, that in their childhood are so eminent for wisdom and grace, and by death nipped in their blossom, that they may be said to die a hundred years old.' More rational is the explanation of Vatablus. The expression is an hyperbole, and it signifies, that mankind shall live very long.

⁴⁷ Similar is bishop Lowth's translation. *For he, that dieth at an hundred years, shall die a boy.*

⁴⁸ That the Hebrew word, which occurs in this place, may be translated *a young man*, can admit of no doubt. It is so translated, in our common version, in ch. XIII of Isaiah, v. 18, in ch. II of Zachariah, v. 4, and in various other books of the Old Testament. To the two spies, who were sent by Joshua into Jericho, this word is applied (Josh. VI. 23); and it is given as a denomination of the patriarch Joseph, at a time when he was 28 years of age (Gen. XLI. 12). The same Hebrew word, in the XIXth ch. of the book of Judges, when in the feminine gender, is used six times as the appellation of a woman, who was a concubine; and (Ruth. II. 5.) it is annexed to the name of Ruth, who had been married at least ten years, and at the period spoken of was a widow.

⁴⁹ Should the work, alluded to in the advertisement, be published, I shall there enter with some minuteness into the causes, which, it may be expected, will hereafter be productive of great health and uncommon longevity.

be his food, is explained by the ablest commentators with some latitude of interpretation. The words are neither susceptible of a literal explication, nor do they, separately considered, contain any precise symbolic signification. They are exactly of the same import as a parallel passage in the xith chapter of the evangelical prophet, which has been recently cited.

The longevity of those, who are to live in the millenary period, is in two other verses alluded to. They *shall not*, it is said, *generate a short-lived race*, but their *days shall resemble the days of a tree*. And this important circumstance, the reader will shortly see, has been declared to be the language of prophecy, by those who have commented on the book of Revelation, as well as by those who have illustrated Isaiah.

Of the industrious part of mankind, at present, only a small part receive an adequate and reasonable compensation for their labours. In rewarding the exertions of ingenuity or of diligence, no laws of proportion are observed, no rules of equity are attended to. In this respect, society will gradually assume a new aspect. Those of whom the prophet speaks are *not to labour in vain*, but they are to *wear out the works of their own hands*. Those who *build*, and those who *plant*, are alike to enjoy the benefit of their own industry. Mankind will mutually labour for each other's benefit, and to supply each other's wants. No longer will a decided majority of them, as is now the case in almost all the civilized countries of the globe, lead a life at once of indigence and of toil; whilst a few individuals, in every district, riot in luxury and in splendor, and, with systematic prodigality, consume upon themselves or their families the labours of hundreds and of thousands.

After having introduced remarks on the xxth and xxist chapters of the apocalypse, I shall now go back

to ch. vii. Nor need the reader wonder at this; for it has already been stated, and Mr. Mede has proved it beyond all controversy, that the apocalypse contains a number of contemporaneous predictions. And it is the observation of bp. Newton, that the latter part of it, comprising the eleven last chapters, ‘is designed as a supplement to the former, to complete what was deficient, to explain what was dubious, to illustrate what was obscure’.⁵⁰

The complete overthrow of all antichristian rule and authority the prophet had described at the close of ch. vi. in his account of the sixth seal. It is, therefore, very natural, and conformable to the method of all the prophets, that, in the following chapter, he should pass on to the description of the subsequent state of the world and of the church. The representation which he there gives is figurative throughout, in a high degree sublime, and is strongly expressive of the great holiness and felicity, which will hereafter prevail.

After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.—And one of the elders answered⁵¹, saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes?

⁵⁰ Vol. III. p. 188.

⁵¹ It is the remark of Beza on this verse, that ‘he who begins speaking is, in the Evangelists, often in this manner said απεργινεται.’ But since the verb to answer has no such acceptation in English, to say that one of the elders *answered*, though what follows is not a reply to any question, is a translation, manifestly awkward, and calculated to embarrass the unlearned reader. That αποχρινεται in various places of the New Testament, signifies simply to speak, or to begin to speak, is a point on which the critics are agreed. The words in the Greek are, καὶ απεργινέται εἰς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, οὐαῖς μοι. Beza’s translation is, *tum me compellavit unus ex illis senioribus, ut ens m. hi;* that of Mr. Wakefield’s, like Castalio’s, is more brief, *and one of the elders said unto me.* Among the places which call for a like alteration are Mat. XI. 25, and XXVIII. 5.

And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat⁵². Bp. Newton, in agreement with his explication of the sixth seal which has already been noticed, found himself under the necessity of declaring, that this ‘is a description of the state of the church in Constantine’s time, of the peace and protection it should enjoy under the civil powers, and of the great accession that should be made to it both of Jews and Gentiles.’ That it is to be understood of a state of things in this world, I am perfectly ready to admit; and acknowledge the force of Vitringa’s observation, that we are admonished of this, because the expressions employed here are perfectly similar to those, by which the Hebrew prophets had formerly painted the future condition of the Christian church⁵³. But no past period of time corresponds

⁵² V. 9, 13—16.

⁵³ See this argument enforced, and passages from the Hebrew prophets and the apocalypse contrasted together in opposite columns, by Mr. Taylor of Portsmouth, in his *Thoughts on the Grand Apostacy*, p. 195—205. As some persons, however, from the loftiness of the language, may possibly be disposed to doubt, whether the passage is not rather applicable to heaven than to earth; I will, for their satisfaction, enumerate some of the most eminent of the commentators, who have conceived it to be descriptive of the state of mankind in the latter. Such are Grotius and Hammond, Mede, More, and Vitringa, Goodwin (p. 55), Whiston, and Juieu, Pyle, Daubuz, and Sir I. Newton (p. 313). But if I am asked, whether there be no passage in the book of Revelation, indisputably announcing a future judgment or a future state, I appeal to the following verses (v. 13 and 14) in ch. XX. ‘And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life:

responds to the lofty symbols of the apostle. To the fourth century, when the foundation of every future corruption was laid, they are doubtless inapplicable. Surely the prelate's adaptation of the prophetic emblems is altogether forced and unnatural; and, conceiving it to be the necessary consequence of his interpretation of the sixth seal, I cannot but regard it as a very strong argument against that interpretation, in addition to those by which it has already been combated.

To prove that the passage under consideration cannot relate to the time of Constantine, I will quote a passage from the bishop of Bristol's own work against himself. 'After Constantine, the church,' says the prelate rather unguardedly in another place, 'was soon shaken and disturbed by heresies and schisms, by the incursions and devastations of the northern nations, by the conquering arms and prevailing imposture of the Saracens and afterwards of the Turks, by the corruption, idolatry, and wickedness, the usurpation, tyranny, and cruelty, of the church of Rome⁵⁴.' Yet, notwithstanding all this, the learned prelate hesitates not to maintain, that in the time of Constantine commenced that happy period, spoken of by the prophet, when the Christian church, consisting of men of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, but God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

That this prophecy refers to the period, which will succeed the downfall of antichrist, is so obvious, that the

Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (that is, the grave) gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

⁵⁴ Vol. III. p. 316.

opinion has obtained not only the suffrage of many learned moderns; but may claim the sanction of the most remote antiquity. It may be found in the writings of that celebrated African Father, Tertullian, who flourished at the conclusion of the second century⁵⁵.

That vast assemblage of persons, of whom the prophet has drawn this symbolic picture, appear *arrayed in robes*, which have been *washed*, and are of a pure *white*. *Palms* also they have *in their hands*. Now ‘a garment,’ says Vitrunga, ‘is the symbol of the condition or state in which any one is.’ The priests who sacrificed, as well among the Pagans as the Jews, were clothed in white. ‘Hence,’ says Dr. Lancaster, ‘white garments, as being worn upon solemn festivals, were the tokens of joy and pleasure; as in Eccl. IX. 8;—to be clothed in white signifies in the prophetic style to be prosperous, and successful, and victorious;’ and ‘to put on clean garments after washing signifies freedom from oppression, care, and evil, together with honour and joy.’ Civil liberty, and religious freedom, at length attain an universal prevalence; and the great body of Christians are emancipated from the shackles of usurped authority and from the pressure of persecuting laws. From Dr. Lancaster it may also be added, that ‘branches of palm trees are the symbol of joy after a victory, attended with antecedent sufferings;’ and that ‘hunger and thirst are the symbols of affliction.’ Great had been the sufferings of genuine Christians and of the true friends of mankind; but, at length, they are every where victorious over their enemies.

They shall, it is said, *serve God in his temple*, i. e. says Vitrunga, ‘in the communion of the true church⁵⁶’

⁵⁵ Scorpiae, adversus Gnosticos, c. XII.

⁵⁶ To the same purpose Dr. More says, ‘the temple signifies the church in its pure condition.’ *Myst. of Godliness*, p. 190.

On the clause, occurring in the next verse, *neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat*, two or three suggestions may be proposed. Brief as it is, but containing a well known symbol⁵⁷, does it not directly intimate, that the monarchies of the world, as such, are far from having a salutary operation ; that, instead of shining with a friendly warmth, they burn with a pernicious heat ? Will it not by some be thought to imply, that the deliverance of mankind from regal oppression is one of the prime benefits, which they will enjoy in the millenary state ? Since it declares, that no *heat* shall *light* upon *them*, perhaps too it may be pronounced to be of a yet larger signification ; and to contain an assurance, that neither monarchs will continue to be a bane to human happiness, nor any other description of men whatever will be armed with a degree of authority, detrimental to the true interest of society.

Immediately after this animating description of the *me-liorated condition of mankind*, which is represented as already commenced at the close of the sixth seal, the seventh seal is opened⁵⁸, a period of great length, but of which the prophet has not defined the extent. That the world will remain in the same happy state of undisturbed tranquillity during the whole of that time, is the great truth which is to be deduced from the account of it⁵⁹. Short as this account is, (and there needed not to

⁵⁷ Vitrunga has not omitted to remind the reader of this verse, that by *the sun* the princes of the world are to be understood.

⁵⁸ VIII. 1.

⁵⁹ See this explanation of the seventh seal proved at large in Vitrunga, though, indeed, he seems to have understood it of the universal Christian church, rather than of the world at large. Consult also Dobuz, p. 346, 347. That the last of the seals is predictive of the peace and prosperity of the church, after the fall of Antichrist, was long ago observed by different commentators, and among others by the Venerable Bede, who flourished in this country as early as the seventh century.

be any new exhibition of hieroglyphic emblems, since things were to continue as they were before represented to the apostle,) it conveys information, not only of the first importance, but altogether differing from the past experience of mankind. Hitherto the church of Christ, ever since its foundation, has been exposed to fluctuations and to calamities. Hitherto the progress of society has been often obstructed: has been sometimes retrograde. Hitherto no period of time has been exempt from the shock of revolutions and the prosecution of hostilities.

The words, which close the prophetic description that was last cited, are these (vii. 17), *and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*; and this very expression occurs in ch. xxi, where St. John has given a striking representation of the millennium, a presumption that both the descriptions are designed for the same period.

With respect, however, to the latter of the two descriptions it may be noted, previously to the allegation of the three principal verses, that it corresponds not in all respects to the introductory stage of that period, but to the state of things, which will, after a considerable period has elapsed, be established. The *new symbolic heaven* and *new symbolic earth* the prophet announces in the first verse of ch. xxi, and the passage has been already produced. The 3d, 4th, and 5th verses are thus expressed: *And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them*⁶⁰, *and they shall be his people. And God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things*

⁶⁰ ‘I will dwell among you, not otherwise than if I had fixed my tabernacle in the midst of you.’ Crellius in loc.

*are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, write: for these words are true and faithful*⁶¹.

'Because of this felicity,' says Peganus, 'all former troubles will be forgotten. There will be no more plagues, nor shall the Christians die an *untimely death*; but, after a long life, by a gentle change be translated into the life to come.' By the expression, *there shall be no more death*, is signified, says Crellius, that there will be no more violent deaths; for those few, which shall happen, will not be worthy of being included in the general account. 'In the Millennium,' says Daubuz on this verse, 'they shall enjoy long the happy fruits of their holiness, and exchange, as it were insensibly, and without sorrow, their mortal flesh with a speedy hope and assurance to receive for it an immortal state of life'⁶²; and 'there shall be no *anticipated* deaths before the usual course of nature.'

Of the causes, which, it may be expected, will, at a future distant period, contribute to prevent a sudden and premature dissolution, it is not difficult to anticipate some of the principal.

Human life will rarely be endangered by the poisons of the mineral, vegetable, or animal kingdoms; malignity will not administer them; accident will seldom stumble upon them; and, when they do touch the skin,

⁶¹ Of this verse the former part implies, that this will be a state of things on earth, which was once in a far different condition; the latter, that it will assuredly arrive.

⁶² In v. 7 it is declared, *he that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* On this verse Peganus writes, 'the combat with flesh and blood, it is true, shall not cease, but the victory to those, who are in earnest, shall not be painful.' Temptations there will be; but he who conquers them will enjoy not merely the happiness, which this world can impart, but that richer and more permanent inheritance, reserved for him in a higher sphere of action.

or enter the stomach, their fatal effects will generally be counteracted by the application of antidotes, which time has discovered to be little less than infallible. Beasts of prey will be extirpated; or they will be awed by the neighbourhood and by the power of man. The inhabitants of every city will sleep, unapprehensive of the dagger of the assassin; such as travel the public, and such as pursue the most private, road, will alike be secure from the lawless assault of the robber; and those, who traverse the trackless ocean, will navigate their ships, and conduct their traffic, without recurring to any measures of defence against the desperate enterprizes of the pirate. Capital punishments will be annulled. Maxims of false honour will no longer give birth to duelling, nor despair to suicide. Men will not be sacrificed, as obstinate heretics, or as expiatory victims, at the suggestion of the bigot or the fanatic. From successive improvements in the structure and the management of ships; from a more complete and accurate knowledge of seas, and rocks, and winds; from the practical precautions suggested by the great advances, which will doubtless be made in electricity; as well as from the ideas, which will generally prevail of the high value to be set on human life, and the criminality of a wanton exposure of it to the hazard of destruction; a hope may not irrationally be entertained, that the fury of the tempest will be disarmed of half its force, that the lightning will lose much of its terrors, and that, in consequence, the relics of ship-wrecked vessels will scarcely ever be cast even upon the most dangerous or the most commercial shores. The torch of civil dissension and of domestic treason will be extinguished; and, the causes of the hostility of nations being annihilated, or their interfering interests being adjusted by mutual concession and amicable negotiation, no longer will thousands of the human race be collected together

gether to slaughter each other, upon the field of battle, or upon the bosom of the deep. Nor will a pacific behaviour be confined to those nations alone, which are entitled civilized. The various tribes of savages, that inhabit the less frequented climes, having undergone a revolution in their manners and their situation, will relinquish the use of the arrow and the spear, the battle-ax and the scalping-knife. In the treatment of diseases, and in the cure of wounds, ignorance and inexperience will cease to be a fruitful source of the destruction of life; and no longer will men be swept away in crowds by those contagious disorders, which care and skill are capable of remedying. Nor will they prematurely destroy themselves by a course of debauchery, or by habits of intoxication.

Sorrow and pain, also, in comparison of the ascendant they formerly had upon the globe, may be said to be excluded from it; for with *the former things*, which *are passed away*, with Bad Government and False Religion, not only war, discord, and pestilence will, in a great degree, be banished from the world; but also those other evils which naturally flow from the same sources, sloth and ignorance, hypocrisy and persecution, superstition and infidelity, excessive poverty and intemperate labour.

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503 22 insert ON THE SEVENTH VIAL.	
512 3 for liber ed	r. liberated.
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