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The Circumstances of the Jewish
People an Argument for the
Truth of the Christian Religion.

T H R E E
D I S C O U R S E S
O N
R O M A N S XI. II.

By NATHANIEL LARDNER. D.D.

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

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R O M. XI. 11.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentils, for to provoke them to jealousy.



IN this context the Apostle **D I S** discourseth of an affecting **I.** scene of things, the reception of the Gentils, and the rejection of the Jews; the former a just occasion of much joy, the later of like grief and concern: that they, who had been long favored and distinguished by religious privileges, should fall from them: and, when others received

4 *The Christian Religion confirmed*

D I S C. marks of divine favour, and indeed pressed
 I. in for a share in spiritual blessings, they
 should be offended at it.

St. Paul has a long argument upon these points in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of this epistle to the Romans. He enters upon it at the begining of the ninth chapter in these words: *I say the truth in Christ, and lye not, my conscience also bearing me witnesse in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heavinesse, and continual sorrow of heart. For I could wish: I am almost ready to wish. He does not say, that he actually wisheth it. For I could wish,* says he, *that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glorie, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.* And it concludes with a pious acknowledgement, and humble adoration of the wisdom and equity of divine providence: though these and other events in this world appear to us, for a time, strange and surprising. O

by the Estate of the Jews.

5

the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! — For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To whom be glorie for ever.

DISC.
I.



My chief design at this time is to observe some advantages, which Christians have in their argument for the truth of their religion, from the present afflictive circumstances, and low estate of the Jewish people and nation.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? As if the Apostle had said: “ But by this their present rejection, “ which I have been speaking of, do I “ intend to say, that they have so stumbled, as to fall; that is, so as never to “ rise again, and never to be again restored to prosperous circumstances, as “ a people? ”

Or, according to another interpretation: “ Do I by what I have said intend to intimate, that all of them should “ fall, and none believe, and partake of “ the blessings of the Messiah’s kingdom, “ and the divine favour? ”

God

DISC. *God forbid: or, which would be bet-*

I. *ter, and more proper: By no means, or*
 { *Far be it: for the name of God never*
is in the original phrase, by which this
emphatical negative is expressed. “ No,
“ by no means: that is not the case,
“ that none of the natural posterity of
“ Jacob should believe, and come into the
“ privileges of the Messiah’s kingdom.”

But through their fall salvation is come
unto the Gentils, to provoke them unto jea-
lousie. “ But by the Jewish people now
“ generally rejecting the Messiah, it has
“ so happened, that salvation has been
“ conveyed unto the Gentils. And herein
“ there is not only a benefit to them, in
“ their salvation, but also to the Jews.
“ For by the Gentils embracing the gospel
“ proposed to them, and coming to par-
“ take of religious privileges, the Jewish
“ people will be provoked to emulation:
“ more of them will now believe, and
“ be accepted of God, than if the gos-
“ pel had not been preached to and re-
“ ceived by the Gentils.”

“ When therefore I speak, as I have
“ done, concerning the offence taken by
 the

“ the Jews against Jesus and his gospel, DISC.
 “ and concerning the divine displeasure I.
 “ against them upon that account; I do
 “ not intend to insinuate, that the poste-
 “ rity of Jacob are totally and absolutely
 “ excluded: or to deny, that such of them,
 “ who now, or at any time hereafter
 “ shall believe, will be received and ap-
 “ proved.”

The sense I have given of this text is confirmed by what the Apostle says at the begining of this chapter, where also, in the course of his argument, he has these like words: *I say then, has God ROM. XI. 1.*
cast away his people? By no means. For I
also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abra-
ham, of the tribe of Benjamin. “ I reckon
 “ myself a proof to the contrarie, and
 “ that God is willing to receive any of his
 “ ancient people the Jews, who believe
 “ in Jesus, and obey the revelation made
 “ by him.” Then instancing in the num-
 ber of true Israelites, servants and wor-
 shippers of God in the time of Elijah, no
 less than *seven thousand*; though the apo-
 stasie was so general, that Elijah thought
 he was *left alone*, he adds: *Even so then ROM. XI. 5.*
at

DISC. at this present time also there is a remnant

I. according to the election of grace.

Indeed the Jewish people by generally rejecting the gospel of Christ, preached to them with divine authority, had generally excluded themselves from the privileges of God's people, having refused to accept the blessings offered to them. What then should be done? Was the Messiah of God to have no people, when the Jews rejected him? It was not fit. Since therefore they now shew great reluctance to that kind proposal, the gospel shall be preached to the Gentils, who will hear and receive it. And when they have received it, they will be of use to the Jewish people. For they will *provoke them to jealousy*, and all good men among them will be disposed to receive the Messiah, and from time to time will be brought into his kingdom: till at length, possibly, there shall be a general conversion of them, and that very much owing to the profession of true religion made by Gentils. So the fall of the Jews has been the Gentils salvation: The Jews rejecting the Messiah hastened the preach-
ing

ing of the gospel to the Gentils. And the D I S C. I.
 Gentils receiving and maintaining the gos-
 pel will provoke the Jews to emulation,
 and excite them to receive it, that they al-
 so may partake in the divine favour and
 the marks of it.

So the Apostle argues in this and fol-
 lowing verses: *But through their fall sal-* Rom. xi.
vation is come unto the Gentils, to provoke 11,—15.
them unto jealousy. Now if the fall of them
be the riches of the world, and the diminish-
ing of them the riches of the Gentils, how
much more their fulnesse? that is, their ge-
neral conversion, or a more numerous con-
version of them, than has yet been. For I
speak unto you, Gentils, inasmuch as I am the
Apostle of the Gentils. I magnify mine of-
fice. If by any means I may provoke to emu-
lation them which are my flesh, and might
save some of them. For if the casting away
of them be the reconciling of the world, what
shall the receiving of them be, but life from
the dead? Again: For I would not, brethren, ver. 25, 26.
that ye should be ignorant of this mysterie,
(least ye should be wise in your own conceit;)
that blindness in part has happened to Is-
rael, until the fulnesse of the Gentils be come

DISC. *in.* And so all Israel shall be saved. —

I. For as ye in times past have not believed
 Rom. xi. God, yet now have obtained mercie through
 30,—32. their unbelief: even so have these also now
 not believed, that through your mercie they
 also may obtain mercie. For God has con-
 cluded all in unbelief, that he might have
 mercie upon all.

There are therefore two things spoken of
 in these and divers other verses of this
 chapter: An advantage accruing to the
 Gentils through the unbelief and rejection
 of the Jews: An advantage accruing to
 the Jews through the belief and reception
 of the Gentils.


It is the first point chiefly, upon which
 I shall insist, and in the following method.

- I. I shall observe the present state of
 things with regard to Christians, the
 followers of Jesus, and the Jews who
 reject him.
- II. I shall shew what advantages Chris-
 tians have in the argument for the
 truth of their religion from the pre-
 sent state of things in the world.
- III. I intend to mention some remarks
 and observations upon this subject.

I. In

by the Estate of the Jews.

II

I. In the first place I would observe D I S C.
the present state of things in the world, I.
both with regard to Christians, the fol-
lowers of Jesus, and the Jews who reject
him. 

And the case is very obvious, such as every one is able to perceive, upon a little thought and consideration.

There are now great numbers of men in the world, in various kingdoms, states and governments, in countreys near and afar off, professing faith in Jesus as the Christ, who are not the natural descendents of Abraham and the ancient Patriarchs.

These people called Christians, of Gentil stock and original, declare themselves worshipers of the one living and true God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God, who delivered the law by Moses, and often spake unto the children of Israel by the Prophets.

And as they are worshipers of the one true God, they are likewise free from all that kind of idolatry, which once prevailed universally in the world, and into which the Jewish people themselves for-

DISC. merly were often seduced and perverted.


I. They worship not, as Gods, the sun, or the moon, or the stars: nor Baal, nor Saturn, nor any other of the Gods of the people of the East, or of the Egyptians, or of the Greeks and Romans, or of any of the countreys of the Barbarians in the northern parts of the world.

Nor are they only worshipers of the one living and true God, the God of the people of Israel, but they also receive the scriptures of the Old Testament, delivered in a succession of ages, at divers times, to the descendents of Abraham and Israel. They believe them to be the writings of men, animated and inspired by the Spirit of God, and have them in equal veneration with the Jewish people themselves.

Moreover they highly respect and honor not only the Patriarchs and Moses and the Prophets, but likewise all the worthies of the ancient dispensation, who walked with God, and in the main were upright in his sight, and stedfast in his covenant.

These Christian people differ indeed from the Jews in receiving a person as a great and eminent Prophet, whom the

Jews

Jews reject. But yet their regard for that D I S C.
Prophet, whom they call the Christ, or I.
the Messiah, is very much owing to their 
respect for those ancient scriptures, in which
they think he is foretold and promised.

And though they do not conform to all
the ordinances of the law of Moses, they
allow and believe his law and his whole
institution to have been of divine appoint-
ment, and wisely designed, and of great
use, as the state of things in the world then
was. And with chearfulnesse and zeal
they assert and maintain against all oppos-
ers the divine authority of that dispensa-
tion. They are likewise sometimes almost
compelled to wonder, that the Jewish
people of old, who had such a law, should
forsake God, and depart from his worship,
so often as they did.

And, which is very considerable, they
do not make void the law of Moses,
but establish it. For their religion strictly
requires obedience to all the moral laws of
righteousnesse and true holinesse therein
delivered, and upon which the greatest
stresse is there laid: which righteousness
is so elegantly and copiously taught and

recom-

D I S C. recommended in the books of Job, the

I. Psalms, and the Proverbs: in comparison
 of which the later Prophets openly declared
 ritual observances to be of little value, and
 without it uselesse and offensive. Inso-
 much that the substance of the Christian
 religion is no other, than what has been
 accounted true religion by Moses, and
 the Prophets, by all the righteous men, and
 wise and pious Princes, that ever were.

This is what is inculcated in their reli-
 gious assemblies, and enforced from the
 consideration of everlasting rewards and
 punishments in a future state; more forcible
 motives, than the hope or fear of temporal
 rewards and penalties in the present life.

Nor do they neglect to improve the
 instances of faith and piety recorded in
 the Old Testament: though more especi-
 ally they dwell upon the shining example
 of perfect virtue in the life and death of
 Jesus, their great lord and master.

As hereby men are trained up in great
 numbers to true and eminent virtue, they
 cannot but look upon themselves as the true

Phil. iii. 3. *Israel, who worship God in the spirit, and
 have no confidence in unnessearie, ritual
 appoint-*

appointments. And the righteousness, DISC.
principally required in the law, is better I.
fulfilled by them who have the religion of Rom. viii.
Jesus, than it was by those who had only 4.
the institution of Moses.

And indeed the religion of Christians is that of Abraham, according to which he was justified, without the peculiarities of the law of Moses. And it is a character, which they are pleased with, and boast of, that through Jesus Christ they are become, according to the spirit, the children of faithful Abraham, and are justified and accepted of God as he was.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, that as the disciples and followers of Jesus do not take upon them the yoke of the ritual ordinances of the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation; so neither have they introduced any other like ordinances in their stead. At least they profess, that Jesus, whom they own for the Messiah, has no such ordinances in his religion: excepting two only, both plain and simple; one initiatory to a profession of faith in him, and of obedience to his law; the other commemorative of his love, who freely laid
down

D I S C. down his life, though spotless and innocent,
 I. as a testimonie to the truth of that important doctrine, which he had taught and recommended to mankind.

These are the followers of Jesus. These are Christians, who now do, and for a long time have flourished, and been numerous and considerable.

In the next place we are to observe the state of the Jews, the natural posterity of Jacob, who reject Jesus, and do not allow him to be the Messiah, the great Prophet and deliverer, foretold and promised in many parts, and in almost every book of the Old Testament.

They also are in great numbers, some in almost every province and kingdom of the known world. They are numerous, but not a people. They have a being, but they dwell not in the land of Canaan, which had been given them for an inheritance. They have no power and authority, no empire, no civil government, scarce * a right and privilege to possess the smallest

* *If they have a right to purchase and possess lands of inheritance in some places, I suppose in but a few only, and there by some special favour and indulgence.*

smallest tract or territorie of land in any part of the world. D I S C.
I.

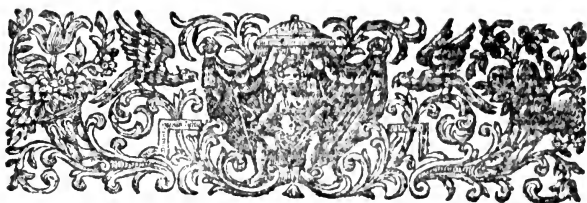
Nor have they any temple. For their stately temple, once glorious in outward appearance, still more glorious for the especial presence of the Divine Majesty, and the frequent manifestations he there made of himself: the temple, I say, where their tribes were to assemble, where alone, according to the law of Moses, sacrifices were to be offered, is in ruins, or rather is no more: without any traces of it remaining, but the remembrance of the place where it once was.

Other tokens of the divine favour are also wanting. They have not the Urim and Thummim of the priesthood, nor any vision, or prophecie, nor voice or word from God to direct or comfort them. Prophecie and vision, in ancient times frequent, or even constant, are now not only rare and uncommon, but altogether unknown among them. Learned Rabbis, and traditionarie teachers they may have. But what Prophet can they boast of, as theirs, since the time of Jesus; who truly was

DISC. a Prophet mighty in word and deed, and,
I. as we say, the looked for and promised
Messiah, but despised and crucified by
them?


Such is the state of things in the world,
with regard to Christians, the followers
of Jesus, and the Jews, who reject him.





R O M. XI. 11.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentils, for to provoke them to jealousy.

II.  AM now in the second D I S C. place, as formerly proposed, to shew, what advantages Christians have in the argument for the truth of their religion, from this state of things, and particularly from the afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people, who reject the Lord Jesus, and believe not in him as the promised Messiah.

D I S C. We know Jesus to be the Christ, the

II. Son of God, the Saviour that should come into the world, from the fulfilment of many ancient prophecies in his person and ministrie, from the consideration of the perfection and excellence of his doctrine, the unspotted purity and holiness of his life, the proofs he gave of wonderful knowledge and understanding: from his many miraculous works, his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, and from the mighty works done by his Apostles, and others, preaching to Jews and Gentils, in his name, and under his authority.

Beside all this, we have, as I apprehend, a great advantage in the argument for the truth of our religion from that state of things, which was formerly taken notice of. And I shall now endeavor to shew it under the following particulars.

1. It was foretold by our Lord.
2. It is agreeable to many prophecies in the Old Testament.
3. The present state of the Jewith people affords reason to believe, that the Messiah is already come.

4. The

4. The time and circumstances of the present captivity and dispersion of the Jewish people are an argument for the truth of the Christian religion.

DISC.
II.



5. The subsistence of the Jewish people to this time affords an attestation to divers things, upon which some evidences of the Christian religion depend.

1. *This state of things, with regard both to Jews and Gentils, was foretold by our Lord.* And, as the event has been agreeable to what he said long ago, it shews, that he was a Prophet. It also demonstrates the truth and justness of all his claims; not only, that he came from God, but that he was the Christ, as he said.

When the centurion had expressed a remarkable faith in the power of our Lord, to heal his sick servant at a distance, *he said to them that followed: I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east, and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.* See also Luke xiii. 29. How unlikely was this! How little prospect was there at that time, that

Matt. viii.
10-12.

DISC. that great numbers of Gentils in all quarters of the world, should believe in God
 II. and his Christ, whom he had sent! But yet that saying of our Lord has been abundantly fulfilled. The truth of his words appeared soon after, and they have been fulfilling to this day.

Luke xv. The reception of the Gentils, with the dislike and resentment of the Jewish people, is evidently represented in the parable of the prodigal son, who upon his repentance is most kindly received by the father: but the elder son, meaning the Jewish people, the natural posterity of Jacob, is offended, and will not come in.

The rejection of the Jewish people, who had been long barren and unfruitful to a great degree, and were still likely to neglect the best means of improvement, is set before them by our Lord very intelligibly, though with as little offense as might be, which is agreeable to all the rules both of wisdom and goodnesse. *He spake also this parable*, says the Evangelist: *A certain man had a figtree planted in his vineyard*, that is, in some enclosed spot of ground, where it was well situated and de-


defended. *And he came, and sought fruit, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this figtree, and find none. Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?*

DISC.
II.

And in like manner in some other parables, representing their great and imminent danger of ruin, and also setting forth the justnesse and fitnessse of the sentence to be pronounced upon them, if they should not repent; if they should still continue unfruitful after enjoying the best means of emprovement, and should withal oppose and abuse the messengers of God sent from time to time to warn and reclaim them. *Then began he to speak unto the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far countrey. — And at the season he sent a servant unto the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard. But the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. In like manner did they unto others, who were sent unto them. At length the lord of the vineyard sent his son. But him they cast out of the vineyard,*

Luke xx.
9.—16.

DISC. yard, and killed him. *What therefore shall*

II. *the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He*
 *will come and destroy those husbandmen, and*
will give the vineyard unto others. Compare
 Matth. xxi. 33.—41.

Our blessed Lord, all whose other miracles were healing and beneficent, with a view to the advantage of that people, if by any means they might be alarmed and persuaded, constrained himself to speak one word of malediction, a sentence of condemnation upon a barren figtree, and with surprizing effect. He was going to
 Mat. xxi. 19. *Jerusalem. And when he saw a figtree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it: Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the figtree withered away.* A miracle that was emblematical and prophetical, signifying the affecting and speedie ruin and desolation of the Jewish nation, if they out-finned the day of tryal allotted them, and persisted to neglect and abuse the means of salvation afforded them.

We have in our Lord's discourses divers predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem,
 and

and the calamities attending it. And the D I S C.
event has shewn the truth of his prophe- II.
tical character. }

It should be also observed by us, that those predictions were publicly spoken in the hearing of many people, not of the disciples only. And they were delivered with such marks of affection and tenderneſſe, and contained ſo diſtinct and ſo moving a deſcription of impending calamities, that nothing could have been better ſuited and adapted to prevent them, by inducing men to repent. And if they did not repent, he aſſured them, that *then would be great tribulation, ſuch as was* Mat. xxiv.
not ſince the begining of the world to that 21.
time, no nor ever ſhall be. And when he was led away to be crucified, *and there* Luk. xxiii.
followed him a great company of people, and 26.—31.
of women, who alſo bewailed him and lamented him, Jeſus turning unto them ſaid: Daughters of Jeruſalem, Weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your children. — For if they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?

And we plainly perceive by his words, that the deſolation, which he foreſaw,
D would

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DISC. would be of a long duration, as we also

II. see in the event: Which added to his

concern for that people. It was not a single judgement, a calamity of one day, though great and terrible, but a long scene of affliction and darknesse, which he fore-

told and bewailed. *And when he was come nigh, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which be-*

Luke xix.
41. 42.

long unto thy peace? But now they are hid

Mat. xxiii.

37. 38.

from thine eyes. And, How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house

Luke xxi.

21, — 24.

is left unto you desolate. Once more, Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it, meaning the city of Jerusalem, depart out, and let not them that are in the countrey enter therein. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. — For there shall be great distresse in the land, and much wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations.

And

And Jerusalem shall be troden down of the Gentils, until the times of the Gentils be fulfilled.

D I S C.
II.

The great and punctual accomplishment of these and other words of our Lord, concerning the sad ruin, the wide dispersion, and long captivity of the Jewish people, afford a strong argument for the truth of the Christian religion, and assure us, that Jesus spoke with divine authority, and that the doctrine taught by him, and contained in the New Testament, the writings of his Apostles, and their faithful companions, is true and of God.

2. The state of things, formerly observed, is also conformable to ancient prophecies found in the books of Moses and other parts of the Old Testament.

In those books are contained prophecies of the general conversion of the nations of the earth to the acknowledgement and service of the one living and true God, delivered, when the worship of God was confined to the one nation of the Jews alone, or to a few men only, their patriarchs and ancestors, and a very small number besides. The way or means, by

DISC. which this blessing should be conveyed to
 II. the world, was also intimated. To Abra-
 ham it was declared, that in him, that is,
 Gen. xii. 3. through him and his posterity, all nations,
 or families of the earth should be blessed.
 That confines the accomplishment of the
 promise to his familie: Some one or more
 of which must be the author, or authors
 and instruments of this general blessing.
 The same promise is solemnly renewed to
 G. n. Jacob. Afterwards there were prophecies
 xxviii. 1. 4. delivered, containing limitations and re-
 strictions, relating to the tribe of Judah,
 and the familie of David. The descen-
 dents of Abraham in general, or many of
 them, may some way contribute to this
 design. But the tribe of Judah and the
 familie of David are often spoken of with
 special regard. In *Isaiah* particularly, it
 is foretold: *There shall come forth a rod out
 of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall
 grow out of his roots. — In that day there
 shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand
 for an ensign to the people, to it shall the
 Gentils seek.* Again, *I will give thee for
 a light to the Gentils, that thou mayest be
 my salvation unto the ends of the earth.*

And

And it is out of the tribe of Judah, and the familie of David, that our Lord arose. DISC.
II.

And by him, as is manifest, the knowledge of God has been spread over the earth, and the promise made to Abraham, that *in him all the families of the earth should be blessed*, has been fulfilled.

But beside this there are intimations given in the Old Testament, that when this event should happen, the Jewish people would be in some circumstances, which are disadvantageous.

Observable are the words of our Lord, when he foretells the destruction of Jerusalem. *For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.* Luke xxi.
22. It is not improbable, that our Lord has here an especial reference to some prophecies in the book of Daniel, relating particularly to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, which he foresaw, and was then speaking of. But he might also have an eye to some other parts of Scripture. And we may without much difficulty perceive divers things said in the Old Testament, which are propheticall, not only of the destruction of Jerusalem, but like-

DISC. likewise of the long captivity and disperſion,
 II. which were to enſue.

~~~~~  
 Gen. xlix. 8. Jacob foretelling the condition of his poſterity in future times ſays: *Judah, thou art he, whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe. Thy hand ſhall be upon the neck of thine enemies, thy father's children ſhall bow down unto thee.* The tribe of Judah, as we find from the hiſtorie of the people of Iſrael, uſually had ſome diſtinction among the reſt. At length David and his deſcendents, who were of that tribe, ſat upon the throne of government among them. And from Judah the kingdom of the two tribes was called. And indeed from that tribe all Iſraelites in general were ſtiled Jews.

Ver. 10. It follows in the place juſt cited: *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shi-lob come. And unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.* The ſenſe of which prophecie may be briefly taken in this manner: “ The \* royal power and au-  
 “ thority, which ſhall be eſtabliſhed in  
 “ the poſterity of Judah, ſhall not be  
 “ taken


\* See Patrick upon the place.

“ taken from them; or at least they shall  
“ not be destitute of rulers and gover-  
“ nours; no, not when they are in a de-  
“ clining condition, until the coming of  
“ the Messiah: But when he is come,  
“ there shall be no distinction between  
“ the Jews and other nations, who shall  
“ be obedient to the Messiah. And af-  
“ ter that the posterity of Judah and  
“ people of the Jews shall have neither  
“ King, nor ruler of their own, but the  
“ commonwealth of Judah shall lose all  
“ form of civil government and autho-  
“ rity.”

This we know to have happened about the time of our Saviour's coming. From David to the Babylonish captivity that tribe held the sceptre for several ages. After seventy years captivity the Jews returned to Judea, or the land of Canaan, where they lived again according to their own laws. Their temple was rebuilt, and they sacrificed and worshiped there, for the most part, with great freedom, according to the appointments of the law of Moses. They were a distinct people, and had among them civil government  
and

D I S C.  
II.  


D I S C. and authority. But at the time of our


II.  Lord's birth, and afterwards, they were in some measure subject to the Romans. And the Jewish power and authority declined, till it was quite abolished and overthrown by the Emperours, Vespasian and Titus, about forty years after our Lord's ascension. And so it has been to this day.

Deut. xviii. 15. Moses assured the people of Israel: *The Lord thy God will raise thee up a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me. Unto him shall ye hearken.*

Ver. 18. 19. And God himself said to Moses: *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.*

Some understand this to be an express prophetic concerning the Messiah himself, that great Prophet, who would be in an especial manner like unto Moses. Others have supposed it to be a promise of a constant succession of Prophets among them.

Allow

Allow this last to be the meaning, it D I S C. implies a command to hear Jesus, if he II. was a Prophet; and a threatening of punishment, if he was not heard and obeyed.  And that Jesus was a Prophet, is evident from testimonials surpassing not only those given to other Prophets among them, but even to Moses himself. Consequently disobedience to him was a thing, for which God would certainly reckon with them.

I shall cite a passage or two more out of later Prophets. In Daniel it is said: *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgressions, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the prince, shall be seven weeks. And threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And the* Dan ix. 24.—27.

E people

DISC. *people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. And for the overspreading of abomination he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

Here is a promise made to Daniel, that the city of Jerusalem with its temple should be rebuilt: and that they should for some while there worship and serve God, as we know they did after the return from Babylon. And here is a promise of the appearing of the Messiah, and a prediction of great desolations afterwards: which also we know to have happened soon after the time of Jesus, who was a great Prophet, and anointed of God in a most extraordinary manner, and was generally rejected by the people, to whom Daniel belonged, and to whom he prophesied.

In Malachi, the last of the Prophets of the Old Testament, are these words: *Behold,*

bold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight. Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand, when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner of silver. And afterwards: For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble. And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings, and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked, and they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.

DISC.

II.

Mal. iii.

1. — 3.

— iv.

1. — 3.

Certainly these are not insignificant words in the mouth of the Prophet. And these emphatical expressions do evidently appear to relate to a great person, who

**D I S C.** should come among the Jews, whilst their temple was standing: whereas their temple was destroyed, and they were led into captivity soon after the time of Jesus our Lord.

**II.**

**Mat. iii.**  
**10. 11.**

John the Baptist, who well understood these prophecies, and knew his own character, says therefore: *And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. But he that cometh after me is mightier than I. — Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. He will gather his wheat into the garner, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

**Luke ii.**  
**32.**

And Simeon, who when he saw the child Jesus at the temple, doubted not but he was the Lord's Christ, and spoke of him as such, and that he was *a light to lighten the Gentils, and the glorie of God's people Israel*, said to Marie his mother:

— **34.** *This child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel.*

The conversion of the Gentils, then, and the low condition of the Jewish people,



ple, are not only agreeable to prophecies of the Lord Jesus, but likewise to many ancient prophecies contained in the books of the Old Testament †.


D I S C.  
II.

3. *The present state of the Jewish people, particularly their afflictive circumstances, afford good reason to believe, that the Messiah, that great person spoken of in the Old Testament, but still wished for and expected by them, is already come.*

For the prophecies concerning him speak of his being of the tribe of Judah, and familie of David. He must appear therefore, whilst the registers of their tribes and families are in being. But now they are lost. If any one should now arise, claiming that great character; it could not be known what tribe he was of, and therefore there could not be any good assurance, that his claim was just.


This is an advantage in the argument for the truth of the Christian religion. For we know, that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, and familie of David. But  
since

† *If any should find this discourse too long for a single reading, here is a proper resting place.*

**D I S C.** since the long captivity and numerous dis-  
**II.** persions and removals of the Jewish people from one place to another, oftentimes under the greatest difficulties, it is impossible, that their registers should be preserved, or the families of particular persons be known.

Another thing clearly intimated by the later Prophets of the Old Testament is, that the Messiah should come, during the time of the temple built after the return from Babylon. God was pleased, by the Prophet Haggai, to encourage the people to go on in rearing up the temple after this manner: *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once more, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. And I will fill this house with glorie, saith the Lord of hosts.*  
 Hagg. ii. 4. 5.  
 — ver. 9. *Again, The glorie of this later house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.*

That temple wanted some things, which were in the temple built by Solomon; particularly, the symbol of the divine presence,


presence, the cloud of glorie overshadow- D I S C.  
ing the mercie seat. By the *greater glorie* II.  
*of the later house* therefore seems to be   
meant the appearance of the Messiah, who  
is Emmanuel, or *God with us*: in whom  
the Deity dwelt and manifested himself in  
a peculiar manner: by which means a-  
lone, that is, by whose presence alone,  
this second temple could be rendered more  
glorious than the former.

The coming of the Messiah to that  
temple is also promised in Malachi before  
quoted. *Behold, I will send my messenger,* Mal. iii. 1:  
*and he shall prepare the way before me. And*  
*the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come*  
*to his temple, even the messenger of the co-*  
*venant, in whom ye delight. Behold, he shall*  
*come, saith the Lord of hosts.*

Since therefore the temple, where the  
promised messenger of so great eminence  
and distinction was to appear, is now no  
more, but has long since been destroyed,  
and continues to be in ruins; we are as-  
sured, that he is already come. For it is  
impossible for God to fail, or that he  
should alter the purpose he has so solemnly  
pronounced and declared.

Have

DISC. Have any of the promises or threatenings delivered by the Prophets failed of accomplishment? Did not the posterity of Jacob descend into Egypt, a few in number? And were they not brought thence again, a great host, by mighty power and an outstretched arm, at the time before appointed and promised?

II.  Were not the threatenings with regard to Saul, David, Solomon, accomplished? Were not the threatenings concerning the ten tribes, and the tribe of Judah, fulfilled? Were not the former, the ten tribes, sent into captivity, and scattered, so as to return no more?

And when the kingdom of Judah took not warning by the judgements inflicted upon the kingdom of Israel, the threatened captivity was brought upon them. And the promise of their return from Babylon was also wonderfully and punctually accomplished. They settled again in the land of Israel, they were increased and multiplied, and became once more a great people. The temple, which had been laid waste, was raised up, and its worship restored

stored, according as God had before said by his holy Prophets. D I S C.  
II.

Why then should it be thought by any, that the promise concerning the coming of the Messiah to that temple should not be performed? It must have been fulfilled. *The desire of all nations* did come to that temple, and the nations have received him, and believed on him, and have partaken of his fulness. They have received grace for grace. They have gained through him the knowledge of the one living and true God. He is their God, and they are his people. They worship him in spirit and truth. And the law of Moses, introduced since the Abrahamic covenant, and ordained for a time only, as to all it's unneccessarie and burdensome appointments, is no longer in force, or of any use unto them. John i. 16.


4. *The time and circumstances of the present captivity and dispersion of the Jewish people afford an argument for the truth of the Christian Religion.* For their afflictions appear to have the marks of divine displeasure against them for rejecting and

D I S C. crucifying Jesus, and for persisting to reject  
 II. him and his apostles.

Their present afflictions began soon after, and have continued ever since. It was not more than forty years after our Lord's crucifixion, that the people of the Jews underwent the dreadful calamities of the siege of their city: when also it was taken, and their temple consumed, and they slain, or scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Nor can we avoid observing the estate and condition of this people, the posterity of Abraham, the friend of God; the children of Jacob, whom God preferred to the children of Esau; whom God had chosen to be his people above all the people of the earth: as Moses reminds them in that solemn and pathetic address, at the end of the book of Deuteronomie: *When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his Inheritance.*

Deut.  
xxxii. 8.9.

It is not reasonable to think, that God DISC.  
would carry it unkindly toward them, or II.  
stand at a distance from them, without   
some just ground of offense and provo-  
cation.

Moreover we know, that he promised  
to bless them abundantly, if they hearken-  
ed to his Prophets, and walked in the ways  
he prescribed them: declaring at the same  
time, that if they were disobedient, he  
would not leave them unpunished: *If ye* Lev. xxvi.  
*will walk in my statutes, and keep my com-* 3.  
*mandments, and do them; — I will set my* —ver. 11.  
*tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not*  
*abhor you. And I will walk with you, and*  
*will be your God, and ye shall be my people.*  
*— But if ye will walk contrarie unto me,* ver. 23.  
*then will I also walk contrarie unto you, and* 24.  
*will punish you. — And if ye will not for all* —ver. 27.  
*this hearken unto me, but walk contrarie un-*  
*to me; then I will walk contrarie unto you*  
*in furie, and will chastise you yet seven times*  
*for your sins.* And his treatment of this  
people in all ages has been agreeable to  
these, and other like declarations.

Since therefore this favorite people, so  
long called by the name of the Lord, and

**D I S C.** so distinguished by him, are under tokens  
**II.** of divine displeasure: since they are no  
 longer in the land of Canaan, which had  
 been given to them, and lye under many  
 disadvantages in the places where they  
 live, there must be some ground and rea-  
 son of it. And a very likely reason offers,  
 when we consider, as before hinted, the  
 time, when the present affliction com-  
 menced, even soon after the appearing of  
 Jesus in this world.

And we shall be confirmed in the sup-  
 position, that this dispersion is owing to  
 their sin in rejecting the Lord Jesus, if  
 we consider farther, when he appeared,  
 and who he was.

He came at the time appointed for the  
 Messiah, when the temple, built after the  
 Babylonish captivity, was in its glorie,  
 when the registers of their families were  
 in being, and when the Jews themselves  
 and all nations around them were in ex-  
 pectation of such an eminent person.

And must we not think, that since  
 Jesus answered the character of the pro-  
 mised Messiah, or the Lord's anointed, it  
 must be a great and heinous sin to reject  
 and



and crucify him? If there be any truth in the evangelical historie, (as certainly it is all matter of fact, and but a part only of the great things done by Jesus are there related;) he was a most excellent person, and a most eminent Prophet. Must not any people, the Jews especially, be accountable for such a privilege? Must not their guilt in rejecting Jesus appear aggravated, when we consider that they crucified him, and repented not: though he rose from the dead, and his apostles continued a good while afterwards preaching among them?

DISC.  
II.

It is also remarkable, that when Jesus was condemned as an impostor and malefactor, they imprecated the guilt of his death upon themselves and their children.

Mat. xxvii. 25.

And the long continuance of this affliction is very striking, so far beyond any thing they had before undergone. And yet they are not guilty of idolatrie, as in times past: but all false gods, and all images in worship, are an abomination to them.

When Solomon consecrated the temple he had built, he prayed: *If thy people sin against thee, and thou be angrie with them,*

1 Kings viii. 46.  
— 50.

*DISC.* them, and deliver them to the enemy, so

II. *that they carry them captive into the land of the enemy, far or near: If they shall bethink themselves, in the land whither they are carried captives, saying, we have sinned, and have done perversly, we have committed wickednesse: And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them captive, and pray unto thee: — then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee.*

And long after this Nehemiah, mindfull of the measures, which God had openly declared he would observe with this people, prays after the same manner: *O Lord God of heaven, that keepest covenant and mercie with them that love thee; — Remember, I beseech thee, the word which thou commandest thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations. But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them: though*

*Neh. i.  
5—9.*

*though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of heaven, yet I will gather them from thence, and will bring them to the place that I have chosen to set my name there.*

DISC.  
II.

Since then they still continue, under many disadvantages, in the dispersion, which began so long ago; it leads us to conclude, that there is some sin they have committed, which they have not repented of, the guilt of which therefore still lyes heavie upon them.

St. Chrystom in one of his homilies to his hearers the people of Antioch, discoursing upon this very topic, the long duration of the Jews dispersion and captivity, has this thought: If \* \* Jesus had been a malefactor and a deceiver, as the Jews pretended; it might have been honorable, and accounted for righteoufnesse to them, that they put him to death. On the contrarie, since the crucifixion of Jesus, they have been chastised more severely, than when they were guilty of idolatrie, and sacrificed their children to Moloch.

In

\* \* Vid. Chrysest. T. 1. p. 652. 653. Ed. Bened.

**D I S C.** In this long dispersion, of so many ages, it is not unlikely, that divers attempts have been made by them to return into Canaan, and rebuild their temple. And it is well known, that they have formed conspiracies, and made violent attempts to restore their government in the land of Canaan. But they have been always defeated and overthrown.

**II.**

Designs of another kind may have been entred into. One thing is often mention-  
ed by ancient historians. The Emperour Julian, commonly called the Apostate, because after having been educated in the Christian religion he turned Heathen, about three hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem, formed a scheme of rebuilding the temple. Filled with enmity against the people whom he had forsaken, but still desirous to avoid the scandal of open persecution, he tryed every method to humble the Christians, and root out their religion. Knowing † the aversion of the Jewish people to Christia-  
nity,

† See *Socrat. H. E. l. 3. c. 20. Sozom. l. 5. c. 20. Thdr. l. 3. c. 20. Chryf. T. 1. p. 530. 646. &c. T. 2. p. 574.*

nity, he sent for some of their chief men, and asked them, Why they did not sacrifice? They answered, because they could sacrifice no where, but at the temple at Jerusalem, and now they had none. He bid them take good heart, and engaged to build a temple for them. And †† accordingly gave full powers and strict orders for that purpose to proper officers, allotting likewise large sums out of the public revenue. But when materials were provided, and they were about to lay the foundations of the intended temple, the workmen were terrified, and some of them scorched by frequent and repeated eruptions of fire from the earth: as is related by divers authors, who lived at the time, or near it: and particularly by a

Disc.  
II.

G

Heathen

†† Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam templum, quod post multa et interneciva certamina obfidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito aegre est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis. Negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiocheni, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro Praefectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvenetque provinciae rector, metuendi globi flammaram prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum. Hocque modo elemento destitatus repellente, cessavit inceptum. *Amm. Marcel. l. 23. c. i.*

DISC. Heathen historian of good credit, and a  
 II. friend and admirer of Julian. Undoubtedly  
 such a design was formed and defeated.

If they, \* who lived about three hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem, thought this captivity of the Jewish people long: how much more may we, when it is now, not only three hundred, but thrice three hundred years, and almost double that number, since the commencement of it?

If they who lived above a thousand years ago observed the long continuance of this dispersion, as exceeding every thing of the like kind that had befallen this people, certainly the continuance of it to this day must appear very extraordinary and affecting.

*5. The subsistence of the Jewish people to this time affords an attestation to divers things, upon which some evidences of the Christian religion depend.*

For hereby all are assured of the antiquity and genuinness of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. These are received by them, and read in their synagogues.  
 And

\* *Crysestom, and others,*

And they allow, that therein are con- DISC.  
tained promises of a great and eminent de- II.  
liverer. None therefore can pretend, that  
the Scriptures, so often appealed to by  
Christ and his Apostles, are forgeries of  
Christians.

Possibly, we are not aware, how great  
an advantage we have, in this respect,  
from the subsistence of the Jewish peo-  
ple, and their synagogue worship, where  
the Scriptures of the Old Testament are  
often read.

It is true, the time of Christ's coming  
seems to have been a time of greater  
knowledge, and more general commerce,  
than that of the deliverance of the Jewish  
people from Egyptian bondage. But a  
variety of evidence for important facts,  
such as the coming of Christ, and his  
teaching among the Jews, is not to be  
despised, but thankfully accepted. And  
if the Jewish people had been extinguished  
soon after the coming of Christ, and the  
planting his religion in the world; some  
things might have been disputed by ene-  
mies, which now are uncontestable. Some  
might have had the assurance to deny,

D I S C. that ever there was such a people in the world, or that ever a nation existed which conformed to the institutions of Moses. And they might have formed an argument, which would have affected some persons, little conversant in ancient historie. And our case might have resembled that of the Jewish people of old, who were sometimes obliged to labor in the proof, that || they were not expelled out of Egypt, but conducted thence under the especial care of a powerful providence and protection.

But here possibly a scruple may arise in the minds of some. And they may say: If the subsistence of the Jewish people be so much to the advantage of the Christian religion, might it not have been as well for them to have continued in the land of Canaan, maintaining the ancient form of their commonwealth, and living in power and splendour, as in some times of old?

I answer: It was not fit.

1.) For,

|| See *Josephus at the end of his first book against Apion, and compare Tacitus, Hist. book v. near the beginning.*




1.) For, *their rejecting the Messiah must* DISC.  
*require some tokens of divine resentment and* II.  
*displeasure.* If Jesus wrought such mi-  
racles, as are recorded in the Gospels, and  
was crucified by the Jews: and if his A-  
postles preached in his name, and were  
abused, as the historie of the New Te-  
stament relates: it was highly proper, that  
after waiting to be gracious God should  
send remarkable judgements upon them, if  
they repented not: which they did not,  
but went on encreasing in wickednesse;  
as we are assured by Josephus, and other  
historians.

2.) *It was by no means fit, that the  
ancient power of the Jews should be conti-  
nued to them, considering their rejection of  
Jesus, and their enmity to them that be-  
lieved in him.* The opposition they would  
have made to the followers of Jesus, the  
sufferings they would have brought upon  
them, would have been insupportable by  
human nature. By the severest persecu-  
tion within their own territories, and by  
solemn and powerful ambassies into foreign  
parts, disparaging the disciples of Jesus  
and

D I S C. and their principles, they would have extirpated them, as soon as they were risen up. We may clearly collect as much from the afflictions and sufferings, they actually brought upon the Apostles and other disciples of Jesus: though their authority and influence were greatly restrained by the superior power of the Roman Empire.

3.) *If the Jewish nation had continued to subsist in their former power and splendour, some evidences of the truth of the Christian religion had not been so cogent, as they are.* For now the temple, built after the return from Babylon, where the promised Messiah was to appear, is in ruins. Therefore he is already come. The Jewish tribes and families are confounded, and it is impossible, any Messiah should arise now, who can be known to be of the tribe of Judah, and the familie of David. In a word, if the Jewish commonwealth and temple still subsisted, all the preceding arguments, taken from their afflictive circumstances, would be weakened. But that is neither for their, nor our benefit.

That


That it is not for ours, is manifest. Nor D I S C.  
is it for theirs. For it is conducive to II.  
their best interest, that the evidences of   
Christianity should be strong and affect-  
ing; that they may be provoked to jea-  
lousie, and all Israel may be saved; that  
is, that the prejudices, which they are so  
apt to indulge, may be weakened and  
removed; and that all who can be per-  
suaded, may be disposed to embrace the  
truth as it is in Jesus, and receive him as  
the Messiah.






R O M. XI. II.

*I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentils, for to provoke them to jealousy.*

III.  **EFORE I conclude this argument I choose to mention a few remarks and observations, which I hope may be of some use.**

*1. The argument afforded us for the truth of our religion from the subsistence and afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people was not absolutely necessarie: but yet it was expedient, and is very useful.*

*It was not absolutely necessarie.* For though DISC. the Jewish nation had been long ago extinct; that is, though they had not now been a distinct people, but had been lost and mingled with other nations, so that no remains of them had been now observable, following any of the ordinances of the law of Moses; yet we should have had sufficient evidence of the truth of the Christian religion, or that Jesus is the Christ, and his doctrine from heaven. This we could have been assured of from our Lord's character, the excellence of his principles, his miracles, his resurrection, and other particulars, well known, and formerly mentioned. III. 

But yet this argument, from the being and afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people, *was expedient, and is very useful:* as abundantly appears from the considerations, which have been insisted on in the discourses upon this subject.

2. We may likewise observe, that *some evidences of the truth of the Christian religion are not weakened, but do rather gain force by length of time.*

DISC. A historie of facts may be thought to  
 III. lose some degrees of credibility in a long  
 tract of time. And therefore it might be  
 feared, that the evangelical historie might  
 some time suffer upon that account. But  
 indeed it is so circumstanced, and has in  
 it so many internal characters of truth, and  
 is so supported by external testimonies of  
 various kinds, that it's credit must remain  
 to the latest ages inviolable.

However it is sufficient, that this kind  
 of evidence remains as it is. But then some  
 other evidence advances and gains strength  
 by time.

Christ assured Peter, that he would  
 build his Church upon a rock, and *that*  
*the gates of hell should not prevail against*  
*it.* The longer Christianity has a being  
 in the world, the fulfilment of that pro-  
 mise is the more remarkable, and the fore-  
 knowledge of Christ the more conspicu-  
 ous: especially considering what opposi-  
 tions of various kinds, in all ages, are made  
 against this doctrine; some by force, and  
 some by art and sophistrie: and considering  
 likewise the weaknesse and inconstance of  
 mankind, that some, who in name are  
 friends,

friends, weaken the interest they profess to uphold. D I S C.  
III.

When a certain woman, not long before our Lord's removal out of this world, opened a very precious vessel of ointment, and poured it upon his head; some had indignation, and seemed to think it too great and expensive a mark of respect. Mat. xxvi.  
6. — 13.  
*But he answered them: Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also that which this woman has done be told for a memorial of her.* And every time this portion of Scripture is read, especially in late ages, it establishes the belief of our Lord's great character.

Jesus often spoke of many coming from Mat. viii.  
11.  
*the east and the west, and from the north and the south, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;* that is, to || partake of the privileges of the gospel, and the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. So long therefore as there are Gentils in the world, who thankfully embrace the gospel, this declaration is fulfilled. And the longer it is, since

H 2

these

|| See *Whitby upon Matth. viii. 11 12.*

D I S C. these words were spoken, the more are they  
 III. verified. And every accession to the Church  
 of Christ from among ignorant and dark-  
 ened Gentils is a fresh confirmation of the  
 truth of his doctrine.

The dispersion of the Jews, the longer it lasts, still more and more does it strengthen the evidences of the Christian religion. It is the more remarkable. It is a plainer and a more affecting token of divine displeasure against them. The greater assurance does it afford, that the Messiah is already come. And the more impossible is it rendered for any man to prove himself of the tribe of Judah, and the familie of David, whence the Messiah was to arise. For these reasons their present dispersion is prolonged. And may it be duly attended to by all, to whom the consideration of it may be of use!

3. *These things ought also to be considered, as warnings to us.*

Paul, the Apostle more especially of the Gentils, fails not to make this use of the argument he is upon. *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and with them*



*them partakeſt of the root and fatneſſe of the olive tree, boaſt not againſt the branches.* DISC.  
III.

*But if thou boaſt, thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt ſay then: The branches were broken off, that I might be graſſed in. Well, becauſe of unbelief they were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed, leaſt he ſpare not thee.*

In the ſubject we have been treating of there is not only an argument for the truth of our religion, but likewiſe an admonition to us to take heed to ourſelves. For from us too the glorie may depart, if we emprove not our privileges. The ſeven churches of Aſia, in the Revelation, were warned, and moſt of them threatened with the removal of their candleſtick: unleſs they ſpeedily repented, and did the firſt works. Many Chriſtian churches, planted by Apoſtles of Jeſus, and watered by their fellow-laborers, have fallen to decay and ruin. The name and title of Chriſtian will not ſave particular perſons in the day of judgement. Nor will the name of Jeſus, or Chriſtian, alone, ſecure churches  
and

DISC. and societies in this world. There should


III. be not only the leaves of a fair profession, but also fruits of love and peace, and all the branches of righteousness and true holiness. Christians should have heavenly minds, and their lives should be adorned with acts of meekness, patience, self-denial, and zeal for each other's welfare. With such Christ will dwell. They honor him, and he will honor them with a distinguished care and protection.

4. *From this argument we may be able to form some judgement concerning the general conversion of the Jews.* It is not a likely thing. If ever it is to be, there does not appear good reason to think it nigh.

*It is not a likely †† thing, considering, that their prejudices are still very great and strong, and have been so all along from the beginning: notwithstanding the great care of the Apostles of Jesus, and other zealous preachers of the gospel, to remove them.*

If ever there is to be a general conversion of the Jews, there is no good reason to think it *near at hand*. The advantages afforded

†† See *Lightfoot's Works*. Vol. i. p. 375. 376.

afforded to believers in Jesus as the Christ, D I S C.  
from the dispersion and afflictive circum- III.  
stances of the Jewish people, in their ar-   
gument for the truth of their religion,  
lead us to this apprehension. So long as  
there remain great numbers of Gentil peo-  
ple unconverted to the faith of Jesus, who  
are strangers to God and his Christ: so  
long as there is, and is likely to be, a stren-  
uous opposition made by many, several  
ways, against the Christian doctrine: so  
long, it is likely, the Jews will remain,  
and continue to be a distinct people, scat-  
tered abroad upon the face of the earth:  
forasmuch as their subsistence in that man-  
ner tends mightily to awaken men, and to  
confirm and strengthen divers arguments  
for the truth of the Christian religion.

Nor is there any injustice done them  
herein. As they at first generally rejected  
Jesus, they were justly rejected and cast off  
as a people. But still, by the faith and  
reception of the Gentils, they are called  
upon and excited to believe in Jesus. And  
whenever any of them are awakened, and  
convinced, and converted, they shall be  
accepted.

DISC. St. Paul's argument in this context leads  
 III. us into this way of thinking. *Have they*  
 ~~~~~ *stumbled, that they should fall? By no means.*  
But rather through their fall salvation is
come unto the Gentils, for to provoke them
to jealousy.

And his words at the twenty-fifth verse of the chapter may be reckoned strong to this purpose: *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mysterie: least ye be wise in your own conceit: that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulnesse of the Gentils be come in: that is, as an admired expofitor paraphra- seth the verse: "For * to prevent your " being conceited of yourselves, my bre- " thren, let me make known unto you " what has been yet undiscovered to the " world; that the blindness, which has " fallen upon a part of Israel, shall remain " upon them but till the time come, " wherein the whole Gentil world shall " enter into the Church, and make profes- " sion of Christianity."*

This may be the thing intended by our
 Luke xxi. Lord, when he says: *And Jerusalem shall*
 24 *be*

* Lacke upon the place.

be troden down of the Gentils, until the times of the Gentils be fulfilled. DISC.
III.

As for St. Paul's words at the twenty-sixth verse, they are understood by some in this manner: *And so all Israel shall be saved*: "And ** so all Israel shall be converted to the Christian faith, and the whole nation become the people of God:" that is, when the fulness of the Gentils is come in.


But I rather think the meaning to be: "In this way, according to this method of divine providence, all † good and well-disposed men, both Jews and Gentils, *will be saved*; that is, will be brought into the way of salvation, taught by the gospel; or, will embrace the means of salvation, proposed therein; the Jews being all along provoked to emulation by the Gentils, and the Gentils being confirmed in their faith by the circumstances of the Jewish people."

I

How-

** Locke, as before.

† Πάντα δὲ Ἰσραὴλ καλεῖ τὰς πιστεύουσας, ἢτε ἐξ Ἰουδαίων ἔσιν, τὴν φυσικὴν συγγένειαν πρὸς τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἔχοντες, ἢτε ἐξ ἐθνῶν, κατὰ τὴν τῆς πίστεως εὐγένειαν αὐτῶν συναριθμοῦνται. Theodoret, in loc. T. 3. p. 91. D.

DISC. However this seems evident, that as in
 III.  past ages the Jews had been of great service in upholding religion in the world, and from them at length it was brought to the Gentils; so, if in the end the Jews are converted to the faith of Christ, it will be through the Gentils: and probably, upon some more general conversion of them than has yet been. So says St. Paul:

Rom. xi. *For as ye, Gentils, in time past have not*
 30. 31. *believed in God, yet now have obtained mercie through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercie they also may obtain mercie.*

And possibly, we may now perceive, that some notions concerning the conversion of the Jews are false and groundless, or at best doubtful and uncertain. For some imagine, that upon their general conversion to the Christian faith, they will be established again in the land of Judea, and that Jerusalem, with it's temple, will be rebuilt with great splendour and magnificence.

But

But †† that supposition is lyable to many difficulties and objections. Should their ancient polity be restored, and they be a distinct people in the land of Israel, separate from all the other people of the earth? The || gospel revelation does not encourage such a state of things. And therefore it is not reasonable to expect, it should be brought in by extraordinarie interpo-

DISC.
III.

I 2

sitions

†† See the sentiments of Origen, and Chrysostom, and others, in Grotius upon Luke xxi. 24. And see Lightfoot's Works. Vol. i. p. 375.—377. and p. 737. 738. What was Eusebe's sentiment upon this point, may be seen in his Commentaries upon the Psalms, not published, till since the time of Grotius. Διδάσκουσαι ἔυχεται τυχεῖν τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν συναγωγῆς, ἵν' ἦδη πότε τῆς διασπορᾶς ἀπαλλαγείητες ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συναχθῶσιν ὅπερ ἰσραῖοι μὲν φαντάζονται μέλλεν ἔσεσθαι ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ, ἐπισάνθη αὐτοῖς τῷ ἡλειμμένῳ. ἡμεῖς δὲ κ. λ. Euseb. in Psalm. 105. al. 106. ver. 47. 48. p. 690. edit. Montf.

|| “ — Not that Jerusalem should be built again, when the fulness of the Gentils is come in, which the Jews conceit: nor that then the Jews should be unblindfolded, and become a gospel church, as the Gentils had been. For what a strange world does such a supposal imagine? And how often does the gospel gainsay such distinctiveness and peculiarity?” Lightfoot. Vol. i. p. 377. The same author says, “ That the calling of the Jews shall be in the places of their residence among Christians: and that their calling shall not cause them to change place, but condition.” p. 738.

DISC. positions of providence, under the dispen-
 III. sation of the Messiah.

Should they sacrifice again, as in times past? The law of Moses is no longer in force, and the sacrifices appointed therein are below the dignity of the gospel institution.

Moreover our Lord plainly declared, that all distinctions of places should cease under the gospel: and that worship would no longer be peculiarly acceptable at Jerusalem, or any other city.

The continued subsistence of a large body of the Jewish people in several parts of the world, and the present desolation of their countrey, or the small number of inhabitants therein, are thought by some to amount to a strong argument, that they shall themselves return thither, and take possession of it again. But from what has been now said it appears, that the fore-mentioned state of things answers very valuable ends and purposes: though the Jewish people should never be reinstated in their ancient inheritance.

It is likely therefore, that whenever there is a general conversion of the Jews

to the faith of Jesus; they will become D I S C.
Christians indeed, and their fondness for III.
the rites of the Mosaic law will cease: }
that they and the Gentils may become one
people, and one sheepfold under Christ,
the universal Lord of the Church, the Sa-
viour, and the Bishop of Souls.

Such an event we have good reason to wish and pray for, that the fulness of the Gentils may be brought in, and that then the blindness, which in part has long happened to the Jewish people, may be entirely removed.

In the mean time we should both labor for the conversion of ignorant Gentils, and do what lies in our power to provoke the people of the Jews to jealousy by the simplicity of our worship, the purity of our faith, and the goodness of our lives. †

5. *We*

† *I have not denied, that there will be a general conversion of the Jewish people. Nor would I be understood to be positive, that they shall never return to the land of Canaan: though I have mentioned some difficulties, attending the supposition. And if indeed they are some time not only to be converted, but also restored; I am persuaded, that their restoration will be accomplished in a manner becoming the Divine Majesty, and that all people will rejoice therein. I am moreover of opinion, that if ever this be brought about, their worship thenceforward will be entirely spiritual and evangelical.*

DISC. 5. *We must be hence induced to admire*
 III. *the exceeding riches of the wisdom, and good-*
 ness of God, who has graciously afforded
 mankind in all ages helps for knowing the
 great truths of religion.

God ever spoke to all in the voice of reason. When that was not duly attended to, and the danger of universal ignorance became great; he separated a familie, that of Abraham, from the rest of the world: and of a part of it he made a great nation, to whom he gave a law; who thereby were set up as a lamp upon a hill, to lighten the world around them. And among them, by frequent interpositions of his wise and powerful providence, religion was maintained, and they were kept a distinct nation, enjoying many privileges, until the Messiah came, and religion was spread far and wide in the nations of the earth, according to promises made long before. And then, the Jews generally rejecting that blessing, God cast them off from being his people, as they had been, and poured down upon them tokens of his displeasure: yet not destroying them utterly,

terly, and making use of them, even under afflictions, to support the truth of his Son's mission and authority, whom they had crucified. DISC.
III.

Nor is there herein any injustice, or unkindness, as has been often observed in these discourses. For still they are provoked to jealousy by those who are taken in their room. And in this respect they now enjoy an advantage, with regard to religion, beyond what the Gentils had formerly. For then it was the nation of the Jews only, to whom God was known, and many of the nations of the earth were remote from them. But the unbelieving Jews for the most part live among, or near the followers of Jesus, and have better opportunities to inform themselves of the principles of their religion, than the Gentils had of old to know that of the Israelites.

And the wisdom of divine providence in the former and the later dispensation is admirable, though above our full comprehension: as the Apostle observes at the end of this chapter, addressing himself to
Gentil

D I S C. *Gentil Christians: For as ye in times past
 III. have not believed God, yet have now obtained
 mercie through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercie they may obtain mercie. For God has concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercie upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? or who has given unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To whom be glorie forever.*

*Acts xv.
 18.*

6. We may hence conclude, that *known unto God are all his works from the beginning.* It is an observation of St. James at the council of Jerusalem.

We may infer from the event, that God foresaw from the beginning the general apostasie of mankind. And when he called Abraham, and separated him to himself from the rest of the world, he foresaw all the consequences of that gracious
 cious

cious purpose and choice: that religion would be in some measure upheld in the world, till the Messiah came: and that when he was come, after the space of many ages from the time of the first promise concerning him, the various ordinances of positive appointment, delivered to the Jews by Moses, which had been of use to preserve them in the land of Judca from mixing with their idolatrous neighbors, till he came, would likewise serve to keep them a separate people, wherever they lived, for a long succession of ages, to bear testimonie to his ancient covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and themselves: whilst still they would have opportunities of knowing the religion of the Messiah, and whenever their hearts should be touched, they might be again received, and partake in all the blessings of his kingdom.

7. It may be reasonably supposed, that *it will be delightful in the heavenly state to know and observe the various methods of divine providence, relating to his creatures, in the world where we have lived: parti-*

DISC. cularly to observe the manifold designs of
 III. wisdom and goodnesse with regard to the con-
 cerns of religion.

A wise and discerning person has now great delight and profitable entertainment in reviewing these works of divine providence, as recorded in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. But the discoveries in a future state may be much more full and compleat, and consequently more delightful. We may then see the overspreading deluge of ignorance in some places and ages, the wonderful steps by which light was restored, and all the virtue of the instruments raised up by God, and employed by him; the faithful and disinterested zeal, with which they served God, and promoted the welfare of their fellow-creatures; and how even afflictive events subserved beneficial designs.

But this review of things will not be pleasing and comfortable, except in a state of ease and happinesse. For supposing any such extensive knowledge in regions of despair and miserie; it could not alleviate, but must aggravate the distresse.


It

It would not be satisfaction, but vexation for any one, finally and justly rejected of God, to look back on the long space and numerous periods of time, and observe the kind provisions made by the divine being for the illumination and salvation of men. For such an one, I say, to survey the scenes of divine providence, in several ages, and observe the time and place where he was fixed, having many advantages afforded him, and more in his power; but all abused, or neglected: whilst some others, less privileged, acted discreetly, honored God, and laid the foundation of future happiness: to such an one this knowledge would be tormenting and vexatious.

But though such extensive knowledge should not be the portion of those who are finally separated from God, there will be remembrance of things past; what men have done, or neglected to do; what means of knowledge were afforded them in this world, what convictions they had of duty, what helps they enjoyed for securing a virtuous conduct, and

DISC. strengthening them against temptations;
 III. and how they failed to improve those many advantages.

How piercing must it be in the place of torment, for a descendent of Abraham, who lived in the time of our Lord, to recollect the gracious words he heard from his mouth: that though Jesus taught in the streets of his city, and in the most winning manner promised everlasting life to such as believed in him, and obeyed him: and though he performed numerous miracles, healing and beneficial, suited to the goodnesse of his doctrine, and tokens of inexpressible mildnesse and benevolence; yet he despised and abused this amiable person! And though he knew, the Prophets had spoken of a great deliverer to arise among them; and it was the prevailing opinion, that was the very time prefixed for his coming; he would not hearken to him, nor regard him, because of some groundless prejudices, and too strong an affection for worldly possessions and enjoyments.

In like manner, for certain, to others D I S C.
also the recollection of religious privi- III.
leges, not improved, will be matter of 
torment and vexation.

Children of pious parents, who *set at* Prov. i.
nought all their counsel, and will none of 25. 30.
their reproof!

Servants, who are averse to the order and restraint of religious families, and offended at daily devotions, and frequent readings of the Scriptures or books of piety; and choose the habitations of the wicked, where there is not so much as a form of godliness, or an appearance of religion; and prefer the company and manners of the dissolute, who are a reproach to human nature!

A Christian, partaking in all the ordinances of the gospel, yet acting contrarie to the obligations he is under!

A minister in Gods house, shewing to others the way of salvation, but not walking in it himself!

How grievous must the recollection of such advantages be hereafter, if finally abused and disregarded! No consolation
can

DISC. can be given to men then. The sad reflection on their own folly will be unavoidable and incurable.

III.


May we therefore be wise to know and mind the things of our peace now, in this our day. Let us secure time for serious reflections on our conduct and our advantages. Let us compare our light and knowledge with our actions and purposes. For between these there ought to be an agreement. Where much is given, much may be expected. *And the servant, who knew his lord's will, and did it not, will be beaten with many stripes.*

Luke xii.
47.

These are certain truths. And these things will some time afford a pleasing and comfortable, or an afflictive and sorrowful recollection and remembrance. It is an awful and awakening observation of our Lord: *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world: and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* If any of us should perish, have we not reason to dread this aggravated condemnation? For we must be sensible, we have had sufficient instruction to assure

John iii.
19.

assure us, that *things above* are preferable to *things on this earth*: and that nothing ought so to divert, or engage us, as to prevent our laying up to ourselves treasures in heaven: and that we ought so to order all our present concerns, and the whole of our conversation, as may best promote our most important interest, the everlasting salvation and happinesse of our souls.

DISC.
III.
Col. iii. 2.

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