FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST:

SHewing, That

I. It was not to the destruction of Jerusalem.

II. That it is to be to the Establishment of that Kingdom which Daniel foretold the God of Heaven would set up.—Chap. ii. and vii.

By the AUTHOR of

ANTICHRIST IN THE FRENCH CONVENTION,

AND

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

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1796.
TO THE

MOST REVEREND

BENCH OF BISHOPS.

MY LORDS,

MAY I take leave to recommend this and my two former publications * to the perusal of your Lordships? I shall make no apology, for if my hypothesis is right, it brings too much comfort to the people of England, and too much joy to her church, to stand in need of any; and if it is wrong, it is not worth an apology. I ask attention only, not patronage; I seek truth, not reputation: which latter, if I am right, must of course perish with the present system of things in this world, ere it be grown up to maternity. I have reason to hope, however, that what I have advanced may be

* An Enquiry into the Second Coming of our Saviour.
Antichrist in the French Convention.
thought not merely the offspring* of an enthusiastic fancy: it has been built on the ancient opinions of many learned and pious men, as far as the foundations appeared to be found. The British Critic has done me the justice to recommend my first publication; and the Reviewer, in the Gentleman's Magazine, has spoken handsomely of them both; and as this proceeds upon the same grounds as the other two, I hope it will not be found wholly unworthy of that attention which, with the utmost deference and respect, I thus presume to solicit, though without a name.

* It sometimes happens that men of moderate talents hit upon what those of superior abilities may have overlooked; should this be the case in the present instance, or should any thing here thrown out excite those superior abilities to a fresh investigation into the prophetic writings, my labours will not be unrewarded.
P R E F A C E.

In the Preface to my Enquiry into the Second Advent of Christ, it was mentioned, that having seen Dr. Whitby's Paraphrase and Annotations on the New Testament after my sheets were sent to the press, I was not at all discouraged from suffering the publication to go on, by any arguments I had met with in Dr. Whitby's work; but was the more convinced the subject still required a more close and strict investigation. In the following Tract, I have endeavoured to justify the above assertion; and as the truth of my hypothesis depends much on the construction which shall be put on the 24th chapter of St. Matthew, I have ventured to lay before the public a review of Dr. Whitby's Annotations on that chapter,
with reasons why I dissent from his opinion; together with some observations on certain passages in Isaiah, in confirmation of what I have advanced. If I have been guilty of repetition, I trust nevertheless that the subject has been in some measure varied by being thrown into different points of view, which in so intricate an investigation may have its use.
THOUGH it may seem the height of presumption to call in question the opinions of so great a man as Dr. Whitby, on which our church places so firm a reliance; yet I trust, a candid discussion of any passage in Scripture about which the learned have so widely differed in opinion, will ever meet with a favourable reception, especially when the mover of it has no idea of dictating opinions to the world, but writes to promote an enquiry into the apparent errors of former interpreters, in order to have the truth more clearly ascertained.

B

There
There are some points advanced by Dr. Whitby, which, as I cannot comprehend, so, unless more convincing reasons than any I have yet seen can be adduced in their support, I cannot assent to; for the authority of man, however great, is not like that of God, infallible.

In his table at the end of his first volume, he has this assertion, "All which Christ says in Matt. xxiv. relates to the destruction of Jerusalem," vol. i. b. And from some slighting expressions which have more than once escaped him against Dr. Burnet and Mr. Whiston, I judge he has been led to such a conclusion more by animosity against his opponents than by the dictates of sound reason; for though it has been understood by many learned divines that the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem might likewise be applied to the destruction of the world, the former being a type of the latter, yet it does not seem to follow that all the signs mentioned in xxiv of Matt. will, vice versa, apply to the destruction of Jerusalem.

* See Poole's Notes.
doubt myself whether Christ alludes at all to the destruction of Jerusalem till he comes to verse 15, where he speaks of the abomination of desolation, for I rather incline to think he takes up the last question first, with regard to the end of the world; telling them, as St. Paul afterwards tells the Thessalonians, 2, ch. ii. v. 3. to let no man deceive them, for that end they enquired after would not come till after such and such things as he there relates had come to pass. He then proceeds in regular order to speak first of the destruction of the temple to verse 28, then of his second coming to verse 30. ch. xxv. and then of the end of the world; for here certainly are three answers to three questions (for the information perhaps of future Christians), whether the Apostles meant to ask three questions or not: nor can I agree with Dr. Whitby, that St. Mark and St. Luke would in that case contradict St. Matthew †, because their narrative falls short of his, when as far as their nar-

* His warning against false Christs in verse 5. is repeated in verse 24, and therefore may well be supposed to relate to another time and another event.

† Appendix, p. 263.
rative goes, it confirms his, more especially as St. Luke makes a separate question about the kingdom in ch. xvii. Where three writers are all equally inspired: he that writes most fully, must be looked to as an expositor of what has been more concisely stated by the other two.

Dr. Whitby says, page 255, "that to inform his Apostles of the times and signs of the destruction of Jerusalem, was all our Saviour had to say, because it was all they meant to ask; for surely," continues he, "he answers fully who answers all that is intended to be asked." Yet, in page 258, he says, "We grant that the latter part of Matthew 24 and the whole of 25 belong to the day of judgment; nor is it," says he, "any wonder that our Lord passes from it, i.e. the destruction of Jerusalem, to a discourse on that day, it being his usual manner* to advance to a discourse of the highest

* In such intricate subjects some allowances must be made for the different times and different points in which they are viewed, before the writer is charged with inconsistency; yet, where he gives two opinions that are at variance with each other, we are surely at liberty to adopt which we like best.
moment.” It remains then surely for us to distinguish where he begins to make that transition.

I must confess I am at a loss to find from whence Dr. Whitby collects that the παροιμία or coming of our Lord, was to take place at the destruction of Jerusalem. He asserts, indeed, that St. James expresses himself to that purpose in chap. 5, but I see no reason to understand him so: that day is frequently in Scripture said to be nigh at hand, though it might still be at a great distance according to our computations; neither will the Lord be slack concerning his promise, though some men may count him so; but that his παροιμία was to take place at the destruction of Jerusalem can by no means be understood from his discourse in Matthew 24, for it has a direct contrary tendency. He warns his Apostles in a very particular manner not to give credit to any such report, though it should be asserted in the strongest manner possible; that many impostors would appear in his name, and if it

* At his παροιμία the τις Χριστος are to rise from the dead.

were
were possible, deceive the very elect, but that they should by no means listen to them. Should it be said he was in the desert, or in the secret chambers, they should believe it not; for that when he should come, the fact would be self-evident, and as clear as the lightning shining from one end of heaven to the other. But it can by no means be inferred from hence that it was to happen at this time, for he is not speaking of the time, but the manner of his coming; yet Dr. Whitby puts his own construction on this and the following 28th verse, and grounds his principal argument on that construction, which appears to me to be evidently an erroneous construction, for the following reason: that in the 13th of St. Mark, and the 21st of St. Luke, we do not find the above-mentioned 27th and 28th verses of the 24th of St. Matthew, but we do find them again in the 17th chapter of St. Luke; in which chapter we do not find one word said of the destruction of Jerusalem, but the question and answer relate solely to the coming of Christ's kingdom*, inasmuch

* Nothing is said here of the gospel being to be preached to all the world before his coming.
that Dr. Whitby acknowledges, in his note on the 21st verse, "that the kingdom here cannot mean Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem;" nevertheless, when he comes to the last verse, he cannot forbear reverting to his former favourite explanation, that "where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together," signifies the Roman standards collected about Jerusalem. Whereas, this passage seems to me to be much better explained by Poole thus: Where he shall be, there will his saints be gathered unto him, Luke xvii. 37. (Where the slain are, there is he, Job xxxix. 30.) it being a proverbial expression and meaning no more than this, that mankind would be collected in his day to that place where their most interesting concerns should lie, in like manner and as certainly as eagles assemble round a dead carcase: and where should their most interesting concerns be but round the person of their Lord and Saviour? And I am the more confirmed in this opinion when I consider the two foregoing verses in Luke 17. as alluding to the same event which St. Paul speaks of in the 4th chap.
1 Thessalonians, viz. that those who shall be alive at the coming of our Lord, will be caught up into the air to be ever with him; that is, all those who, like the wise virgins, have taken care to provide oil for their lamps, while those who have neglected to provide it will be left behind.

St. Matthew 24. 29. Our Saviour proceeds to tell them what shall happen immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem; that is, events which shall then begin to take place, not among the Jews, as Dr. Whitby supposes, whose city and polity should have been then destroyed, but in the Roman empire, the seat of his church; viz. that the sun would be darkened, and the moon would not give her light; that is, that the light of the gospel* would be obscured by numberless heresies, as it began to be in the reign of Titus (See Echard’s History); 2dly. That the stars would fall from heaven; that is, that the churches which had professed christianity would aposta-

* See Revelations 12, where the woman is clothed with the sun, and Poole’s Notes.
tize, for our Saviour himself explains stars to mean the angels of the churches, Rev. i. 20. Thirdly, that the powers of heaven would be shaken; that is, as has been generally understood, that the governments of this world would be ready to fall away, and then would appear the sign of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven; which Dr. Whitby, by an unaccountable retrogression, explains to be signs of what had already happened, and to mean the Roman army coming to destroy Jerusalem, notwithstanding it had been said in the preceding verse, that these things were to happen after the tribulation of those days in which Jerusalem had been destroyed. In like manner he quotes a passage from the Revelation of St. John, to prove this coming of our Saviour to be to the destruction of Jerusalem, though St. John wrote the Revelation after that destruction had happened. See the note on verse xxx, chap. 24. Which words of St. John, he says, relate to this very time, and might be a vision seen by St. John before the destruction of Jerusalem, notwithstanding St. John writes thus in the future tense:

"Every
"Every eye shall see him, and they who have pierced him and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn." Which last words are the words likewise of St. Matthew, and there can be little doubt but that our Saviour and St. John foretold the same event. St. John, indeed, frequently writes of the future as past, because perhaps he had seen it represented in vision; but to understand that he was speaking of the past* when he was foretelling future things, would be to invert the order of prophecy, and confuse it with history.

Dr. Whitby seems to lay some stress on the word immediately, see his note on verse 29, 31, and 34; and in his appendix in answer to Mr. Whiston, p. 256, he writes thus: "Is it not evident that all these things which Mr. Whiston refers to the day of judgment were to happen immediately after that tribulation, and not almost two thousand years after it? And in page 258 and 212, he says, this very destruction was foretold by

* His answer to this objection, see page 276, where he seems to run into confusion inexplicable, by applying St. John's. words to another event.

Joel.
Joel. Now let us examine when and in what words Joel foretells this destruction of Jerusalem. He foretells it eight hundred years before Christ in these words: "For the day of the Lord o, eth; it is nigh at hand: which is sufficient to shew that these prophecies are not to be expected to be so speedily accomplished as the words seem at first sight to import; for a thousand years are with God as one day, and one day as a thousand years. See Dr. Whitby's own note on that passage, 2 Peter 3; likewise Poole's note, Rev. i. 1.

But if all those particular and remarkable events foretold by our Saviour in Matthew 24 had really happened at the destruction of Jerusalem; if he himself had appeared in the clouds as manifestly as the lightning shines from one end of heaven to the other; if all the tribes of the earth had mourned when they looked on him whom they pierced; if he had then gathered his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other; if of two men in the field, one had been taken and the other left;
left; if of two women grinding in the mill, one had been taken and the other left; if those wise and faithful servants therein mentioned had at that time received the promised rewards of their fidelity, there can be no doubt but that the completion of all these things would have been manifested to the world, and as faithfully recorded to posterity as the prophecies which were fulfilled at his crucifixion, at which time the most trisling circumstances were noticed, even that they parted his garments among them, and cast lots upon his vesture.

In the 9th of Hebrews, verse 28, it is said, "Unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." But if his second coming was to be to the destruction of Jerusalem, that destruction and this salvation must mean the same thing; yet though Dr. Whitby has put that construction on the kingdom and redemption, I do not find that he has done the same on this salvation: yet that this salvation, the kingdom, and the redemption, mean
the same thing; who can doubt? Should it be said, that what was destruction to the Jew was salvation to the Christian, would it not be to fritter away the glorious promises of God to a most unworthy construction, by making them end in the escape of a few miserable people with their lives from the destruction of the city?

In the 23d chapter of St. Matthew, last verse, our Saviour tells the people of Jerusalem, "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This passage Dr. Whitby tries hard to explain as relating to the destruction of Jerusalem; but with what success let the reader judge, when it appears that the Doctor himself is not satisfied with his own proposition; but after twisting the meaning of the word ἀνάγει to little purpose, he writes thus. "If this exposition should not be allowed, I would willingly refer this to the time mentioned by St. Paul, Romans 11. 25. Isaiah 52. 20. When the Deliverer shall come out of Sion,
and turn away iniquity from Jacob, and so all Israel shall be saved (he adds) by conversion to the Lord, and saying, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. But if he admits they were not to see the Lord till their conversion, and that conversion has not yet taken place, he admits of course that they were not to see him at the destruction of Jerusalem, and it will follow that the 30th verse of chapter 24 can have no reference to that time. In short, such admission must entirely destroy his whole exposition of chap. 24 of Matthew.

Nor is this the only passage in Dr. Whitby so at variance* with itself as to require explanation. In his appendix, p. 274, vol. 1.

* I am far from meaning to speak disrespectfully of Dr. Whitby's works: it is not to be wondered at that they should have some inconsistencies. What has been finished with so much labour and ingenuity must have been the result of a long study, and the mind must have been burdened beyond its abilities to bear. In this short treatise I fear my errors also are more than I am aware of. In my last there is a note with regard to the cities of Israel, which was too hastily adopted without due consideration of the context, page 12.
on Matthew 24, he affirms, that the destruction of Jerusalem was to be attended by the real presence of Christ (παρουσία); yet, in vol. 1, page 256, he says, “It is proved that this 30th verse of Matthew 24 cannot relate to his second coming.” How are we to understand this? If he came at all, surely it must be his second coming. In verse 2, page 458 and 466, he endeavours to prove, that the Jewish nation is meant by the Man of Sin, or Antichrist; and page 459 was revealed so to be when the Lord did consume her with the breath of his mouth. Here he speaks of Antichrist as past; yet, in his discourse on the Millennium, page 9, he speaks of Antichrist as to come, for he says, “I believe, that after the fall of Antichrist, there shall be such a glorious state of the church, &c. to continue a thousand years during Satan’s binding, &c.” And again, page 10, “After the fall of Antichrist, and before the second coming of our Lord to judgment, the Jews shall be converted, and become a famous church again.” But if our Lord is to destroy Antichrist by the brightness of his coming,
coming, as the Doctor acknowledges he is, then of course he must come to do it; and therefore, as the happy state of the church is to be after the fall of Antichrist, so likewise must it be after that coming of our Lord, therefore that coming cannot be to the final judgment and to the end of the world. The only difficulty that occurs to me is in the 34th verse. This generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be done (Luke, fulfilled). Perhaps the word γενετήρα might more properly be rendered, till all these things shall be doing, that is, taken in hand to be done; but all difficulty is done away by admitting Stackhouse's definition of a generation to be right, viz. that it means one of the three ages of the world, that is, two thousand years. Nor is Dr. Whitby without his difficulties in establishing the kingdom of Christ at his resurrection. In his note, 1 Cor. 15, page 205, "All power is given me in heaven and in earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. he says, Why this reward should not cease when the work is done; why his dominion over death should not cease when death
death is destroyed; his power of giving eternal life, or judging when all are judged, and none are left to be crowned, he confesses he does not understand. But are not these strong arguments that his kingdom was not set up at the resurrection? that his work was not done, that death was not destroyed, that all are not yet judged, and that some are still left to be crowned? For when all these things have been done, of which the destruction of death is to be the last, he is to deliver up the kingdom to the Father. He was risen, it is true, and had opened to us the gates of everlasting life, but those gates were not to be entered till a future period. As Samuel tells Saul, 1 Samuel, chap. xv. 28. "The Lord hath this day rent the kingdom of Israel from thee, and given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou." Yet it did not take place till some years after.

Though Dr. Whitby quotes the Prophets in confirmation of his hypothesis, yet he confesses, in his Appendix to the 11th chapter of the Romans, page 110, that their
prophecies have not been fully accomplished; and this confession leads me to a supposition that this may be a mistake, owing not to any deficiency in the completion of the prophecies, but to an error in his interpretation of them. Respecting the kingdom of Christ, he refers to the prophet Daniel, chap. 2 and 7; which shews, that by the kingdom we have here the same meaning, and I am willing to try the question by this rule. Was then this prophecy fulfilled at the resurrection? Was the fourth kingdom, or Roman government, supported by ten kings in the days of our Saviour? Or was that government destroyed at his resurrection, as it is to be upon the establishment of his kingdom? No. It was in the zenith of its power, and governed by one arbitrary monarch, who held all other states in subjection; it flourished for ages after, and at length, under its eighth form of government, the papal power, has continued down to the present day. Let us now consider how it may be fulfilled in these times. This eighth head, or papal power, since the imperial power that restrained it from shew-
ing itself was taken away, has continued al-
most one thousand two hundred and sixty
years; or time times and a half. It has been
supported by ten kings of late, till at length
another power diverse from them arose
amongst them, and has plucked up three
of them by the roots. This power has
spoken great words against the Most High;
he has worn out, and has threatened to
wear out, the people that profess the true
worship of God; he has thought to change
times and laws. What more is there left of
the prophecy to be accomplished, but that
his dominion be taken away, and that the
stone that crushed him become a great
mountain? Dr. Whitby says (2 Ep. Theff.
page 472), "At the dissolution of the Ro-
man empire in 476, when the restraining
power was taken away, they saw no Anti-
christ appearing, for the Pope and his clergy
were then orthodox." I answer, The impe-
rial power (that ὁ κατεχόμενος) was not taken
away at that time, for it was only the sixth
head of that government that was destroyed
in Augustulus; the imperial power still
flourished in the Gothic Emperors, the fe-
venth
venth head; but when they were driven out in 536, the historian says, “Now Rome became a member of that empire of which heretofore she had been the head.” The eighth head succeeded in the papal power, which agrees with the prophecy explained by the angel, Rev. 17. For that this prophecy in the Revelations, and the above prophecy in Daniel, allude to the same events, is plain; one speaks of the fourth empire on earth, which every one understands to be the Roman, which was first divided into two, and afterwards into ten, answering to the legs and toes of a man; and the other speaks of that great city which sat on seven hills, and ruled at that time over the kings of the earth.

I have insisted the more on this subject of Christ’s second Advent, because I find many learned writers have given into the same opinion as Dr. Whitby; but Dr. Stackhouse does not seem to join in it heartily, for page 1319, History of B. he says, Dr. Whitby’s is the popular opinion at present, which seems to imply a doubt at least; and in page 1459, he
says, this Advent was not personal, meaning his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem. But if it was not personal, how could it be that coming mentioned in Matt. xxiv. 30? at which coming all the tribes of the earth are to mourn and to see him coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. It remains only to make a few observations on two passages of Isaiah, which appear to me to relate to this second Advent of our Lord. I think it cannot be denied me but that the 25th chapter of Isaiah relates to this event, where it is said, Thou hast effected wonderful things, counsels of old, promises immutably true. He shall take away the veil that was spread over all nations: he shall utterly destroy death for ever, and wipe away the tear from off all faces. Here then is not a word said of the final judgment; but his care and protection of his people, as well as his wrath and destruction dealt out to his adversaries, are represented in lively colours in this and the two next chapters. And it appears, chap. xxvi. 10. that even in this his kingdom rebellion will still exist.
"Though mercy be shewn to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the very land of rectitude he will deal perverely, &c." So that there will be authorities and powers even yet to be subdued, 1 Cor. xv. ver. 24, 25.

If it be allowed that this 25th chapter relates to the second Advent of our Lord, may we not reasonably suppose that the foregoing 24th chapter may relate to those signs* which are to precede his coming? viz. that the powers of the heaven shall be shaken. Here perhaps we may find the right key to open the door of this prophetic mystery; and may understand that he meant by this expression, confusion, and a total overthrow of all order amongst mankind in the first place, and in the end misery, desolation, and death; all which are here painted in the strongest colours. The

* Dr. Lowth understands this 24th chapter to relate to the judgments impending over the Jews. He understands the 25th chapter to relate to the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and therefore concludes these two chapters have no intimate connection. Let the reader well consider this. See Lowth's notes.

The
first figures in the piece bear a striking resemblance to liberty and equality, and the latter pursue them as their shadow. The scene is still in Moab. There is nothing said of the restoration of the Jews* till chapter 27. We will now pass on to chapter 60, where we shall see the same events in a different point of view, but preceded by a similar apostacy, disorder, and calamity, as in chapter 24. “Arise! be thou enlightened, for thy light is come.” This I understand to be addressed to the Christian church (the woman in the wilderness, Rev. 12) after the expiration of time times and a half. It could not be meant to be addressed to her at his first coming, for how could she be called hated, forsaken, afflicted, rejected, before she had been in existence? And as it is not at all consistent with what

* The condition on which the Jews are to be restored shews how very jealous God is of whatever may have the least tendency to idolatry: why then do we ornament our altars with figures of men, doves, crucifixes, or triangles? They are useless at best: they may be offensive. Hearts as deeply impressed with a sense of God's goodness as they ought to be, need no such monitors to devotion. Exodus xx. 25.
we understand of his kingdom, that he should have smitten her in his wrath after his kingdom had been set up, therefore we may hence conclude that his kingdom is to be set up at the time when he shall take her into favour again, and not before; then may she come forth from her place of safety, for every nation that will not serve her shall perish; the sons of the oppressor shall come bending before her, and the days of her mourning shall cease. Dr. Lowth seems to think, that the six first verses of the 63d chapter have no connection with the foregoing or succeeding verses; but it should be considered, that it is usual with all the prophets, where they speak of the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and the restoration of his church, to intermix his triumphs over his enemies. For instance: in the 15th 1 Cor. his saints are to arise: he is to reign and to subdue his enemies. In Revelation, the witnesses arise; he gives rewards to his servants, and destroys them that destroy the earth: so, in the 26th chapter of Isaiah, is set forth the glory of his kingdom, the salvation of his people, the
the resurrection of his deceased saints, and the destruction of his enemies, insomuch that the earth shall no longer cover her slain—See Lowth's note on the 63d chapter. The concordance in all these passages is remarkable. Though I am far from laying it down as a rule that the events foretold in Isaiah are to succeed each other in course according to the course of the chapters, yet where two events are twice mentioned in the same order, it seems probable that they are to take place in that order. It is observable, that in both the above passages the Jews are not noticed till after Christ's second Advent, and the exaltation of the Christian church: and the manner in which they are introduced in the 63d chapter, verse 7, is very particular. They burst forth abruptly into praises of Jehovah, calling to mind his old loving kindnesses, lamenting their present fallen state, confessing their sins, and imploring his forgiveness; and in our Bible translation, in the 19th verse, evidently betray a jealousy of the Christians. Lowth calls it a formulary of humiliation, in order to their con-
conversion. He has altered the sense in verse 18 and 19; but whether they expressed that jealousy or not, it is very clear that the Lord provokes that jealousy in the 65th chapter, where he answers them thus: I am made known to those that asked not for me. Which provocation to jealousy was foretold by Moses, see Romans x, verse 19, and chap. xi. from all which I infer, that the Jews will not be received into favour till after our Lord's second Advent, and the exaltation of the Christian church. And it appears from chap. lxvi. verse 7, that their conversion will bring about the accession of the heathen world. If therefore all these events are to take place after our Lord's coming; and that they are to take place after it, appears from the order mentioned in 1 Cor. 15; surely his reign on earth must be of some duration. If the days of his people are to be as the days of a tree, so that they are to wear out the works of their own hands, it seems to confirm that passage in the Revelation, that he is to reign with his saints a thousand years. How or in what manner this reign is to be conducted it may not become us to be too inquisitive
inquisitive about, nor may it be within the reach of human knowledge to comprehend; but to say we will not believe the word of God because we cannot comprehend it, would be to give a reason that would not found well in the mouth of a christian, whatever it might do in that of a philosopher; for it would be to set up the reason of man as a judge of the ways of God, which are far above out of his sight, excepting so much of them as he has been pleased in his infinite goodness to reveal.

I shall only add a few words more respecting the 29th verse of Matthew 24, "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light," &c. My idea of this passage is this: that it was meant to comprehend in a few short words the state of his church at different periods from the destruction of Jerusalem till his second coming. That the light of the gospel was darkened immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, history, I trust, will bear me out in the proof, notwithstanding what Dr. Whitby has said of the orthodoxy of the pope and
and his clergy in the year 476. There is every reason to think that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost ceased soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, yet the arrogance of man still pretended to inspiration, and introduced schism and heresy, till at length he (God) smote his church in his anger, and permitted the powers of darkness, or as St. Paul expresses it, 2 Cor. 4. the God of this world to prevail for 1260 years, so as to drive away those who wished to worship God in the purity of the gospel into the wilderness, that is, into the distant and obscure corners of the earth. The Church of Rome, though now fallen from the right faith, yet as long as she professed the faith of Christ crucified, might still be called the church of God, as the Jewish church continued to be notwithstanding her worship was mixed with idolatrous rites; so the fall of the Popish churches from all profession of the faith may be meant by the stars falling from heaven, for it is to be hoped that the prophecy is not to be farther verified by the fall of any more Protestant churches, though we must lament to see how it is verified by the falling away
away of individuals among our own people. As to the rest, viz. that the powers of the heaven should be shaken, where can we look for an explanation of so short and obscure an expression, but to other passages of Scripture which evidently relate to the same subject, and treat of it more diffusely? If then the 25th and 60th chapters of Isaiah (not to weary my reader with farther references) are allowed to allude to his second coming, and the chapters immediately preceding each of them foretell anarchy, oppression*, apostacy, &c. with their concomitant evils, and to use Dr. Lowth's own words, "changing entirely the face of things, and destroying the whole polity both religious and civil;" surely they may safely be admitted as a clear and sufficient explanation of that expression of our Lord's, viz. The powers of the heaven shall be shaken.

That the 25th and 60th chapters of Isaiah do relate to the second coming of Christ ra-

* St. Paul foretells the same to the Thessalonians and Timothy, and St. Peter the same; but where is the happy state of the church previous to his coming foretold?
ther than to his first coming, I could wish my reader to pay some attention to. Dr. Lowth understands the 25th chapter to allude to the establishment of Christ's kingdom, but so as to be comprehended under the gospel dispensation. Herein we differ. The gospel has brought immortality to light, but it has not destroyed death as yet: it has been a light to lighten the Gentiles, but it has not as yet removed the veil from the face of all nations; it is but a few that walk in that light, and those few see through a glass darkly; but when his kingdom shall be established, we shall see face to face, and the tear will be wiped away from every eye.

As to the 60th chapter, I shall copy his words, which evidently speak of the kingdom of Christ, not as present, but as future.

"The subject of this chapter," says Dr. Lowth, "is the great increase and flourishing state of the church of God by the conversion and accession of the heathen nations to it, which is set forth in such ample and exalted terms as plainly shew that the full completion of this prophecy is reserved for future
This subject is displayed in the most splendid colours under a great variety of images highly poetical, designed to give a general idea of that perfect state of the church of God which we are taught to expect in the latter times, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and the Jews shall be converted and gathered from their dispensations, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms* of our Lord and his Christ.”

* If the kingdoms of this world are yet to become the kingdoms of our Lord, they could not have become so at the resurrection. To those who have recourse to a mediatory kingdom to explain this inconsistency, I have only to say, that the term mediatory kingdom seems to me to be of human invention, and not authorized by Scripture.

FINIS.