THE

TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY

PROVED.
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PROVED

FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES;

AND

ESPECIALLY FROM THE PROPHECIES OF JESUS HIMSELF.

BY

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PREFACE.

The following work originated in an idea which has long impressed my mind—that no proof of the truth of Christianity can be found so unanswerable as that which is supplied by the prophecies of Jesus himself.

Some learned divines of our Church have positively asserted that the Gospels were published previous to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Although I cordially agree in the fact, and rejoice that there is powerful evidence in support of it, I am unable to coincide in the opinion that its reality is placed beyond dispute. This I greatly lament, because if there existed an absolute proof of the Gospels having
been generally known at the time when there are strong reasons to believe they were published, namely, soon after the year sixty of the Christian era, the attacks of the caviller would cease, and the labours of the infidel would be at rest.

There is, however, another view in which the prophecies of Jesus may be seen, whence, according to my judgment, may be drawn irresistible evidence of the truth of his religion.

On the supposition that the prophecies which the Evangelists affirm to have been uttered by Jesus in the course of his ministry were not spoken by him, I will venture to maintain that no sane man who will read them with a sincere desire of discovering the truth, can solemnly declare his belief that they were forged, and produced as the words of Jesus after his death. Such a conclusion is not only in the highest degree improbable, but is altogether absurd and incredible.
These prophecies, therefore, stand on a sure foundation, and bear an overwhelming testimony to the divine wisdom which dwelt in the blessed Jesus, and which enabled him, "who being in the form of God took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man," to see things future in one view with the past and the present, and to show to his wondering hearers things that should be there-after.

There is a subject which, in the present stage to which it has attained, is calculated to afford additional evidence to the authenticity of the Gospel. I allude to the harmony of the three Evangelists—Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and, at the same time, to their discrepancies. In these there have been found difficulties not easy to be reconciled. They have been deeply entered into by the German theologians, and it is wonderful that the subject has drawn so little attention to it in England. One Englishman,
however, has laboured diligently in the cause—the present Bishop of Peterborough, who, in his younger years, spent a considerable time among the Germans, and understood their language and their theology.

The difficulties that surround this subject were formerly almost wholly obviated by a pretty general acquiescence in the doctrine of plenary inspiration, by which the knot was severed. But the inquisitive spirit of the German divines could not long submit to a doctrine which they believed to be sanctioned neither by reason nor scripture; accordingly the doctrine of plenary inspiration gave place to the belief that the Evangelists had been assisted in composing their gospels by having consulted, in common, an original manuscript, and this opinion prevailed, and its merits were discussed, during many years. At length it was found that this system was unequal to the solution of all the difficulties involved in the question satis-
factorily, and another notion was adopted by some, which prevails at present—that the Evangelists had access to many manuscripts, written and preserved by the disciples of Jesus, and by the friends and followers of the Apostles; and that from these manuscripts, from the personal information of the same friends or others, or from what they had witnessed themselves, they composed those lively oracles which we at present enjoy, and from whose pure fountains we draw that living water which springeth up unto everlasting life.

St. Luke, in the beginning of his gospel, seems to favour this idea of a number of early manuscripts existing; for if "many had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were most surely believed," it seems highly probable that there were also many who had set down memoranda of particular things which they had seen or heard.

Supposing it could be satisfactorily shown
that numerous original manuscripts existed, it would greatly diminish the importance of the question, when were the gospels of the Evangelists published? for such manuscripts could not have been written but by men who had heard the parables or seen the miracles of Christ himself. I hope none of my readers will quarrel with me under a fear that I am opposed to the doctrine of divine inspiration, for I am a firm believer in the faith that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God." But I am of opinion that a belief that the Apostles and Evangelists received divine inspiration whenever it became necessary, and that they were, in other respects, left free to the exercise of their own feelings and judgment, is more rational, and also more in accordance with the general tenor of scripture, than a belief in the doctrine of plenary inspiration.

When Christ told his Apostles that they should be "brought before governors and kings
for his sake and the gospel's," he cautioned them "that they should take no thought how or what they should speak, for that it should be given them in that same hour what they should speak, for it is not ye that speak," added our Lord, "but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."* Here divine aid was needful.

It is clear that the power to work miracles in the Apostles was limited, for the father who brought to Jesus his lunatic son to be cured, said, "I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him."†

St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, gives his advice to unmarried and widows, during the perilous times that impended over the Christians, not to marry, but to abide even as himself. But the married he commands, "yet not I," says the Apostle, "but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband."

* Matt. x. 18—20.
† Matt. xviii. 16. 1 Cor. vii. 8—10.
I now offer my little volume to the public; should it prove acceptable, and if it shall please the Almighty to spare me, it is my intention to add another volume on the character of Jesus, and on the powerful support that is given to the truth of our religion from the strength of its internal evidence.
INTRODUCTION.

Christianity is manifestly built upon the scriptures of the Old Testament, and its foundation stone is chiefly laid upon the prophecies therein contained; because, as the person declaring himself to be the promised Messiah has appeared in the world, and both he and his Apostles have appealed to these prophecies for the truth of his mission, his pretensions could not have been supported if the particular prophecies which foretold the advent of the Messiah had not found their completion in his birth, life, death, and resurrection. Ancient heathen writers asserted that there prevailed a constant opinion throughout the East that a person from Judea should obtain dominion. It is clear, also, from similar testimony, that the Jews were so deeply imbued with this notion,
that it excited them to rebel against the Roman government, to which, at the time of Jesus Christ's ministry on earth, they were subjected.

In the New Testament are to be found many instances of the minds of the disciples of Christ having been filled with the same expectation. When the two disciples, in the way to Emmaus, spoke of their disappointment at the death of their master, and said, *We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel,* it cannot be supposed that they meant a spiritual kingdom, but that they referred to the general persuasion which prevailed throughout the nation, that their promised Messiah, the son of David, would deliver them from the foreign yoke under which they groaned.

The like may be said of the question of the Apostles to their Master, when they were assembled together previous to his ascension, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* It is obvious their meaning was, to ask whether the time was come when the temporal kingdom of the Jews should be again restored to Israel in all its splendour; and, perhaps, they expected more than this—that

Judea should have an extended dominion and rule over other nations. There are, in the writings of the Evangelists, many other allusions to the prevailing opinion, that the kingdom would be again restored to Israel in a temporal point of view.

It cannot be doubted that the Jews claimed Abraham as their father, and relied upon the promises made to them through him. It is no less certain that they expected some one to arise from David's house, in whom the throne of his kingdom would be established for ever; this is plain from their having universally called Jesus the son of David, and from the people having received him with acclamation, crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

In the following work it will be my endeavour to prove that the ancient prophecies which caused the Jews to expect their Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, whom Christians acknowledge as the Saviour of mankind.

The evidences will be drawn from the application of these prophecies, and especially from the prophecies of Jesus himself, numbers of
which have been fulfilled, and many are still fulfilling by the progressive extension of Christianity into all nations, where increasing multitudes, in various languages, profess their faith in him, and worship him.

Before I proceed to consider the prophecies, it may be proper to observe, that about the middle of the last century some theologians in Germany, and there were some, also, of the same class in England, undertook to free the scriptures from what they conceived to be a burden improperly laid upon them by pious and well meaning men, who supposed that all the ancient scriptures quoted or appealed to by our Saviour himself, his Apostles, or the Evangelists, were types or prophecies of the events to which they were applied. These learned divines whom I have mentioned, set themselves to the work with zeal, and with the best intentions, the ground of their undertaking being, 'that nothing has made the New Testament the subject of ridicule to Jews and Infidels so much as the absurd inferences which Christians have usually drawn from passages which visibly contain not one tittle of what is pretended.'

But most Christians, I presume, will be of
opinion that these deep theologians have carried their system too far, when they are informed that they laid down as a principle, that the Old Testament contained no types of any of the events related by the Evangelists, excepting a few which are specifically set forth as types; accordingly the rest of the Israelites in the land of Canaan was, in their opinion, no type of the Christians' rest in heaven; nor was the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness, although applied by our Lord himself to his hanging on the tree, in their conception, in any sense typical of his crucifixion.

In like manner, a great number of the prophecies quoted by the Evangelists and the Apostles are supposed to have been employed in what they call the way of accommodation, and not to have been used as predictions of particular events. Another maxim of these divines was, that no prophecy could be applicable to circumstances occurring at the time it was uttered, and also foretell a future event. The following is an instance of a passage which has been esteemed by Christians in general as a prophecy, and which appears to have been acknowledged as such by Christ himself. It is
written in the gospel of St. Luke, c. iv., 18-21. Jesus, in the synagogue at Nazareth, read this passage of Isaiah—"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." When he had read this passage, he closed the book, and began to say unto them, "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears!" The divines, to whom I have before alluded, although they allow that Jesus did preach the acceptable year of the Lord in one sense, as Isaiah had done before him in another sense, deny that our Saviour meant any double completion of prophecy; but say that he only applied or accommodated the words of the Prophet to the present occasion.

The generality of Christians, I believe, will not coincide in this view of the passage in question; but will rather agree in opinion with the learned Grotius, who observes, 'As the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, was both an image and pledge of the
deliverance of souls which was to be effected by the Messias; in like manner, those things which Esaias spoke of himself, are so directed by God, as to apply in a more excellent manner to the Lord Jesus.'

It is well known that ardent and zealous Christians, in several ages of the church, have fancied that latent meanings were to be discovered in almost every line of the scriptures, by which much injury was done to the pure spirit of Christianity. But to assert that none of the important things transacted under the law looked forward to, or were types of, more momentous truths under the gospel—or to deny that any saying of a prophet, applicable to the times in which he lived, can be also prophetic of future events recorded in the Gospel—is not, perhaps, the best mode of putting down these fancies, or of repairing the injuries done by them. A middle course would better suit the feelings of sober and rational men; who cannot but believe that the sacrifices under the law were typical of the great sacrifice of the Saviour for the sins of the world, and that Christ, in claiming the passage just now quoted, did apply it as a direct prophecy of himself.
I have adverted to the opinion of these learned divines, for the purpose of obviating an objection, which might possibly be made, to the proof of Jesus being the Messiah drawn from the Jewish prophecies; namely, that I had produced passages from the mouths of the Prophets, which related merely to their own times, and which were never intended as prophecies of the Messiah, or of any future event; but were only quoted by the Evangelists as suiting their present purpose, and were used by the Apostles simply in the way of accommodation.

I hope I shall not lay myself open to this objection: but should I bring forward any passage of scripture that has been objected to by any body of Christians, if I am cognizant of it, I will state the difficulty.
CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE MESSIAH.

Previous to entering on the Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, it may be proper to advert briefly to the character of John the Baptist, there being so close a connexion between Christ and his forerunner, that any doubt thrown upon the existence or the character of the Baptist, could not fail to be injurious to the pretensions of Jesus himself.

Exclusive of the account of John the Baptist given by the Evangelists, there can be no doubt of his having lived in Judea at the time spoken of in the New Testament, nor of his having been a Baptist and a preacher of righteousness, since the Jewish historian Josephus, an author of high reputation, in his Jewish Antiquities,
speaks of him in the following terms. His main object is to expose the cruelty of Herod the Tetrarch who, he says, in accordance with St. Mark,* was the murderer of John.

'Herod the Tetrarch was utterly routed in a battle with Arctas, through the treachery of a certain band of refugees that came over from Philip, and were at that time in Herod's pay.' The historian goes on to say, 'Now the generality of the Jews were of opinion that this was only a just judgment of God upon Herod and his army, for the business of John, surnamed the Baptist, which excellent man this Tetrarch murdered. And what was his crime? but his only exhorting the Jews to the love and practice of virtue: and, in the first place, of piety and justice, and to regeneration by baptism, and a new life; not by abstaining from this or that particular sin, but by an habitual purity of mind, as well as of body. Now so great was the credit and authority of this holy man, as appeared by the multitude of his disciples, and the veneration they had for his doctrines, (for he could do what he would with them) that Herod did not know how far the reputation of

Mark vi. 27.
a man of his spirit might influence the people towards a revolt; so that, for fear, he chose rather to take him out of the way in time, before any hurt was done, than to put it to the hazard of an unprofitable repentance when it should be too late. Therefore he sent him away bound to Machærus, with orders to have him put to death, which was accordingly executed; and that impious fact was followed with divine vengeance upon Herod, for the blood of this just man, as the Jews reasonably enough persuaded themselves.*

This account, it will be seen, does not greatly differ from St. Mark, in the sixth chapter of his gospel, where he says, "Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him, and when he heard him he did many things, and heard him gladly."† Nor is this inconsistent with Herod's cruelty towards John, either upon the motive alleged by Josephus—that the people's reverence for John might lead to an insurrection, or upon St. Mark's narrative—that "Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him in prison, for Hero-

† Mark vi. 20.
dias' sake, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him, but she could not."

It appears from the Evangelist, that Herod had put John in prison at the instance of Herodias, whom he had offended by condemning her marriage with her husband's brother. St. Mark's expression is extremely strong, "that she would have killed him, but she could not," and justifies all the circumstances that happened after, until Herodias had obtained her purpose by procuring John to be beheaded. Granting, however, that Herod had put John in prison at the instance of Herodias, according to the Evangelist, it is highly probable that other motives might have also weighed with him, as described by Josephus; and this is supported by the remarkable expression of St. Mark, that "Herod feared John," although he afterwards says that "he heard him gladly," for what cause of fear could Herod have of John, excepting from the excessive attachment of the people to him? in which the scriptures accord with Josephus; for St.

* Mark vi. 17, 18, 19.
Matthew says, "he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet."* That John the Baptist, then, lived in the land of Judea, at the time spoken of by the Evangelists, and that he was murdered by Herod the Tetrarch, is placed beyond dispute.

We may, therefore, now turn our attention to the end for which John the Baptist was sent into the world, as stated by the Evangelists. St. Matthew says, "This is he that was spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight."† St. Luke adds the remainder of the prophecy, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."‡ This last sentence is taken from the 10th verse of the 52d chapter of Isaiah; in which chapter the learned commentator Whitby observes, 'the ancient Jews allow that the prophet is speaking of the Messiah?' The theologians, however,

* Matt. xiv. 5.
† Matt. iii. 3.
‡ Luke iii. 6.
whom I have noticed in the introduction, will not admit that this prophecy of Isaiah relates to John the Baptist; because, they say, in its original purport, it was a prophecy which foretold the future state of Jerusalem; and this they affirm, notwithstanding they confess that St. Mark, when he cites this place of Isaiah, joins to it a passage of Malachi—"Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee,"

* which they say was a literal prophecy, and was really accomplished in John. I may, therefore, safely leave it to the judgment of Christians in general to decide, whether the prophecies of Isaiah related to John or not, since here is the prophecy of another prophet, which is admitted to have belonged to John, and to have been accomplished in him. And it must be evident to all, that the general tenor of John's preaching was confined to one object—the pointing out Him, and his future kingdom, who was in very deed the promised salvation of God. "He (John) was not that light; but was sent to bear witness of that light—that was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the

* Mark i. 2.
world."* The main object of our Lord's fore-runner is set forth by St. Luke. "As the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not, John answered, saying unto them all, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'"†

I hope I shall not have occasion to take further notice of those divines whose opinions on the subject of the application of ancient prophecies differ from the sentiments of the generality of Christians, there being prophecies acknowledged by all professing Christians to belong to the Messiah sufficient to establish the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ.

Whoever shall read the Old Testament attentively will perceive that almost every one of the prophets foretells the advent of the Messiah in various passages; speaks of the fortune of his own countrymen, throughout distant ages,

* John i. 8, 9, † Luke iii. 15, 16, 17.
for good or evil; and announces the purpose of God to call the Gentiles into his Church—that strayed portion of his flock which, in future times, through the mediation of his Son, he had determined to restore to his safe fold. It is no wonder, therefore, if that great personage who came in the character of the Messiah, foretold by the Prophets, should take up their strain, and himself prophesy of future events. In the present chapter I shall briefly show that the Prophets generally prophesied of Christ, and that Jesus was the Christ.

In the ministry of Jesus, as well as in his birth, a great number of circumstances occurred which assumed the character of being miraculous. One of the most prominent of these was the testimony borne to him by a voice from heaven, immediately after his baptism. A heathen poet has observed, that the presence of a God ought not to be admitted unless the occasion be altogether worthy of it. On the supposition that the Christian religion is true, no event could call for the interposition of heaven more than this. A learned writer, alluding to miracles, says, "the boldest infidel will not deny that the immortality of the soul, a future
and eternal state,' (connected) 'with our present good or bad conduct, not to mention the doctrines concerning the divine unity and perfection, are tenets which carry no absurdity in them. And let the unbeliever say whether he can conceive an object worthier of the divine interposial, than to reveal those truths to mankind, and to enforce them in such a manner as may give them a suitable interest in the heart and life.'*

St. Matthew informs us that "Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him; and that Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."† On the above supposition, that the Gospel is true, and that Jesus was the Son of God, nothing can be conceived more appropriate, at the commencement of his ministry, than this divine evidence borne to his mission.

* Campbell's Essay on Miracles.
† Matt. iii. 14, 16, 17.
When, in the course of his ministry, and as it drew towards a close, "Jesus took three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, up into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them," a similar testimony was borne to him; "a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* As the voice at his baptism was evidently intended to show to the assembled multitude the dignity of the person baptized, for the purpose of promoting the success of his ministry, so, on this occasion, was such a witness calculated deeply to impress the minds of the three disciples, and to enable them to support the trials which they were destined to undergo in seeing their master torn from them by a cruel and ignominious death. These, if the witnesses who heard the voice at his baptism, and at his transfiguration on the Mount, be credible witnesses, are undoubted testimonies to the sublime character of Jesus.

The evidence borne to the mission of Jesus by the ancient Prophets is of a different nature. Here are prophecies of a certain person who,

* Matt. xvii. 5.
at a future time, was to come into the world, which were uttered many centuries before the birth of Jesus, and which were generally esteemed by the Jews as foretelling the advent of their promised Messiah. The only question, then, is, whether these prophecies were accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth, who confessedly assumed the character of the Messiah promised to the Jews, and who, according to the confession of heathen historians, suffered a violent death under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor? The prophecy of the Prophet Haggai, and that of Malachi (to the latter of which I have before alluded) are both of this stamp, having been always expounded by the ancient Jews as foretelling the coming of the desire and hope of Israel. Haggai says, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill his house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts; and in this
place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

The prophecy of Malachi relates to both the Messiah and his messenger. “Behold I will send my messenger, who shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Accordingly, Jesus, as the messenger of the covenant, in the course of his ministry, entered into the temple, and laid claim to it, and cast out those who abused and polluted it. Again, Malachi says, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” And Christ tells us expressly that this messenger was John the Baptist.||

At the 42d verse of the 22d chapter of St. Matthew, Christ, in his contention with the Pharisees, refers to the 110th Psalm, and asks, “What think ye of Christ, whose Son is he? They say unto him, the Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my

* Haggai ii. 7—9.
† Malachi iii. 1. ‡ Malachi iv. 5. || Matt. xi. 10.
Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?* If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?” We are informed that “no man could answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.” And we can understand how it was impossible for any man to answer the question, who was not persuaded that the verse of the Psalm quoted was a prophecy of the Messiah; for, without this acknowledgment, the question was unanswerable.

In the remarkable speech of St. Peter to the people, on the day of Pentecost, a most powerful attestation is given to the resurrection of Jesus, from the prophecy of David in the book of Psalms, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he

* Psalm cx. 1.
should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."* St. Paul, also, in the synagogue at Antioch, in Pisidia, giving a detail of the history of religion, from the Patriarchs to the resurrection of Christ, says, towards the conclusion of his speech, "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.† And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also, in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation,

* Acts ii. 22-27. † Psalm ii. 7.
by the will of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but he whom God raised again saw no corruption."* We have here, then, the testimony of the Apostle of the circumcision, and also of the Apostle of the Gentiles, that David foresaw the Lord Jesus, and prophesied in a particular manner of his resurrection.

St. Peter informs the Jews, in the Acts of the Apostles, that Moses prophesied of Christ. "Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatevers he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." St. Peter adds, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have also foretold of these days." Then the Apostle goes on to apply the prophecies to Jesus, and to the people who were to be blessed in him. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all

* Psalm xvi. 11; and Acts xiii. 36, 37.
the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."*

With regard to the prophecy of Moses, that a prophet should arise like unto him, our Saviour himself declares that "Moses wrote of him;" and it is certain that no one like unto Moses was seen until Jesus Christ appeared in the world. Joshua, and the other governors of the Jews who succeeded Moses, were only appointed to uphold the law which Moses, by the command of God, had promulgated; they had no similar communion with God, compared to him, with whom "God spake face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend."† Moreover, Moses was the promulgator of that covenant which was given by God to the Jews, from Mount Horeb; and Jesus was the publisher of a new and better covenant, bestowed by the same God upon all mankind, at a time when the old covenant was ready to vanish away. Accordingly, Moses is in the scriptures contrasted with Christ, and called a mediator; although Christ, as is most due, has in all things the pre-

* Acts iii. 22-26. † Exodus xxxiii. 11.
eminence, "Being counted of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who buildeth the house hath more honour than the house." "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony to those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."*

It is generally acknowledged that the Prophet Daniel prophesied of events that would happen thereafter upon the earth, when he interpreted the vision seen by Nebuchadnezzar of an image formed of gold, and silver, and brass and iron; which Daniel himself explains as representing four kingdoms. And he adds, speaking to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces, and the wind carried them away, and no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."†

* Heb. iii. 3-6.  * Daniel ii. 34, 35.
The meaning of a stone cut out without hands is, that the cutting it out was no human workmanship; and that the kingdom which it represents was not an earthly but a spiritual kingdom. So, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, the Apostle speaks of the circumcision made without hands—by the circumcision of Christ, which is not a carnal but a spiritual circumcision. Accordingly Daniel proceeds, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."*

In the seventh chapter a fourth beast is represented as arising, which was "dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly;—it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts which were before it."† The prophecy extends even until this beast was slain; "I beheld even until the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning

* Daniel ii. 44.  † Daniel vii. 7.
flame." And the death of this beast appears to remove every obstruction to the introduction of that kingdom which has been the main object of the prophecy. "I saw in the night visions," says the Prophet, "and, behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

It cannot be doubted that the great mountain, which the stone cut out without hands should become and fill the whole earth, was, in the language of the Prophet, the same with the kingdom to be given to the Son of man, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; and a kingdom that should not be destroyed. This gives us an infallible clue to the prophecy of the Psalmist, in the 118th Psalm, "The same stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner;"† which is often quoted

* Daniel vii. 13, 14.  † Psalm cxviii. 22.
in the New Testament, and particularly applied by Jesus himself, after he had delivered to the chief priests, and elders of the people, the impressive parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen. "Jesus saith unto them, have ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."* This was spoken after Jesus had gone up to Jerusalem for the last time; and when the hour was at hand in which the mountain of the Lord's house should be established, and the truth of his mission be demonstrated by his death, and his resurrection from the dead.

I shall have occasion to enter more deeply into the consideration of this parable, in a future chapter.

In the 53d chapter of Isaiah are numerous and distinct events foretold of the Messiah; and the ancient Jews acknowledged that the whole chapter related to their expected deliverer. The 8th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, bears a remarkable testimony to this

* Matt. xxi. 42.
prophecy, in the striking conversation between Philip and the Eunuch. It appears that "A man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, was returning from Jerusalem, and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet. Then the spirit said unto Philip," (who had been preaching Christ, and working miracles in Samaria, and who had been before ordered "to go towards the south," ) "Go near and join thyself to this chariot; and Philip ran thither unto him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest; and he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture that he read was this: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb, dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself, or of some other man?" The answer to this was, that "Philip opened his mouth,
and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”

Here is a most interesting narrative, which shows that the angel of the Lord directed Philip, a disciple of Christ, to go towards the South, for the purpose of meeting with an eunuch of the Queen of Ethiopia, in order to send out the sound of the gospel into that distant country; and to commence the fulfilment of the numerous prophecies which foretold the promulgation of the religion of the Messiah to the Gentiles. How simple is the meeting. Philip, as directed by the spirit, joins himself to the chariot of the eunuch; and, seeing him reading, asks the question, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” The answer is a natural reply from an uninstructed heathen, who, having been on an embassy to Jerusalem, had procured the sacred book of the Jews’ religion, which contained the predictions of the prophets. “And he said, how can I, except some one should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” The place of the scriptures that he read was written in the

* Acts viii. 27-35.
famous 53d chapter of Isaiah, which was acknowledged by the whole Jewish nation to contain a prophecy of their expected Messiah. The eunuch, having read the prophecy, asks, "I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself, or of some other man?" In answer to this, we are informed that "Philip began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

By preaching unto him Jesus, we cannot understand less than that Philip opened and explained to him the whole spirit of the gospel which we now enjoy; and this is confirmed by the subsequent act of Philip having baptized him. "And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water; and the eunuch said, see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him."* This is as strong an evidence

* Acts viii. 36-38.
as can be imagined, borne not only to the truth of the prophecy, and its being applicable to Jesus, but also to its having been intended to be applied to Him, as the Saviour of the world.

In this 53d chapter of Isaiah, to which we have just been referring, and in which the eunuch was reading respecting the Messiah, "that he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth," we find the extraordinary sentence, "and he was numbered with the transgressors."

We should have been able to have understood the meaning of this prophetic sentence from barely reading a relation of the circumstance that Jesus was crucified between two thieves; but St. Mark, in relating the fact that "with him they crucified two thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left," adds, "and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors."* 

In addition to this, St. Luke informs us that

* Mark xv. 27, 28.
our Saviour himself, when the conclusion of his ministry drew near, at the end of his admonition to his disciples, adds, "for I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors, for the things concerning me have an end." * The whole prophecy, therefore, having been always understood as relating to the Messiah, it cannot reasonably be doubted that it was justly claimed by him whose words and works—whose life and death proved him to be truly the Son of God.

It was by no means my intention to examine all the ancient prophecies which foretell the advent of the Messiah, but only to select a few of those which are, by the acknowledgment of the Jews of old, predictions of that event; and which Christians believe to have been perfectly fulfilled in Him to whom they bow the knee as their Lord and their Redeemer. My object is to concentrate the evidence to the truth of Jesus being the promised Messiah from those prophecies found in the Old Testament relating to Christ, and from his own prophecies dis-

persed throughout the writings of the Evangelists.

I now proceed to treat of the prophecies of Jesus himself relative to his death and resurrection. Those will follow which foretell the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish people, and the calling in of the Gentiles to constitute the universal Church of God.
CHAPTER II.

PROPHECIES OF JESUS RELATING TO HIS DEATH.

After his baptism Jesus began his ministry, and called to him his chosen disciples, whom, also, he named Apostles. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Thus the unlearned men whom he had selected for his witnesses, and to be assistant in the great work he had undertaken, became gradually instructed in the nature of his kingdom, and of the pure system of morality that he was about to bestow upon mankind; and his miracles, wrought in their presence, gave them undoubted evidence that the person who had performed them was
commissioned by God, "for no man could do such miracles as he did, unless God were with him." Some of the surprising miracles that he wrought in the beginning of his ministry, were the stilling of the tempest, the curing the man sick of the palsy, and the raising from the dead the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue.

Previous to the first of these miracles, "he entered into a ship, and his disciples followed him. And behold there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord save us, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men wondered, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"* No one can wonder at this observation, for every man can judge what his feelings would have been at a deliverance from the imminent danger of death: what conception he would have entertained of the unbounded power that had rescued

* Matt. viii. 23—27.
him, and what ardent gratitude would have filled his heart towards his deliverer!

The next miracle was the curing the man sick of the palsy, in which was shown the power of their Lord, not only by the miraculous act of raising up the helpless sufferer by a command to "Arise, and walk," but also by the before unheard of annunciation, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." What doubt could exist—what answer could be given to the question? Who can forgive sins but God only? The disciples, therefore, must have been impressed, beyond all doubt, with the divine power of their Master. If this impression could have been increased, the raising of the daughter of the Ruler from the dead was calculated to augment it, for no conviction is, I presume, more universal, than that no human power is able to restore the dead to life.

No sooner had our Lord thus instructed his disciples, and shown them his divine power, than he employed them in the work of his ministry. "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal
all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease."

After having informed them in what manner they were to execute their office, and what punishments would await those who rejected them, our Saviour judged it necessary to warn them against the obstacles they would meet with in executing their commission, and the sufferings they would undergo from the rulers of the world. "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, but harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they shall deliver you up to the councils, and they shall scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles."* Then came the healing balsam, that will attend every sincere and zealous servant of God, in all his difficulties and distresses. "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."

* Matt. x. 16-18.
Not that we must expect to be inspired, as the Apostles were, with "a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries could not gainsay, nor resist;"* but of this every faithful Christian may be assured, that, in encountering difficulties in the discharge of his duty, he will not be left alone; but if he prays for help, God will hear him, will direct and support him in every difficulty; and, in every temptation, will "also make a way to escape, that he may be able to bear it."†

This foretelling to his disciples the difficulties they would encounter, and the persecutions they would suffer, connected with our Saviour's numerous predictions respecting himself, may be considered as the commencement of his prophecies.

In the 12th chapter of St. Matthew, he begins to prophecy of himself, in an incidental manner, and in a way which, at that time, could not have been comprehended, either by his disciples or by the Pharisees, to whom he was addressing himself. He had been repelling the malicious charge of the Pharisees, that he was casting

* Luke xxi. 15. † 1 Cor. x. 13,
out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils, which occasioned his impressive discourse against blasphemy; and his declaration, "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment;" not meaning trifling, careless, or foolish words, but evidently alluding to the malignant calumny of the Pharisees that had preceded. The Pharisees, probably, not much relishing this refutation of their slanderous accusation, endeavoured to turn it aside by saying, "Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

It was usual with our Lord to compare present things with past, and in this case there was a great similitude, for not only as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so was the Son of Man to be three days and

* Matt. xii. 38—40.
three nights in the heart of the earth; but the Prophet Jonas had been sent to preach repentance to the great city of Ninevey, as Christ was the messenger of God to preach repentance to the Jewish nation; and to this our Lord immediately refers. "The men of Ninevey shall rise in judgment against this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here;" manifestly intimating that, if they did not repent in like manner at the preaching of a greater than Jonas, they would be subjected to that overwhelming destruction which he afterwards frequently prophesied would inevitably be their fate.

An instance of Christ's foretelling his death, and the manner of it, is to be found at the commencement of his ministry, in the 3rd chapter of St. John, where he is instructing Nicodemus in the spiritual nature of his kingdom; on being told that he must be born again, Nicodemus is startled, and asks in surprise, "How can a man be born when he is old."† The decisive answer of our Lord is, "Verily,

* Matt. xii. 41. † John iii. 4.
verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."* He then illustrates his doctrine by the beautiful and apt similitude of the wind. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." Nicodemus, yet unsatisfied, asks, "How can these things be?" It is well worthy of observation, how naturally our Lord's answer to this question led him to speak of himself, of the heavenly kingdom whence he came; of the end for which he was sent into the world; and of his own death, which can alone accomplish that end, and of the manner of it. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness; if I

* John iii. 3-7.
have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things."* In saying this, Jesus probably alludes to his appearing in person as the Messiah, and to his miracles, which the Jews did not believe. His having spoken of heavenly things, carried him at once to the following declaration. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven." Then he refers to the manner of his death. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life; for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."†

Well, therefore, might the angel declare, when the Saviour of the world was born, in conformity with the predictions of the Prophets concerning him, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the

* John iii. 10-12. † John iii. 14, 15, 16.
city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."* And well might the heavenly host praise God and say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."†

There are two more instances, in the Gospel by St. John, of Jesus having made use of the term lifted up, in allusion to his being about to die on the cross. The one is in the 8th chapter, when he was accused by the Pharisees of bearing record of himself, and therefore his record was not true; which he answers by saying, that "His Father bore witness of him; meaning, principally, as he affirms also in many other places, by his works or miracles. After this discourse in the Temple, "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, will he kill himself, because he saith, whither I go ye cannot come? And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath, I am from above; Ye are of this world, I am not of this world." He then repeats the appalling sentence, "I said there-

fore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if you believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."*—"Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."†

Another instance is found in the 12th chapter of the same Apostle. It appears that much people were gathered together at the first, not for the sake of seeing Jesus only, but with the hope of seeing Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. These people, hearing that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, "took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord."‡ The Apostle says, "The people, therefore, that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle."|| There was evidently a considerable

* John viii. 21-24. † John viii. 28, 29.
‡ John xii. 13. || John xii. 17, 18.
degree of excitement at Jerusalem at the feast, and a general wish to see Jesus. Among others there were certain Greeks, who came up to worship at the feast; who came to Philip, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, and again Philip and Andrew told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified."* This, and the three following verses may appear at first sight not to contain an answer to the request of the Greeks to see Jesus; but these Greeks were probably Gentiles, who were come up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast, who were called by the Jews proselytes of the gate, and who were permitted to worship in the court of the Gentiles, but not to celebrate the feast. It is probable, also, that these Greeks were permitted to see Jesus, and were present. Under these circumstances, Jesus, knowing that he was come to be the Saviour of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, nothing could have been more appropriate than his saying "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified,"

* John xii. 23.
meaning, that the hour is at hand when the glory of the Messiah shall be made manifest to all the nations of the earth.

At the 27th verse, Jesus seems to have been deeply impressed with the idea of the sufferings he was about to endure, in order to accomplish the great work for which he came into the world: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people, therefore that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered; others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes; now is the judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out."* Then he adds the prophecy which proves that he foresaw not only his death but the manner in which he should offer up his soul for the life of the world: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said," observes

* John xii. 27-31.
the Apostle, "signifying what death he should die."

The 13th chapter of St. Matthew is full of interesting parables and similitudes spoken by our Lord. Amongst others is the parable of the tares, of which, when he had sent the multitudes away, his disciples desired an explanation, "saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world; the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."†

• John xii. 32, 33. † Matt. xiii. 36-43.
Here is no mention made of either the death of Jesus or his resurrection; but I would wish it to be particularly observed, when he speaks of himself as sending forth his angels, when he tells the Jews that he must return to his Father, or when he announces his coming in the clouds of heaven to execute judgment on his sinful nation, how closely connected, and in how perfect union these representations are with his death and resurrection, for without his resurrection he could not have taken possession of his kingdom, nor could his kingly power have been exercised. But when he had been "lifted up," that is, crucified, dead, and buried, and had risen to life again, the Jews would know that it was He, that is, their Messiah. When he had been thus "lifted up," he would draw all men unto him.

In the 16th chapter of St. Matthew, Jesus blesses Simon Peter for his acknowledgment of him as the Messiah. To the question of our Lord to his disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" They said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am?
And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."*

Previous to this time the words of Jesus relative to his death, spoken on different occasions, seem to have been barely hints or intimations of that event; but, perhaps, they are the more valuable on this account as evidences of his prophetic character, having been apparently uttered without any premeditation, and merely in accordance with the tenor of the conversation that produced them. Moreover, they were addressed

to the Scribes and Pharisees in their vexatious contentions with him, and heard by the multitude that surrounded him. At this era of his life he appears to have thought it proper and necessary to impart to his disciples, more particularly, a knowledge of those things which, "by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God," he was to encounter for the salvation of mankind. "From that time forth," observes the Evangelist, "began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Our Lord appears here to have reproved Peter with more severity than accorded with the general mildness of his character, but it was a cause in which every thing was at stake. The great end for which he came into the world was

* Matt. xvi. 21-23.
to offer himself a sacrifice for the redemption of mankind, he therefore calls Peter, Satan, which meant an adversary to him; and he says thou art an offence or a hindrance to me in the great work I have undertaken to perform. The mind of Peter was probably excited and exalted by the important and extraordinary office his Lord had bestowed upon him, and this, possibly, emboldened him to presume to rebuke his master. We can readily suppose Peter to have been greatly shocked at hearing his Lord, who had just promised to make him the chief cornerstone of his church, declare that he was soon to be taken from them by a violent death. We can conceive a variety of distressing anticipations and difficulties to occupy his mind, a chief one of which, unquestionably, was the parting with a master whom he so much revered and loved. But may we not also imagine that a passing doubt might have arisen respecting the establishment of a new kingdom after the proposed king of it had been taken away from the earth? I am almost sorry to throw out this suggestion, but it is evident, from the history that the Evangelists give of the Apostles, that they possessed a very defective knowledge
of the nature of Christ's kingdom until after his death. This will account for Peter's denying his master after having said, "though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee;"* as well as for the extraordinary and afflictive circumstance, that when Jesus was apprehended, "all the disciples forsook him and fled."† Should any one imagine that by thus noticing the weakness and timidity of the Apostles I mean to throw any reflection on their character, he will be greatly mistaken, for, on the contrary, I am fully convinced both that their conduct during their Lord's presence with them, as described by the Evangelists, was in perfect harmony with the situation and circumstances in which they were placed, and also that their character has been greatly exalted by the striking contrast that exists in their behaviour previous to the resurrection of their Lord, and the fortitude which they showed under the most difficult and trying circumstances, when they were better instructed in the nature of his spiritual kingdom; when they "counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of

* Matt. xxvi. 35. † Matt. xxvi. 56.
Christ Jesus their Lord;* "when they counted not their life dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God."†

After having foretold to his disciples the sufferings and death that awaited him, Jesus immediately began to instruct them in their own duties. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it, for what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul." He then adds the reward that every man shall receive according to the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not

* Phil. iii. 8. † Acts xx 24.
taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."* It can hardly be doubted that the coming of the Son of Man mentioned here meant the destruction of Jerusalem, which the Apostle John is said to have survived; and probably there were many others who saw Christ on earth, who also lived to witness this dreadful retribution upon those who had killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto them, and who filled up the measure of their iniquity by crucifying the Lord of glory.

In the beginning of the 17th chapter is the relation of the transfiguration of Christ, when "he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them." Here also the Evangelist represents that "a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."† "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from

the dead."* In this vision the disciples saw Moses and Elias; and having seen the latter, they very naturally ask their Lord, "Why, then, say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things; but I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them."†

At the 22d verse of the 17th chapter, the Evangelist says, "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them (his disciples) The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men. And they shall kill him: and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry."‡ St. Matthew states this communication of our Lord to his disciples to have taken place in Galilee, immediately after the miracle performed on the young man, who had been possessed by an unclean spirit, which his disciples were unable to cast out. And so also do St. Mark and St.

‡ Matt. xvii. 22, 23.
Luke. St. Luke says, "Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at the things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your hearts, for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men."* The two last mentioned Evangelists observe that "they understood not this saying, and were afraid to ask him."† Probably this fear might have been excited or increased by their Lord's reproof to St. Peter, when he rebuked him on a former occasion, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee."

Whoever reads the gospels with attention, will clearly perceive the surprising dulness of even Christ's chosen Apostles, in understanding the nature of his spiritual kingdom, and the manner in which it was to be established, by his crucifixion, and consequent resurrection. St. Peter first rebukes him when he announces the unwelcome truth. In the instance now

* Luke ix. 43-45. † Mark ix. 32.
before us, they could not understand him, and feared to ask for an explanation. Even after his death and burial, although his disciples, both men and women, went to the sepulchre, there seems to have been no confident expectation of his rising to life again in his human body. Moreover, the apostle John, who was doubtless one of the two that went to the sepulchre, says expressly, "Then went in also that other disciple," meaning himself, "who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." *

The disciples also, on the way to Emmaus, after Jesus had joined them, say, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel; and, beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body they came saying that they had seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the

* John xx. 8, 9.
sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken! ought not Christ (the Messiah, according to the Prophets,) to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded to them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself;”*

It appears certain, therefore, that even at the time of his resurrection the disciples “knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead:” however extraordinary it may seem, after their Lord had so frequently, and in such plain language, told them that he was to suffer death, and that on the third day he would rise again.

In the 20th chapter of his gospel, St. Matthew relates that Jesus, on his way to Jerusalem for the last time, took his disciples apart, and informed them distinctly of the things that would happen to him there. “And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in

the way, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the Chief Priests, and unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again."* St. Mark states that "They were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them, and they (the disciples) were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid."† And this seems to have been the cause, according to this Evangelist, of Jesus's repeating to them again the sufferings that awaited him; that they might be enabled to endure the sight of his agonies, being forewarned, and also be endued with fortitude to resist the persecutions which themselves would meet with from the adversaries of the gospel, for his name's sake. "If the world hate you," said he to his disciples, "Ye know that it hated me before it hated you."—"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."‡

There is a remarkable observation in St. John, relative to the description Jesus gives of the manner of his death, in the passage just now quoted, in which he says that the Chief Priests and Scribes "shall condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles, to crucify him." When our Saviour as a criminal stood before the governor, Pilate, willing to release him, said unto the Jews, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, it is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the saying of Jesus," observes the Evangelist, "might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die."* The fact also, that the power of life and death was not then possessed by the Jews, shews our Lord's meaning in saying that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, because in Pilate, the Gentile governor alone, that power resided.

We have seen, on a former occasion, that the soul of Jesus was troubled in the anticipation of his sufferings; and now, going up to Jerusalem, where the things concerning him were to be

* John xviii. 31-32.
accomplished, we can easily conceive that his mind must have been filled with anxieties of various kinds, relative to the arduous work he had undertaken. It is evident that, being in his human nature like unto his brethren, sin only excepted, he was subject to the same infirmities; and it appears from the passage just quoted, as well as from his conduct in the garden of Gethsemane, that he deeply felt the gloomy prospect that was before him. “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, said he, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”* It appears also that he was extremely anxious about his disciples, lest, as they had shewn fears already, their resolution might fail them in the day of trial. This is confirmed by the ardent prayer that he put up for them to his Father, a little before his death. “I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. And all mine are thine,

* Matt. xxvi. 38, 39.
and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.”

He then seems to triumph in his Apostles. “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

Now it may be asked, what was it that enabled this “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” to support this heavy burden of suffering that was laid upon him? This we are told by the Apostle: “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The joy that was set before him was the power and glory to which he was about to be exalted. But we cannot conceive that this most benevolent of beings, who came down from heaven that, united to human nature, he

* John xvii. 9-11.  † John xvii. 12.
‡ Heb. xii. 2.
might suffer for the salvation of mankind—we cannot imagine that he valued glory and power for its own sake. No; it was that his Father, in consequence of his death, would put all things in subjection under his feet;* that by his death he would "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage."† He looked forward with joyful expectation to a dying world raised to immortality; to those myriads who, in future time, would believe in him, and, through that faith and obedience to his laws, become partakers with him of eternal glory, singing praise to Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.

In the same 20th chapter, Jesus takes occasion, from the request of the mother of Zebedee's children that her two sons might sit "the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom,"‡ to allude again to his death, and this, probably, for the purpose of checking their ambition, and of showing them again that his kingdom was not of this world. "Jesus called

them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

The magnificent description of the day of judgment which Jesus gives, when he calls himself the Son of Man, ought to have fully instructed his Apostles where his kingdom was to be found, and have convinced them that it was not of this world. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats."†

The parable of the talents, which our Lord had repeated immediately before, together with

his representation of the final judgment, were eminently calculated to repress all lofty thoughts in his disciples on the subject of power and superiority, and to cause them to attend diligently to their present arduous duties, and to improve that valuable talent which had been committed to their care.

"When Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste; for this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor."

* St. John says that it was Judas Iscariot who asked the question, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? And this he said," St. John observes, "not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bore what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone, against the day of my burying has she kept this."† St. Matthew adds a further observation of Jesus, "Verily I

* Matt. xxvi. 6–9. † John xii. 5–7.
say unto you, that wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her.”*

CHAPTER III.

OF THE ISRAELITES, AND THE REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES.

God chose Abraham and his seed, the children of Israel, to preserve his name and worship in the world. After they had been driven from the land of Canaan by a famine into Egypt, where Joseph, the son of Jacob, was governor, they were placed in the land of Goshen; but after a time Pharaoh the king of Egypt died, and another king arose who knew not Joseph, and the people were evil entreated, and were finally brought under a cruel bondage. In their distress they cried unto the Lord, who sent Moses unto them, that, by a series of miracles wrought in the sight of the Egyptians, he might bring them out with a mighty hand, and after a strict discipline during forty years in the wil-
derness, for their good, might conduct them to the land given to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As soon as the people were delivered out of Egypt, and were come unto Mount Sinai in the wilderness, God speaks to them, through Moses, and gives them gracious promises, if they would obey his voice. "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

It was not long after this, when Moses was gone up into the mount, that the people persuaded Aaron to make them a golden calf, that they might worship it, saying, "make us gods to go before us, for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we

* Exodus xix. 3—6.
wot not what is become of him."* This provoked the Lord to anger; and "the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiffnecked people. Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation."† But Moses turned away the anger of the Lord from the people, and the threat was not carried into execution.

So early as the 26th chapter of Leviticus is a gracious blessing promised to their keeping God's commandments, and an alarming threat denounced to their disobedience; and this denunciation of punishment, as in many other instances, goes far into future ages, even to that time now under our consideration, when the nation was to be destroyed, and the people scattered among the heathen. "I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste."‡ Yet there

* Exodus xxxii. 1.
† Exodus xxxii. 9, 10. ‡ Levit. xxvi. 32, 33.
is a gracious declaration behind: "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers—then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham, will I remember, and I will remember the land."*

These promises are repeated and extended in the book of Deuteronomy. After again reciting the curses threatened to the transgressors, forgiveness is again held out to the penitent. "And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of

* Levit. xxvi. 40—42.
heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee; and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."

From the history of the Israelites in the Wilderness, it appears that they continued a "stiff-necked people." The reward promised them, if they would be obedient to the voice of God, was, that they should possess the land given to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But from the long residence of the Israelites in Egypt, this land was then possessed by many warlike tribes, whom it became necessary for the children of Israel to drive out from before them. It was, therefore, highly proper that the people should be detained long in the wilderness, that they might learn to bear such hardships and privations as might prepare them for the encounter with the heathen nations which possessed their land. This service of forty years in the wilderness was ordered for another important reason, as we learn from the word of God

* Deut. xxx. 1—5.
itself, namely, "to humble them, and to prove them, to know what was in their heart, whether they would keep his commandments or no." * Unfortunately they did not perform this imperative duty of keeping God's commandments. They often provoked the Lord by their sin and rebellion, and drew down God's wrath upon them. Finally, when men were sent from every tribe to search out the land of Canaan, "to see the land what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;" on the report of the men that were sent, "all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." †

It was this rebellious proceeding that caused

* Deut. viii. 2. † Numbers xiv. 2—4.
the Lord to cut off the existing generation, that they might never behold the land of promise. "Because all those men that have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice. Surely they shall not see the land, which I sware unto their fathers; neither shall any of them that provoked me see it."* "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upwards, which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun."† These individuals were of the number of those sent to examine the land of Canaan, and the report respecting the country was favourable—that it flowed with milk and honey. "Nevertheless, they said, the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great, and moreover we saw the children of Anak there."‡ This

* Numbers xiv. 22, 23.
† Numbers xiv. 29, 30. ‡ Numbers xiii. 27, 28.
had the effect upon the people to make them murmur. "But Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land, saying, The land through which we have gone to search, it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."* Caleb, therefore, and Joshua, who obeyed the commandments of God, and exhorted the people to go up and possess the land, were exempted from the judgment that fell upon all the people, from twenty years old and upwards, that they should perish in the wilderness, and not behold the land of promise. I have previously observed, that the government of God, in the earliest ages, was a government of blessings and curses, of promises and threat-

* Numbers xiii. 30-33.
enings, depending upon the conduct of men, who enjoyed freedom of action, whether good or evil.

Here is an eminent instance of God's dealing with his chosen people, which shews that his threatenings will be assuredly executed, as well as his promises fulfilled. Christians are often told, in the New Testament, that the sins and punishments inflicted on the old world happened to them for examples. St. Paul tells the Corinthians, speaking of this overthrow of the rebellious Jews in the wilderness, "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore, says the Apostle, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." *

A striking instance of the certain execution of God's judgments, is seen in the remarkable

* 1 Cor. x. 6-10, 11, 12.
circumstance that Moses himself incurred the divine displeasure; which holds out a clear warning to Christians that even they, who stand highest in the favour of God, must not presume, but go on more and more perfecting their obedience in all things that are said unto them; always remembering, that to whom much is given, from him much will be required. The cause of God's anger against Moses, is to be found in the 20th chapter of the book of Numbers. The people gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, because they had no water. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth water to them out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he
smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."* On a former occasion, when the people murmured for want of water, Moses was ordered by God to strike the rock with his rod, and, as the Psalmist speaks, "he brought forth water out of the rock of flint;" but, in the present case, it is plain that Moses was commanded to speak unto the rock, instead of which he spake unto the people, and smote the rock with his rod, contrary to the divine command. It is probable that, as the people had seen the rock smitten before, and bring forth water, the Lord meant to have shown a still more surprising miracle, by the dry rock being seen gushing out with water at a word spoken by his servant Moses; whereas, through the disobedience of Moses, the miracle was only repeated. The grief of Moses was great

* Numbers xx. 7-12.
at the sentence passed upon him, that he should not carry the people up into the promised land; but as he was probably conscious that his disobedience was not wilful, and had been occasioned chiefly by the tumult that had surrounded him, he presumed to beseech the Lord to reverse the sentence, and "to let him go over to see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me, (said Moses to the people,) for your sakes, and would not hear me; and the Lord said unto me, let it suffice thee, speak no more to me of this matter. Get thee up unto the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes, for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him, for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see."

Accordingly Moses was gathered to his fathers, and Joshua was appointed to conduct the people over Jordan.

The Israelites, therefore, passed over the

* Deut. iii. 25-28.
river Jordan, according to the word of the Lord, under the command of Joshua, prepared to drive out the nations that had possessed the land promised to their fathers. This they performed in the course of six years, with various fortune, having crossed the river 1451 years B.C., and having rested from their warlike labours 1445 B.C. The chief thing worthy of remark, in these exterminating battles with the inhabitants, is, that as long as the Israelites were obedient to the voice of the Lord, followed his directions, and relied upon his aid, so long they were successful and prevailed against their enemies; but when they forgot the Lord, he also forgot them, withdrew his succour from them, and forced them to turn their backs upon their adversaries. But their defeat had the effect upon them that afflictions and calamities usually have in the world, to make men reflect and enquire after God; so that through God's especial help they finally subdued their enemies, and the promise was fulfilled which had been given again and again to their fathers, that their posterity should dwell in their own land. After the death of Joshua, Judea was governed by Judges; until, from feeling the effects of
bad government, or from ambition, supposing that a king would raise them in the scale of nations, they besought the Lord to grant them a king, and God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, who began to reign over Israel 1095 B.C., and reigned 40 years. The exaltation of his successor, David, to the throne, was interesting and extraordinary; and we are taught, in every part of scripture, to believe that he was placed there by the express ordinance of God. The Psalmist, speaking of him in highly poetic strains, says "He (God) refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, even the hill of Sion, which he loved. And there he built his temple on high, and laid the foundation of it, like the ground which he hath made, continually. He chose David also, his servant, and took him away from the sheep-folds. As he was following the ewes great with young ones he took him, that he might feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power."*

* Palms lxxviii. 68-73.
The successor of David was his son Solomon, who built a magnificent temple to the Lord, which was celebrated over the world. The temple was dedicated 1004 years B.C. Solomon reigned over the children of Israel forty years; and these three kings—Saul, David, and Solomon—were the only kings that reigned over the whole body of the Israelites, for on the death of Solomon the ten tribes revolted, under Jeroboam, whilst the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained under the government of Rehoboam, Solomon's son. And this division of the nation was ordained by God himself, and foretold to Solomon, because he had forsaken the Lord, and turned unto idols. Accordingly the prophet Ahijah found Jeroboam in the way as he went out of Jerusalem, "and he had clad himself with a new garment, and they two were alone in the field; and Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces, and he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces, for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. ——Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the
Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant’s sake, whom I chose because he kept my commandments and my statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen to place my name there.”

From this time the ten tribes were separated, under Jeroboam and his successors, from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who possessed Jerusalem and the neighbouring country; but neither of the kingdoms, neither Judah nor Israel, with their kings, were careful to observe the command of God to abstain from idols, but turned to idolatry, so that after a series of pro-

* 1 Kings xi. 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36.
phets, mercifully sent to warn them of their danger, in no great number of years the threatened chastisement fell on them. And first the Israelites were carried into captivity by the Assyrians, 740 years B.C.; twenty years later Samaria was taken and destroyed by Shalmanazer; and about fifty years after the deportation of the whole of the ten tribes took place by Assurbaddon, so that they were no more a nation. The captivity of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin soon followed; 606 years B.C. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, and in a few years destroyed the city, and carried the people into slavery in his own city, Babylon. This portion, however, of the former Israelitish nation, after seventy years captivity, returned in great numbers to their own country. Cyrus issued an edict, 536 years B.C., that they should return into their own land, and gave them facilities to rebuild their city and temple; these were improved, from time to time, by succeeding governors, and greatly enlarged and beautified by Herod the Great, who is signalized by the cruel act of murdering the infants when the Messiah was born.

As it is clearly shown that the Israelites
were either to prosper or to encounter adverse fortune during their passage through the wilderness, under the command of Moses, in proportion as they obeyed or disobeyed the commandments of the Lord, so, after their possession of the land of Canaan, the prophets, with one accord, prophesied in the same strain. The language of the Almighty by Moses was—respecting the conduct of his people when they should dwell in their own land—"When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image the likeness of any thing, and shalt do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it, ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed."*

The denunciations of the Prophets were in perfect harmony with this. "The people," says Isaiah, "turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord o fHosts, there-

* Deut. iv. 25, 26.
fore will the Lord cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day."*

In the 5th chapter of Jeremiah is a threat of bringing the king of Babylon upon them. "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord; it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation; a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. And they shall eat up thine harvest and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat; they shall eat up thy flocks and thy herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig-trees; they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword. Nevertheless, in those days, saith the Lord, I will not make a full end with you. And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doth the Lord our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer to them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours."†

It is perfectly consoling to see how, together with these threatenings, the Prophets, in almost

* Isaiah ix. 13, 14. † Jer. v. 15—19.
every chapter, intermix the most cheering offers of forgiveness to his people who have forsaken the Lord, if they will repent and return, showing that the Lord is, as he declares himself to be in the book of Psalms, "a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and who repenteth him of the evil." From God's dealing with his people, the Jews, in the Old Testament, Christians may learn, what is also fully supported by the whole tenor of the New Testament, that although God will not pass by iniquity and sin, yet that he is always ready to receive the humble penitent; that he is grieved at the wickedness of the ungodly, and ever desirous to be reconciled. "For the hurt of the daughter of my people," saith God, "am I hurt; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

The prophecies of the Prophets are generally applicable to the destruction brought upon the ten tribes of Israel by the Assyrians, and afterwards upon Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

* Jeremiah viii. 21, 22.
The city of the Israelites was first destroyed, and the people were so entirely carried into captivity, that their very name appears to have been lost; and it is even at this day a subject of dispute where any of their posterity are to be found. It is most probable that in a series of years after their captivity, they sought refuge among other people, and became scattered throughout the nations, as it had been prophesied of them. Their country, Samaria, was so utterly forsaken, that it is said to have been peopled by other nations, who had been idolaters; but who afterwards learned something of the worship of Jehovah from their neighbours the Jews. But we find, from the 4th chapter of St. John's gospel, that the nations were at that time hostile to each other, and that "the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans."*

They had also built a temple for themselves, on Mount Gerisim, to which the woman of Samaria refers in her conversation with Jesus, at the well of Sychar.†

Although the ten tribes of Israel were destined to be utterly destroyed, this was not to be

* John iv. 9.  † John iv. 23.
the case with the tribe of Judah, nor with Jerusalem, where God had chosen to place his name; and all the Prophets concur in stating the reason of their final preservation to have been, because the tribe of Judah was the tribe of David, whence was to come a governor that should rule God's people, and extend his government even to the ends of the earth.
CHAPTER IV.

ANCIENT PROPHECIES FORETELLING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

In treating of the prophecies which relate to the final destruction of Jerusalem, I would first draw the reader's attention to the 28th chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, in which is an eminent instance of God's merciful kindess, when the prophets are commanded to declare God's judgments against the rebellious, in providing them with previous gracious promises towards the obedient, and with compassionate offers of favour and pardon to those who, although they have strayed, are willing to repent and return. It begins with a promise: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandments, which I
command this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth; and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God.”* Then the blessings are enumerated, as the curses had been in a former chapter. At the 15th verse the curses are resumed, in case they will not be obedient to the voice of the Lord their God: "It shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.” Tremendous curses immediately follow, which will fall upon them whilst they are dwelling in their own land, and they are continued to verse the 25th, where begins the scene of destruction and desolation: "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.” Verse 32. "Thy sons and thy daughters shall

* Deut. xxviii. 1, 2.
be given to another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day long, and there shall be no might in thine hand. The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always, so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see." After the 47th verse the most appalling threatenings are denounced.

"Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young. And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy
kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustest, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, and the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, whereewith thine enemies shall distress thee; so that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom, and towards the remnant of his children which he shall leave, so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which
she shall bear, for she shall eat them, for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates, if thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this fearful and glorious name, THE LORD THY GOD."

I have copied largely from this remarkable prophecy, because the commentators in general believe it to have been a prediction especially of the final destruction of Jerusalem, and of the whole land of Judea, by the Romans, and because the Jewish historian, Josephus, has given the particulars of that terrible event, the sacking of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, in nearly the words of the prophecy. The reasons why this prophecy is believed to have particularly foretold the final destruction of Jerusalem are, that it said, "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth;" whereas, the Chaldean invasion from Babylon, is generally spoken of as coming from the north; moreover, the Babylonian captivity was particular, they were carried away

* Deut. xxviii. 58.
captive into Babylon, and it was also confined in time. After 70 years they were to return, and did return into their own country. But this was to be of long continuance. "Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance; and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance."

* The long continuance is repeated; and, instead of their being carried away captive into any particular place, at the 64th verse it is said, "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even to the other. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even; and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning; for the fear of thy heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."†

* Deut. xxviii. 59.  † Deut. xxviii. 64-67
These prophecies were spoken above fifteen hundred years before the final destruction of Jerusalem. We know the facts, that Judea was desolated by the Roman army, and its chief city laid waste, about 40 years after the death of Christ, and that the people were scattered throughout all the countries of the known world; moreover, that they have continued in this state, mixed with, yet separated from every other people, during the long space of 1800 years.

A celebrated divine has observed, that nothing can be more extraordinary than the existence of this people in their dispersion to this time. The fact is visible to all the world, that when all the great nations of the earth, that have existed in it throughout the lapse of time—the Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Macedonian, the Greek and Roman nations—are obliterated, this singular people remain, cherishing their ancient religion, and their own peculiar customs, and retaining their distinct character during so many revolving ages. What proof can be wanting that this wonderful prodigy is nothing less than the ordinance of God?

The prophecy that I have quoted, uttered so many hundred years before it was in any
respect fulfilled, may be fairly taken as applicable to all and each of the terrible judgments that fell upon this nation, for their repeated rebellions against the God of their fathers, by worshipping strange gods, and for their continued iniquities. It may refer to the miseries endured by the ten tribes of Israel, in the siege of Samaria; to their being carried away captive by the Assyrians; and to their utter desolation. It may also be presumed to have predicted the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the captivity in Babylon of the two chosen tribes of Judah and Benjamin. But it has been well observed, that the prophecy can never be justly said to have had its completion, without taking in the last invasion of Judea by the Romans, and the entire destruction that followed; this alone can have perfectly fulfilled the impressive prophecy just now quoted, as well as that which is found in the following chapter, to which I must refer the reader, only quoting the concluding threatenings if they shall refuse to keep the covenant, and to obey the commandments that are written in the book of the law. "So that the generation of your children that shall rise up after
you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown nor beareth, nor any grass groweth there-in, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and his wrath; even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book. And the Lord rooted them out of the land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.”*

* Deut. xxix. 22-28.
In a note on the 22d verse, Bishop Patrick observes, 'The wickedness of the Jews was the more provoking, because they had such an example as the Lake of Sodom continually before their eyes, and yet persevered in their evil ways, till they brought the like judgments upon all Judea. This was more exactly fulfilled in the last destruction of the Jews by the Romans, than in their first by the Babylonians; for the whole land was laid waste, and deserted by its inhabitants, and made a den of thieves, being brought to desolation by repeated returns of war; more especially in the time of Adrian, when Julius Severus made such a devastation, for the whole country was turned, in a manner, into a wilderness.'*

As some of the Prophets prophesied from one to two hundred years previous to the Babylonian captivity, and others during the accomplishment of that remarkable and interesting event, it is not to be wondered at that their prophecies, foretelling the evils that were to fall on their nation for their sins, were chiefly applicable to the impending ruin; and that they belong to

* See Mant's Bible.
the overthrow and captivity that awaited both Israel and Judah, from the Assyrians and the Babylonians. But there appears no motive why they should be thus limited, unless where some reason occurs that may make it necessary to confine them to these subjects.

In the 24th chapter of Isaiah, are threatened terrible, and what are called in the contents of the chapter, "doleful judgments of God upon the land;" upon which Bishop Lowth observes, 'The subject of this chapter, some refer to the desolation caused by the invasion of Shalmanazar; others by that of Nebuchadnezzar; and others to the destruction of the city and nation by the Romans. Perhaps it may have a view to all of the three great desolations of the country. The Prophet chiefly employs general images; such as set forth the greatness and universality of the ruin to be brought on, involving all orders and degrees of men, changing entirely the face of things, and destroying the whole polity, both religious and civil."

The accordance of the Old Testament with what we learn from the New, respecting the

* Note on Isaiah xxiv. 1.—Mant.
present state of the Jews, and their final acceptance, will, perhaps, be best shown by considering a few of those passages, of which the Prophets are full, relative to the promises that God will not cast away his people, but that a remnant shall be left, and that they shall finally return triumphantly under the dominion of the Lord their God.

An early promise of their restoration is found in the chapter following that which I have lately quoted as containing curses, and enumerating the evils that would befall them, if they continued rebellious and disobedient. "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee; and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I commanded thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and will have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be
driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee; and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.”

On these verses Dr. Hales observes, 'that the restoration of the Jews to their own country is plainly predicted at the destined end of their captivity; but it should seem that their conversion to Christ is to be the preliminary condition of their acceptance with God.' This is plainly seen in both the Old Testament and the New; and on this ground the prophecies of the Jewish Prophets, which speak of the final restoration of their nation, are so intermixed with the conversion of the Gentiles, that they cannot be separated.

In the 11th chapter of Isaiah is a remarkable prophecy of the recovery of the remnant of God's people joined with the appearance of the Messiah and the conversion of the Gentiles: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse,

* Deut. xxx. 1—5. See the whole note in Mant.
which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea; and he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”*

This prophecy cannot be interpreted respecting the return of the Jews from Babylon, because so many places are mentioned distant from each other; because supposing the prophecy to be applicable to the ten tribes, and supposing them, after the destruction of the Assyrian empire, to have been scattered throughout the nations of the earth, yet they have never been recalled, and therefore the prophecy must look forward to a future time, even to the general restoration of the Israelitish nation. Fi-

* Isaiah xi. 10—12.
nally, the prophecy can intend nothing less than the conversion of the Jews to Christ, because the root of Jesse, evidently meaning the Messiah, is represented as present, and the Gentiles seeking to him, which last was not the case whilst he was on earth, the gospel not having been preached to the Gentiles until after his death.

If we take a retrospective view of this subject, every impartial enquirer must allow, that a very powerful argument for the truth of the gospel history arises from it. That the Jews are in a state of general dispersion is an undeniable fact, and no prophecy was ever more truly fulfilled than that which I have quoted from the book of Deuteronomy: "Even all the nations shall say, Wherefore has the Lord done this unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers,"* &c.

The Prophet Isaiah is justly called the evangelical Prophet, because he treats almost minutely of the future kingdom of the Messiah. In the 53d chapter of his prophecy, which has

* Deut. xxix.
been already noticed, in the meeting between Philip and the Eunuch, the sufferings of Christ, his death, and burial are distinctly foretold. That Jesus of Nazareth lived in the time of Tiberius Cæsar and Caligula, emperors of Rome, and that he assumed the character of the Messiah, cannot be denied; that he suffered an ignominious death under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, is equally well attested; and that, within forty years after his death, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the nation of the Jews dispersed, is altogether undeniable. Without going into other concurring evidences for the truth of Christianity, these connected proofs bear a striking testimony to its authenticity; and it is incumbent on unbelievers to shew, if they sincerely desire to know the truth, how these remarkable appearances exist, of prophecies uttered more than two thousand years ago, fulfilled and fulfilling by extraordinary facts unfolding themselves during successive ages; the prophecies, and their completion, agreeing, supporting, and proving one another.

The passage which I have quoted, from the Prophet Isaiah, plainly shews that the restoration of the Jews is closely connected with the
conversion of the Gentiles; I shall therefore forbear at present to produce further prophecies from the rest of the Prophets' predictions of the first-mentioned event; and shall postpone their production till we come to the consideration of, what the Apostles call, "The mystery of Christ, which, in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel."

I proceed, therefore, to examine the prophecies of Jesus himself, foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin that was to overtake the land and its inhabitants.

* Ephes. iii. 3-6.
CHAPTER V.

PROPHECIES OF JESUS FORETELLING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

It must be evident to all that Jesus, in the course of his ministry, laboured to correct the pernicious doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees, which had been corrupted by their traditions. When they asked him, "Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders, for they wash not their hands when they eat bread? He answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother, and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me," meaning, I have
dedicated to sacred purposes the sum that would have been applied to the support of my parents, "and honour not his father and mother," that is, support them not, "he shall be free. Thus," says our Saviour, "have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."*

This conversation elicited from our Lord, in few words, a development of the pure principle of morality. "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."\+

Our Lord's answer, when he was told that the Pharisees were offended at this saying, is worthy of particular observation, and seems to show that he thought them incorrigible, and to be given up to their own blindness: "He answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."\++

In the following chapter he warns his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,

\+ Matt. xv. 11. \++ Matt. xv. 13, 14.
and Sadducees, which, as they afterwards understood, was meant as a caution against their doctrine.* Some of our Lord's parables are also directly pointed against these perverters of the law; and their extirpation is threatened in language which they fully understood. In the parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen is pourtrayed, in terms not to be mistaken, the fate of the Jewish nation: and how impressive is the whole parable? "Last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance; and they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto these husbandmen? They say unto him, he will miserably destroy these wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render him their fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become

* Matt. xvi. 6 and 11.
the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The Evangelist observes, "when the Chief Priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet."* Here our Saviour evidently predicts his own death, as preceding the vengeance that was to fall upon the wicked husbandmen, who would cast him out of the vineyard and slay him.

In the 23d chapter of St. Matthew, Jesus again cautions his disciples, and, with them, the multitude, against the doctrine and the evil examples of the Scribes and Pharisees; and points out, in many particulars, the errors of which they were guilty, and the manner in which they made void the law of God by their traditions. The woes denounced were forcible and alarming, but such as were called for by their hypocritical pretences to religion, whilst

they omitted the weighty matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transcribing the comment of Archbishop Newcome upon this part of the chapter. He says, 'In this last address of our Lord to the Scribes and Pharisees, everyone must be struck with the severity of his reproofs. His reproofs were stern, but just; indignant, but dictated by virtuous indignation; earnest and vehement, but the grave language of insulted majesty; of perfect goodness, detesting vice; and of perfect knowledge, penetrating all its disguises and aggravations.'*

At the 34th verse, our Saviour foretells the fate of those men whom he should send to preach unto them. Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill, and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto

* Note on Matt. xxiii. 1.—Mant.
you, all these things shall come upon this generation." Then comes our Lord's tender and beautiful apostrophe over the fate of Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chicken under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Doubtless this last sentence contains both a judgment and a prophecy, and means that the time of mercy was past, and that their city and temple would be destroyed. It is added, "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

This prophecy is supposed, by some commentators, to have been fulfilled when Christ came in the clouds of heaven to execute judgment on the unbelieving Jews by the destruction of their city and country; but it appears to me that it may, with more probability, be referred to their final restoration, which we know, from

* Matt. xxiii. 34—?  
† Matt. xxiii. 39.
the whole tenor of scripture, we are to expect, and when Christ will come, not to execute vengeance, but to bring again the sheep that were lost, when, with joyful and exulting hearts, they may cry out, "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The same may be said of that remarkable prophecy in the Prophet Zechariah: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look on me whom they have pierced."* This passage is quoted by St. John in his gospel, who, speaking of Christ's crucifixion, says, "these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."† Archbishop Secker says, "By the wonderful preservation of this one and only people, distinct from all others for so many ages, Providence has left room for the season here foretold; by looking on him whom they have pierced, and mourning, they shall rise again, and be as life from the dead."‡ St.

* Zech. xii. 10. † John xix. 37. ‡ Note on Zech. xii. 10, Mant.
John, also, repeats the expression in the Revelation: "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they, also, that pierced him; and all kindred of the earth shall wail because of him."*

This supplies a strong additional argument, for the passage under consideration having respect to the second coming of the Messiah, when "all Israel shall be saved," because the learned are agreed that the Revelation could not have been written sooner than twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem. In the chapter we have been considering the Jews are sentenced to desolation, and in the 24th chapter, Christ describes particularly the manner in which this judgment would fall upon them.

The natural way in which the subject is introduced is worthy of notice. "Jesus went out, and departed from the temple, and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

* Rev. i. 6, 7.
And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, his disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* For Christ's answer to his disciples, and his representation of the miseries that would fall upon his nation, I must refer the reader to the remainder of the chapter; nor shall I make any remark upon it, excepting to observe, that the sufferings of its inhabitants during the siege of Jerusalem surpassed all description, and were, indeed, "such as were not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."†

After having cast out them that sold sheep and oxen, and the money changers, from the temple, saying, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise," the Jews said unto Jesus, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple

in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"*

This saying was at the time obscure not only to the Jews, but, probably, also to the disciples. The Evangelist John, therefore, explains it by saying that "He (our Lord) spake of the temple of his body." The Evangelist adds, "When, therefore, he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."†

It was this speaking of the destruction of the temple of his body by Jesus to the Jews publicly which probably gave rise to a general prejudice against him, for his prediction of the utter destruction of the Jews' temple was given privately to his disciples; and it was also, probably, the ground of the evidence which the two witnesses gave at his trial, who deposed, "this fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God; and to build it in three days;" as, also, of the taunt of those who passed

• John ii. 18—20. † John ii. 21, 22.
by during his crucifixion, "who reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise, also, the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save; if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God."

It is obvious, therefore, that the whole nation had no expectation, in the appearance of their Messia'h, of anything less than a triumphant conqueror, who would deliver them from their subjection to the Romans, and that when they saw him assuming a different character—meek and lowly of heart, and teaching them humility; paying tribute himself, and exhorting them to pay tribute to Cæsar; condemning their vain pretences to religion, and instructing them in the true principles of religion and

morality—their hopes were blasted, their expectations were disappointed, and they could cry out, with one voice, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him;"* and under this savage cry was transacted the doleful tragedy that secured the salvation of the world.

* John xix. 15.
CHAPTER VI.

OF RELIGION, ITS PROGRESS AND EFFECT.

Notwithstanding the old world became so degenerate as to induce divine wisdom to destroy it, yet there were descendants of Adam, during many years, who worshipped God, and who endeavoured to preserve his name and a sense of religion among men. And it cannot be reasonably supposed that soon after the flood God was entirely forgotten. Noah himself lived 150 years after the deluge, and left a large posterity, who peopled the earth; and it is not probable that the immediate descendants of Noah, at least, were ignorant of the worship of God by sacrifices, or that they altogether neglected to pay him that honor which was due unto him. We may presume, however, from the
circumstance of God's having seen fit, about four hundred years after the flood, to call Abraham out of his country, for the purpose of making him the depository of religion, that the worship of the Deity was then at a very low ebb, and that the wisdom of God foresaw that religion could not be sustained in the world without the particular interference of divine providence. Abraham then was the faithful servant of God, and was called the friend of God; he was the ancestor of the Israelitish nation, and the father of the faithful, both Jews and Gentiles, throughout the world, and even to the end of it. He was promised, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed."* And, no doubt, he looked forward with a prospective faith to that seed, and to that day, which our Saviour himself tells us, "he rejoiced to see."† St. James informs us, that "he believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness."‡ And Christians are constantly exhorted, in the New Testament, to follow the faith of their father Abraham, that

* Gen. xxii. 18.
† John viii. 56.  ‡ James ii. 23.
their faith also may be counted unto them for righteousness. But Christians should never forget, that Abraham's faith was immediately made perfect by obedience; and that when the Lord gave him the gracious promise, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," it is added, "because thou hast obeyed my voice."*

Even so the faith of Christians will profit them nothing, unless it be accompanied by obedience. And it should be remembered that the above sentence, "because thou hast obeyed my voice," was spoken by God, in consequence of that astonishing instance of obedience in Abraham, of sacrificing his son at God's command. Abraham was called the father of the faithful, because he was the depository of that faith which was after to be revealed. Christ is called, in the Revelation, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."† And if we attend to the words of Christ himself, when he was on earth, and to the epistle of his Apostle, we shall be convinced that the efficacy of the meritorious sacrifice of Christ took place from the beginning of time;

* Gen. xxii. 18.  † Rev. xiii. 8.
that the men who walked with God in the old world were saved by his merits, as well as all the pious, after the flood, previous to his appearance on earth. Our Saviour's answer to the Sadducees, who said there was no resurrection, at once decided the question. "But, as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."* St. Luke adds, "for all live unto him."†

In his parable of the rich man and Lazarus, our Lord represents Lazarus as having been carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; clearly meaning a place of happiness, in contrast with a place of torment, where Dives is seen in a state of suffering. When Jesus marvelled at the faith of the Centurion, who besought him that he would heal his servant, "He said unto them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and

shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."** This assertion of our Lord proves that the faithful servants of God are in heaven; and it is, at the same time, a prophecy of the rejection of the Jews from God's kingdom, and of the call of the Gentiles.

It is hardly necessary for me to produce farther proof from the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the pious, before the coming of Christ, were saved by a prospective faith in his sacrifice. I shall only, therefore, observe, that in the 11th chapter to the Hebrews will be found an enumeration of the worthies of the Old Testament, from Abel downwards. After the mention of Abraham, and the faith of Sarah, in believing God's promise, the Apostle says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." The Apostle then

* Matt. viii. 10—12.
goes on to reckon those servants of God, of whom he says, "the world was not worthy," from Isaac to those who, previous to the coming of the Messiah, suffered for righteousness' sake. And he concludes with this remarkable observation. "And these, all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."*

Notwithstanding, as I have endeavoured to show, pious men who walked with God, both before and after the flood, were saved by faith in him that was to come, that was, in Christ Jesus; yet it does not appear from the scriptures that any general revelation was made to mankind of the expectation of a Redeemer, excepting that which was given in the sentence on the serpent, that "the seed of the woman should bruise his head." Nevertheless it seems probable that something more respecting this expectation might have been made known to individuals—to Adam, to Noah, and to Abraham, who appear to have been representatives

*Heb. xi. 13—38, 39.
of their posterity, and by them have been communicated to their descendants.

Should any be inclined inquisitively to ask, if a Saviour was given to mankind from the foundation of the world, why this fact was not openly declared from the beginning? or why God did not see fit to send the Messiah into the world in its earlier ages? such inquirers would lay themselves open to the charge of searching into the deep things of God, which, in his wisdom, he has judged proper to hide from us; and should they doubt of all God's ways being just and right, they will render themselves liable to the force of the question of St. Paul, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"*

But although it is not lawful for us to cavil or find fault with God's government of us, we may, in deep humility, and with devout reverence, endeavour to discover, in particular instances, the reason of his proceedings.

In the present case, as the benefits and advantages to be derived from the sacrifice of the

* Rom. ix. 2.
Redeemer were infinitely great, and to extend to all mankind, these benefits would have been in great part lost, if the Messiah had been sent into the world either before the flood or soon after, when men were few in the world, and, from the circumstances of the case, profoundly ignorant of their own nature, and unable to perceive their need of a Redeemer, or to comprehend the blessings which the Saviour of the world was about to bestow upon it, by procuring pardon of sin, and an eternal life.

If it be lawful for man at all to contemplate the plans of his Maker, it must appear to him to be the design of the great Ruler of all events, with regard to man, to allow him and induce him, in all that concerns him, to use his faculties for advancement and improvement, whether it be in religion or civil life, in scientific or moral pursuits, in arts or in arms. The great command of the universal Creator to man is, 'Go on unto perfection,' although so few, in any sense, approach it. This view of the case is in harmony with our experience, and perfectly analogous with what is daily passing before our eyes. The infant knows nothing, and can understand nothing; but as he grows, his faculties
unfold by slow degrees, and he is capable of receiving and of increasing in knowledge. A young man designed for a profession, for any trade or business, is probably wholly ignorant of the knowledge required in the particular calling to which he is destined, he is, therefore, placed under the tuition of some proficient in the art, and perhaps years pass away before he is able to obtain a competent measure of skill in the employment he has chosen or that has been selected for him. Nor is this mode of obtaining knowledge confined to childhood, to youth, or even to individuals; families and classes of men improve in the same manner, and so do the most populous nations. These observations are applicable to the subject of religion, and I have made them for the purpose of so applying them. Every man who reflects on the subject must be sensible that at the time when it pleased the Lord to call Abraham, mankind were in a state of knowledge utterly insufficient to qualify them for the reception of a pure religion. Accordingly, God thought it necessary to introduce it with much antecedent preparation. For this reason he called Abraham; for the same end he chose—may we not say that he created?—a
nation for himself, who would be a burning and a shining light to the ends of the earth, whether they chose the blessing or the curse which was set before them. Moses, speaking in the name of God, said, "Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which ye have not known."* We have seen that this perverse nation unfortunately did not obey the commandments of God, but were rebellious and idolatrous; and that although God frequently forgave them, and received them again into favour, and planted them in the promised land, yet that their city and temple were destroyed for their iniquities, and the nation carried into captivity in Babylon during seventy years; that after their city and temple had been rebuilt, their crying sins, especially that of crucifying the Lord of Glory, again drew down God's judgments upon them—Jerusalem and

* Deut. xi. 26—28.
the other cities of the country were demolished, the land was laid waste and "utterly spoiled," and the people finally scattered among the nations, where they remain unto this day.

I have already entered briefly into the wonderful and interesting subject of God's dealings with his people, the Jews; my object in this chapter is to show generally the steps by which the Christian religion was introduced into the world, and particularly the manner in which that part of it was unfolded, which proclaimed the salvation of the whole Gentile world.

God's promise to Abraham was, that "in him all the families of the earth should be blessed;"* but the meaning and extent of this promise were not understood by either Jews or Gentiles until after the death of Christ. It contained "the great mystery which had been hid from ages and generations, but was then made manifest to his saints," by the preaching of his Apostles;† even the mystery, "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same

* Gen. xii. 3.    † Colos. i. 26.
body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, states at large the grounds on which Abraham was called “the father of the faithful,” showing that it included all, whether Jews or Greeks, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, who worshipped God in sincerity, even to the end of the world. He explains that Abraham could not have been justified by works, for that “to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” And he shows that the faith which was thus counted to Abraham took place previous to his circumcision, lest it should be supposed that the promise of salvation related to the Jews only. “For the promise,” says the Apostle, “that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith; for if they which are of the law be heirs, faith

* Eph. iii. 6. † Rom. iv. 4, 5.
is made void, and the promise made of none effect."*

So early, therefore, as the days of Abraham, provision was made for the salvation, through faith, of the whole world of sinners; although this important measure was not promulgated during many hundred years. But God chose the nation of the Jews, as a peculiar people to himself, that, under his own government, by a strict discipline, he might teach them his laws, and render them obedient to his commandments; and, by these means, prepare both Jews and Gentiles for the reception of that brighter light with which the Messiah was to enlighten the world. There are many reasons and intimations given in the writings of the Apostles, shewing the necessity there was that religion should have been introduced in the manner it was imposed on the Jews, by a severe system of burdensome ceremonies, and legal ordinances, instead of laying open the whole design of divine providence at once, which men were utterly incapable of understanding, and, consequently, could not have been reasonably ex-

* Rom. iv. 13, 14.
pected to obey. St. Paul says, "By the law," that is, by the legal and ceremonial law given to the Jews, "is the knowledge of sin;"* and again, "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said Thou shalt not covet."† The meaning is, I should not have known the covetous desires of the heart to be sins worthy of death, but for the law declaring them to be so.

In his Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul observes to his Gentile converts, "The law was our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ."‡ The business of a schoolmaster is to teach rudiments and principles, to be carried into practice in a more perfect state of knowledge. On the above passage, Dr. Hammond observes that the law was 'an imperfect rule proportioned to an imperfect state; not to justify us, but to keep us in order, and to instruct and prepare our nature for the higher and more holy institution of the gospel, for our justification.'\

St. Paul himself asks the question, after having pronounced faith to be the only way

* Rom. iii. 20.
† Rom. vii. 7. ‡ Gal. iii. 24. || Mant's Bible.
of salvation, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" and he answers, "It was added, because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." And he adds, "But the scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe; but before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed;"* whence the Apostle draws the conclusion that "The law was our schoolmaster."

We have seen that St. Paul, in stating the difference between the law of Moses and the law of faith, speaks of the former as far from being a justifying law; on the contrary, that it was imposed for the purpose of giving the knowledge of sin, and "That the offence might abound;"† and he concludes from hence, that "if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect;" and the Apostle adds, "because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression."‡

* Gal. iii. 19-22, 23.
† Rom. v. 20. ‡ Rom. iv. 14, 15.
This last expression, and others of the like import, such as "sin is not imputed where there is no law,"* have led inquisitive men to contemplate the condition of the unconverted heathen world; and whilst some have concluded, from these expressions, that they are hardly accountable for their actions, others have inferred, from the statements of the same Apostle, in his second chapter to the Romans, not only that they are answerable for their misdeeds, but that they will be liable to severe punishment for the flagrant sins of which they are too generally guilty. These pious men, shocked at their horrid crimes,—I allude to idolatry, to pious murders, committed in conformity with their superstitious rites, and to their dreadful impurities,—these pious men are sometimes too apt to pass judgment upon these ignorant and unhappy heathens, and to consign them to everlasting perdition. God knows, I do not presume to decide the question, nor to judge of God's dealings with them; but may we not venture to ask, who will assert that there is no mercy to be found for them at the hand of God?

* Rom. v. 13.
Who will dare to affirm that no portion of the merit of His sacrifice, who died for the salvation of all men, can ever extend to them? No consideration could induce me to treat of a subject so sacred and so momentous as this, any further than by making use of the light that scripture throws upon it.

In the 1st chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul gives an appalling representation of the state of the heathen world; and says expressly, that "as the invisible things of Him (God), from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead, so are they without excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."*

In this quotation, speaking of the Gentile world, the Apostle alludes to those learned heathen nations which flourished at that time, amongst whom were philosophers, and men of

* Rom. i. 20-22.
science and of deep research, both in Greece and Rome, such as Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, Cicero, and others, who, as the Apostle speaks, knew God, as we perceive by their writings, which are still extant. Of these nations, the Apostle says, with great justice, that they were without excuse; and it cannot be doubted, as "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," that "God" (justly) "gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;" which, as may be seen by what follows, means things contrary to reason and nature. Notwithstanding, therefore, the Apostle had laid it down that "where no law is there is no transgression," and "that sin is not imputed where there is no law," it is clear that these wise heathens were amenable to the law of nature, they were of those who, the Apostle says, "having not the law, they are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness."* And it cannot be doubted, that every man born into the world is bound by the law of nature, and that every man

* Rom. ii. 14, 15.
is answerable for his conduct according to his knowledge and ability. But what shall be said of those wholly unenlightened heathens who inhabit the new continents and islands which were discovered by our adventurous voyagers during the last century? Far from knowing God, they believed images of wood and stone to be their makers and protectors, instead of the living Jehovah, and were given up to idolatry—to the most profane and superstitious rites, and to the most abominable practices. What can we say of them, but that we leave them to the mercy of God, believing that every man is, in some degree, responsible for his actions, and will be judged according to his work; although the difference in the responsibility from the untutored savage to the well-instructed Christian must be incalculable, and by us unfathomable. This distinction is plainly laid down in scripture, in our Saviour’s parable of the talents, and in his declaration, that “the servant who knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes, for unto whomsoever
much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

St. Paul took advantage of this distinction in his Epistle to the Romans, by the mode which he judiciously and delicately adopted for the purpose of convincing his brethren, the Jews, of their great depravity, by comparing them with the Gentiles whom they despised, plainly intimating that they who boasted of superior knowledge without adding to it virtue, would only receive the greater condemnation. “Behold thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?”† The Apostle goes on to show that

the Gentiles, whom he calls the uncircumcision, if they fulfilled the law, would judge or condemn the Jews, who, by the letter and circumcision, transgressed the law; and he concludes with the following expansive, just, and liberal declaration, applicable to all people: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."*

To return to the heathen of the present day, whose countries I have mentioned as having been discovered in the last century. He must be void of the proper feelings of a man, and cannot join with the Roman poet in saying, 'I am a man, and nothing that concerns man is alien to me,' who has not been filled with horror, mixed with much pity, at the recital of the crimes of which they were found guilty; crimes which were not committed occasionally, and through the force of temptation, but some of them established and thought proper and

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

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necessary, through the power of long custom, whilst other most immoral actions assumed the title of sacred, being performed with religious rites, and believed to be acceptable sacrifices to their gods.

The man who feels as he ought to feel for these unhappy beings, will not fail to encourage and support the great efforts that are now making for their conversion. I allude to the religious societies, long established in our church, to the Bible Society, and to the Missionary Societies generally, all of which are making gratifying progress in this truly religious work. Neither let any one forbear to assist in this important undertaking, through fear that the unenlightened heathen are incapable of imbibing the rudiments, and entertaining the principles of our holy religion; for we have undoubted evidence, putting these points out of the question, that the Southsea islanders, to whom I have chiefly alluded, have given up their profane, cruel, and impure rites, and have become professing Christians. Like the early converts to Christianity, who were called upon to repent and embrace the gospel, the missionaries could not but have told these
erring heathens that they could not be capable of learning, nor fit to receive a pure religion, before they had renounced their impious customs and vicious practices. If they have acted thus, at least a great point is gained in morality; and it must be acknowledged by all that it is a first step towards the reception of our holy religion in sincerity, and to their becoming Christians both in heart and life.

I conclude this chapter with some gratifying and consoling reports, which our hardy voyagers and our indefatigable travellers have given us.

It has been long known that the Arabs possess the virtue of hospitality in a high degree, although they have an extraordinary mode of exercising it. Notwithstanding they will often rob helpless travellers, and sometimes, I fear, take their lives if resisted, yet they are never known to deceive, or surrender to an enemy, any man in their power who has placed himself under their protection, or who has ate or drank with them.

Modern voyagers and travellers relate that they have found savage nations so strictly honest, that they were not afraid to leave every thing belonging to a ship unprotected, depend-
ing on the forbearance of the natives, although the temptation held out to them from the various articles for the first time submitted to their attention must have been almost irresistible. Others have discovered a people so rigorously chaste, that no instance was met with of the smallest deviation from the exact line of purity. With respect to the virtue of kind-heartedness and the most consummate charity, which in every land pervade the whole female sex generally, one traveller has summed up the history of his travels with paying the sex, not the compliment, but the due meed of praise, by declaring that in every country through which he passed, in every difficulty and in every distress, he had ever found a woman ready to afford him her best assistance. What shall we say to these things? Shall we consign these amiable children of nature to everlasting perdition, when that God has made them whose "tender mercies are over all his works, and who is kind to the unthankful and the disobedient?" Does God take care for oxen, and does a sparrow fall to the ground without him? And are not these helpless children of our common Father of more value than many sparrows? and
will their virtues be passed by unregarded? Instead, therefore, of usurping God's prerogative by passing judgment upon them, let us use our utmost endeavours to enlighten them with the knowledge of the pure religion graciously revealed to us, who once lay in equal darkness, from which we were extricated by the preaching of the gospel. Let every man, according to the opportunities offered him, stretch forth his hand to lead his benighted brother into the light of the truth, either by personal exertions, if in his power, or by aiding those who are most forward in the exercise of this highest of the graces which fill up the measure of Christian charity.
CHAPTER VII.

ANCIENT PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE GENTILES.

The prophecies that I have first quoted from the ancient Prophets, and from Christ himself, were accomplished by his appearance on earth, by his crucifixion, and his resurrection. Those which related particularly to the Jewish nation were in part fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem, not long after our Saviour's death, and are now fulfilling in the continued dispersion and separation of that singular people, but will not be completed until their final restoration shall have taken place, which, throughout the whole of the scriptures, we are taught confidently to expect.

The prophecies which I am about to bring forward, will relate to what St. Paul calls
"the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel."*

Isaiah, in his 42d chapter, introduces the Messiah as the reigning Lord over the Gentiles. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth."† St. Matthew quotes this prophecy, for the purpose of applying the latter part to Christ's humility, in withdrawing himself when he was opposed, and desiring the multitude not to make him known.‡ The former part of the prophecy plainly foretels the publication of the gospel to the Gentiles. This is still more clearly seen

* Ephes. iii. 4-6. † Isaiah xiii. 1-3.
‡ Matt. xii. 18, 19.
in the 6th verse. "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."

The prophecy in the 54th chapter of Isaiah, appears, from its very extensive nature, to have reference to the time when both Jews and Gentiles would be converted to a belief in Christ. It announces the conversion of the Gentiles, in words addressed to the Jewish church, as the emblem of the Christian. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called."† When the gospel had been offered to the Jews, and been preached with success to the

* Isaiah xiii. 6. † Isaiah liv. 1-3 and 5.
Gentiles, the Messiah might be properly called the God of the whole earth. In a still more enlarged sense will he possess this title, when the Jews shall also turn to the Lord, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, and when all Israel shall be saved.

Bishop Lowth observes, that 'the subject of the 16th chapter of Isaiah is the great increase and the 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 times. The 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, which we are taught to expect in the latter days.'*

The chapter begins, "Arise, shine, for the light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the

* Bishop Lowth. Mant.
Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

The Gentiles are spoken of in scripture frequently as inhabiting the isles of the sea or the sea coasts. Here it seems to be foretold that many nations separated from each other by the sea, shall flow together, and be united under the banner of the great captain of their salvation, Jesus Christ.

In the 26th chapter is a prophecy of the manner in which the Almighty sometimes made use of his chosen people for the purpose of spreading the knowledge of himself among the other nations of the world. "It shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. And I will

* Isaiah lx. 1—5.
set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pal, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.”

This purpose in scattering the people is likewise declared in other parts of the prophetic writings; thus in the Prophet Ezekiel it is said, “they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries; but I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come, and they shall know that I am the Lord.”

The Jews were chosen of God as his peculiar people, and they were destined to be a sign unto the world under any circumstances. If they were obedient to the voice of the Lord their God, and rendered themselves worthy of the blessings which God promised to bestow upon them, they would be a burning and a

* Isaiah lxvi. 18, 19. † Ezek. xii. 15, 16.
shining light in the sight of all the nations, and every people would know that there was a God in Israel. On the contrary, if, as was unfortunately the case, they rebelled against his commandments, and ran after strange gods, the punishments inflicted on them, and especially their dispersions, would be a striking example, and a standing monument of God's righteous and just government over them, for when the question is asked, Wherefore has the Lord dealt thus with this people? the only answer that can be returned is, Because they have rebelled against the voice of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them, therefore is the wrath of their God kindled against them, and his fury poured out upon them.

Whoever reads the prophecies of the Old Testament cannot avoid seeing how deeply impressed the Prophets were with the prospect of the future kingdom of the Messiah. In a former chapter I have produced many predictions of the advent of the Messiah, and of the circumstances relating to his life and death. In the present chapter I have quoted a few prophecies which foretell the great mystery of the
calling in of the Gentiles, and allude to that blessed time, spoken of both by our Lord and his Apostles, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, and when all Israel shall be saved.

It is not necessary, therefore, to accumulate quotations from the rest of the Prophets, tending to the same object, and I shall pass on to the next chapter.
CHAPTER VIII.

PROPHECIES OF CHRIST FORETELLING THE CALLING OF THE GENTILES.

The time and manner of the coming of the Messiah into the world were in perfect agreement with the plan of Divine Providence relative to the introduction of religion, of which I have given a brief sketch in a former chapter. The Messiah was sent in person to preach only to the Jews; had he divulged the extensive nature of his commission—that its object was to call in the Gentiles, and to make them fellow heirs and partakers of God's promises with his chosen people,—the whole nation would have rejected him with one accord. Accordingly, our Lord said expressly, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel;"* 

and although, at the same time that he made this declaration, he yielded to the importunity of the woman of Canaan, and healed her daughter, saying, "Great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt;"* and, notwithstanding he complied with the request of the Centurion, who was also a Gentile, that he would heal his servant; these were but particular instances, and did not excite the jealousy of the Jews, who were unable even to imagine that the Gentiles, whom they despised, and to whom they gave the name of dogs, were about to be brought into fellowship with them, or, rather, that they were to be rejected from the vineyard of the Great Husbandman, and the Gentiles planted in their stead.

All must allow that the time when the Messiah was sent into the world was favourable to the promulgation of the glorious gospel of salvation which he came to establish. The Greeks were a polished nation, boasting of their wisdom; the Romans, a powerful and understanding people, by degrees extending their government throughout the then known world. That

* Matt. xv. 28.
these nations were at that time fitted to receive our holy religion is proved by the result. The great cities where the Apostles preached soon after their Lord's death—Athens, Ephesus, Corinth, and others—joyfully received the message which they brought, and gloried in the name of Christians. That the gospel not only prevailed at Rome, and in the Roman provinces, but that it soon shook the idolatrous and superstitious worship of the heathen to its foundation, is placed beyond dispute by the letter of Pliny to the Roman Emperor Trajan, stating and lamenting the fact; and we know that the new religion so steadily and regularly increased, that in the beginning of the fourth century the Emperor, and the whole Roman nation, became Christian.

At the birth of Jesus, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto the shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night, and the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

* Luke ii. 8—11.
The expression, "to all people," is a clear proof that the benefit of the gospel was to be universal. When the Virgin, after the days of her purification were accomplished, brought the child Jesus to present him to the Lord, "Simeon, a man just and devout, who waited for the consolation of Israel, came by the spirit into the temple; and when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."* "It had been revealed unto Simeon, by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord Christ." So that here is a distinct declaration from the Holy Ghost, that the great purpose of the mission of Christ was to enlighten the Gentile nations, and to shew forth his salvation, even to the ends of the earth.

In the 3d chapter of St. Matthew, where

John the Baptist says to the Pharisees and Sadducees, "I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,"* there is an evident allusion to the calling in of the Gentiles.

Whitby observes, 'the sense seems to be that God, who raised Adam from the earth, and children to Abraham from the dead womb of Sarah, can, from these stones, create such persons whose faith shall render them more truly and acceptably the sons of faithful Abraham than you.'† The Baptist calls the Pharisees and Sadducees "a generation of vipers;" and asks, "who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"‡ meaning, probably, from the destruction that God was about to bring upon the nation, for their manifold iniquities.

In the 8th chapter of St. Matthew is a narrative of the interesting conversation of Jesus with the Centurion, who besought him to heal his servant, who "lay at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented," and of this wonderful miracle, that Jesus wrought by a word only. To the Centurion's request, "Jesus saith unto

* Matt. iii. 9.
† Whitby on Matt. iii. 9.  ‡ Matt. iii. 7.
him, I will come and heal him. The Centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed; for I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh, and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said unto them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the Centurion, go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.”

Here is an express prediction by our Lord, of the rejection of the Jews, and of the calling in of the Gentiles in their stead. And this, as I have before observed of several of Christ's pro-

phecies relating to his death, and to the destruction of Jerusalem, is spoken incidentally, that is, it belongs entirely to the subject in hand. The Centurion appears to have been the first Gentile in whose behalf our Lord had exercised his miraculous power; and, being astonished at the faith and humility of his supplicant, he breaks out into the exclamation, “Verily I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel;” which naturally suggested to his mind the great purpose for which he came into the world, “that he should die, not for one nation only, (the Jews) but that also he should gather together, in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

It seems to have been the marked determination of our blessed Saviour, that the gospel should not be promulgated to the Gentiles during his ministration on earth; and, in conformity with this, is his command to his Apostles, when he sent them forth to preach, “saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” he says, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles.”* I have before observed, if our Lord, or his Apos-

* Matt. x: 5.
tles had preached to the Gentiles, the whole nation of the Jews would have rejected him; but, although the nation generally was destined to destruction, yet we know that Christ's ministry was not altogether lost among them, for we learn, from the Acts of the Apostles, that great numbers of Jews, as well as Gentiles, were converted to the Christian faith.

In the 12th chapter, St. Matthew quotes the prophecy of Isaiah, relating to this subject. "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles; He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets; A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment into victory; And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

Whatever be the meaning of the sentence, "till he send forth judgment into victory," this prophecy is a confirmation of what I have before endeavoured to show—that the ancient Prophets foretold the conversion of the Gentile

* Matt. xii. 18—21.
world. With regard to the above sentence, it probably looks forward to that time when God's judgments, having been executed to the utmost on the unbelieving Jews, and the Gentiles having been called into Christ's church, "In him shall the Gentiles trust;" "That," according to the Apostle, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He (God) might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."*

Our Saviour's similitudes,—The grain of mustard seed, which is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown is the greatest among herbs, which was to become a tree, so that the birds of the air would come and lodge in the branches of it,† shows the expansive nature of his kingdom, and the extent to which it would in future times attain;—The leaven, hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened, has the same effect; and they both intimate that a much larger society of men than the Jewish nation consisted of, would constitute Christ's kingdom.‡ The similitudes of a treasure found

* Eph. i. 10.  † Matt. xiii. 32.
‡ Matt. xiii. 33.
hid in a field, for the sake of which a man selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field; And the pearl of great price, which the merchant went and sold all that he had, and bought; exhibit, in strong colours, the inestimable value of that kingdom. And the last similitude, of a net cast into the sea, is a just representation of the state of mankind, ever since those lively oracles were pronounced; for there have always been good and bad, which will be in the end separated from each other; and the great business of each man, in this time of salvation, is to strive earnestly that, when the angel shall come forth to sever the wicked from among the just, he may not be found in the number of those who will be subject to the dire sentence of their Lord, and be cast into the fiery furnace.* "Jesus said unto them, have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe, which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” *

* Matt. xiii. 44—50, 51, 52.
Thus 'He warns them,' says Dr. S. Clarke, 'that they should lay up these doctrines in their minds, that they may be thoroughly qualified to become preachers of the gospel, and be able on all occasions to bring forth out of their memories, as out of a well furnished store-house, instructions suited to persons of all capacities."

The beautiful similitude of the kingdom of heaven likened to "a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard," is applicable to Jews and Gentiles in their collective state, and, in his individual capacity, to every man. The Jews were called into the vineyard of God early in the morning, as a nation; the third, sixth, and ninth hours probably represent those times, when, by his Prophets, or by particular interposition of his providence, God called them to repentance. Such was the example of all the Israelites who came out of Egypt, for their rebellion, two only excepted, perishing in the wilderness. Such the miraculous manner in which those who remained passed over Jordan, in spite of their formidable enemies, and were

* Dr. S. Clarke. Mant.
planted in the land promised to their fathers. Finally, such was the judgment of their being carried away captive into Babylon. Such heavy inflictions as fell on the rebellious Israelites, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, and who saw not the land which God had promised to their fathers; and as the sore punishments sent upon the Jews of Jerusalem, in their captivity, with the desolation of their city and temple, were calculated to soften the hardest heart; and, in the latter case, it had the effect of causing the people to relent, to forsake their idols, and to seek after God. "When God's judgments are in the earth," says the Prophet, "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."*

With regard to the time which I have supposed to be the sixth hour, when the Jews were called into the vineyard, when the Lord was planting them in the promised country with a mighty hand, and giving them daily instances of his irresistible power in enabling them to overcome their enemies, it is hardly possible to believe that it could have failed to have had

* Isaiah xxvi. 9.
a powerful influence upon their minds and conduct; notwithstanding what the Psalmist says of their fathers, "that they regarded not God's wonders in Egypt, neither kept they his great goodness in remembrance," and though the nation continued a stiff-necked people, we must charitably suppose that both God's judgments and his mercies produced the desired effect on many, and prevailed on them to turn and enquire after God—to enter into the vineyard of the great householder, and to labour therein in hope of the promised reward.

The labourers sent into the vineyard at the eleventh hour undoubtedly point out the Gentiles; and when they are seen to receive the same wages as the Jews, who were employed earlier, and, as they allege, "had borne the burden and heat of the day," the latter "murmured against the good man of the house," as if he had done them wrong. "But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way. I will give unto this last even as unto thee." Is

* Psalm cvi. 7.
it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?"* As God is the lord of the vineyard represented in the parable, this last sentence is, doubtless, applicable to him who ordereth all things in perfect wisdom according to the council of his own will. Whoever studies the holy scriptures attentively and impartially, will perceive that God has frequently exercised this right of doing what he will with his own in a way where the grounds of his proceedings cannot be comprehended by ignorant and short-sighted mortals. Thus he called Abram out of his country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, for his own wise purposes, which were unknown by the sons of men; thus he chose Isaac, the son of Sarah, as the progenitor of the nation whence the promised seed should spring, in preference to Ishmael, who was the son of the bond woman. Then of the sons of Isaac he preferred Jacob the younger to Esau the older born, to be the father of the patriarchs, who were to multiply and extend their families until they became a great nation, distributed into the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Fi-

nally, God chose this nation as his own people, giving them a law to regulate their conduct, whilst he apparently neglected the Gentiles, who were "suffered to walk in their own ways, and were a law unto themselves, their conscience also bearing witness."*

These instances of God's "doing what he will with his own" are apparent to every one; but in the divine dealings individually with men, who are his rational, moral, and accountable creatures, the case is widely different. Where virtue and vice are concerned, the Almighty acts with strict impartiality, and shows that he is no respecter of persons. In the 18th chapter of Ezekiel, God, by his Prophet, expressly disclaims the act of laying one man's sin upon another, and distinctly proclaims that every man, respecting his moral actions, shall bear his own burden. Without adverting to the acknowledged attributes of God—justice and mercy—the whole tenor of the scripture appears to me to be in perfect harmony with this simple view of the question—that, infinitely various as the situations and circumstances

* Rom. ii. 15.
of men are in the world, every man has a duty to perform, and will be accountable to the righteous Governor for the use or abuse of the talent committed to his care. The scriptures teach us that God's ears are open to the prayers of his humble servants; that he "willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* They declare that Christ died for all mankind, and his gracious invitation "to all that labour and are heavy laden" is addressed to all.† He affirms, "that him that cometh to him he will in no wise cast out;"‡ and he reproves the Jews because they would not "come unto him, that they might have life."|| In his description of the day of judgment he shows distinctly that men will be judged according to their works: "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice"—the voice of the Son of Man,—"and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation."§ This parable was spoken by our Lord for the purpose of illustrating and

* 2 Peter iii. 9. † Matt. xi. 28.
‡ John vi. 37. || John v. 40. § John v. 28, 29.
showing the justice of the concluding sentence: 
"So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen."*

'That is,' observes Whitby, 'many of the Jews to whom the blessings of the kingdom are first to be offered, shall be the last to partake of them; and many of the Gentiles, to whom they are to be offered after the Jews, shall first enjoy them.'†

I have before adverted to the parable of "the householder who let out his vineyard to husbandmen, and went into a far country,"‡ as proving our Lord's foreknowledge of the fate of the Jewish nation; and I have quoted both the answer of the priests and elders of the people to our Saviour's question, What will the Lord of the vineyard do unto those husbandmen; and also our Lord's sentence on the nation. As applicable to our present subject—the admission of the Gentiles—I would wish to draw the reader's attention again to the answer of the Jews, who not only say, "he will miserably destroy those wicked men," but that "he will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen which

* Matt. xx. 16.
† Whitby. Mant. ‡ Matt. xxi. 33.
shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”* And also to our Lord’s declaration of destitution to the Jews, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”†

This parable is minutely descriptive, in a covert manner, of the character that Christ afterwards gave the Scribes and Pharisees openly, in his reproachful conversation with them. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous; and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets; wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them that killed the Prophets.”‡ They prided themselves upon their ancient Prophets, and garnished their sepulchres, in a vain show of their regard for them whose blood their fathers had shed, whilst they heeded not their prophecies, and paid no attention to their warnings. The conclusion,

* Matt. xxi. 41. † Matt. xxi. 43.
‡ Matt. xxiii. 29-31.
therefore, that our Lord drew, was, that if they had been in the time of their fathers, they would have been guilty of the like atrocities; and then he foretells that they would fill up the measure of their fathers, by persecuting the new race of Prophets, whom he was about to send unto them.

In his next parable, our Lord says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son; and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come." "All things were ready; but they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize; and the remnant took his servants, and treated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he sent forth his armies, and destroyed these murderers, and burnt up their city."* The invitation undoubtedly applies to the Jews, and on their refusal to come, and their savage treatment of the king's servants; the armies sent forth are a lively representation of the Roman armies, who, not long after, "destroyed these

* Matt. xxii. 2-7.
murderers, and burnt up their city;" the guests called in from the highways, in the place of those who "were bidden, but who were not worthy," indicate the Gentiles, who obeyed the call in such numbers, that "the wedding was furnished with guests." Is not the prophecy contained in this parable fulfilled to the utmost, by the exclusion of the Jews, and by the multitudes of Gentiles who have accepted the divine invitation, and who are partakers of the heavenly feast? But "when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he was speechless;" that is, he was conscious that without a wedding garment he had no proper claim to a seat in such an assembly, and could not have been received as an acceptable guest.

Nothing can prove the necessity, if we would seek to be admitted to the supper of the Lamb, at the last day, of our being careful to put on the wedding garment, more than the king's severe sentence upon the unhappy guest who was found at the wedding dinner without the appropriate garment. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness;"
there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for many are called, but few are chosen."*

However clearly we are called to the heavenly banquet, however confident we may be that a place will be reserved for us there, we shall not be admitted, or shall be unwelcome guests, and be thrust out, unless we are clothed with the white robe of righteousness, which is the distinguishing token of God's saints, and in which alone we can become guests at his holy table, in his Son's everlasting kingdom.

In describing to his disciples, on the Mount of Olives, the ruin that was coming upon the Jewish nation, and pointing out the signs which should precede these horrific events, Jesus adds, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."† Before the destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel was preached throughout the Greek and Roman empires, the then known world. 'This great event,' observes Whitby; 'He only could foretell, who, having all

power in heaven and in earth, was able to effect it.*

In the magnificent representation that our Lord gives of the day of judgment, is an intimation not to be mistaken, that the Jews were not the only people who in that great day would be called upon to answer for their moral conduct, and to give an account of "things done in the body, whether they be good or evil." "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."† Who can doubt that in the sentence, "before him shall be gathered all nations," are included the Gentile nations, and every man that has lived, or who hereafter shall live upon this earth?

The like conclusion must be drawn from our Lord's command to his Apostles, after his resurrection. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of

* Whitby. Mant. † Matt. xxv. 31, 32.
the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*

St. Mark states the command to have been, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,"† which is equally extensive, and comprehends all mankind.

Our Lord obviously spoke the parable of the lost sheep in defence of himself, against the calumnies of the Jews, because he ate and drank with publicans and sinners. The Scribes and Pharisees despised the publicans, and considered them not only as unfit for their society, but as men reprobate and cast off by God, and incapable of being renewed unto repentance; but these were the very men whom our Saviour had compassion on. "They that be whole," said He, "need not a physician, but they that are sick; but go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to

* Matt. xxviii. 18-20. † Mark xvi. 15.
It seems highly probable that, in this parable of the lost sheep, Christ had also an eye to the Gentiles, who were peculiarly his lost sheep; not having that portion of the bread of life, the knowledge of God’s will, which even the publicans among the Jews possessed; and, in the 10th chapter of St. John, our Lord claims the Gentiles as his sheep. “Other sheep I have,” says He, “which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.”

The parable of the Prodigal Son was, doubtless, intended to point out the Jews and Gentiles. The prodigal represents the Gentiles, who, losing the knowledge of the true God, which they had received from nature or by tradition, had wandered far from their father’s house, fallen into spiritual destitution, and fed on husks, which were neither nutritious nor wholesome—they served wood and stone instead of the living God. The elder brother indicated the Jews, who could not imagine that their father would ever again receive his prodi-

* Matt. ix. 12, 13. † John x. 16.
gal son, who "had taken his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." When he heard, therefore, that his younger brother had repented and returned, and was received by his father joyfully, he was angry; and "as he drew nigh to the house, and heard music and dancing, he would not go in,"* but, in an angry mood, and with jealous feelings, drew a comparison between his own dutiful behaviour and the neglectful treatment he had received, and the ready gift of the fatted calf that had been killed on the return of his reprobate brother. Although there might have been some reason in this remonstrance, our Lord puts to silence every thing of the kind by the answer that he puts into the mouth of the father, which is in perfect harmony with his declaration in a former parable, that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine; it was meet that we should make merry, and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found."

We are the descendants of those Gentiles

who are represented by the Prodigal Son, and we have been received joyfully, and reinstated in our father's house; if we leave it again, or behave undutifully in it, we shall be justly chargeable with accumulated guilt.
CHAPTER IX.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE GOSPEL WAS PROCLAIMED TO THE GENTILES.

ST. PAUL.

In a former chapter I have observed that it appears not to have been the design of Providence that the gospel should have been preached to the Gentiles during the ministry of Christ on earth; and every one who reads the writings of the Evangelists must perceive the justness of the observation. After the ascension of Christ into heaven, there was obviously a difficulty in commencing this great work, which had been ordained, but kept secret, from the foundation of the world. The Apostles, and the disciples of our Lord generally, were bigotted Jews, and
those who had been sent out to preach the gospel in the towns and villages of Judea were particularly instructed "not to go into the way of the Gentiles." No one, therefore, probably, of those Jews who had been converted to Christianity by our Lord and his disciples, entertained the least idea of any Gentile being admitted nearer to the Church of God than those who were allowed to worship in their temple in what was called the court of the Gentiles.

The history of the manner in which it pleased the Almighty to prepare for the call of the Gentiles into his Church is contained in the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. The miracles are surprising, and the narratives to the last degree interesting. Before I enter upon the consideration of them, I would desire the reader to peruse the above-mentioned chapters, which will enable him to enter into the spirit of such observations as may offer themselves in pursuing the narrative.

It appears from the Acts of the Apostles, and from his own confessions, that Saul, although he was unlike the twelve Apostles, being a learned Jew, "brought up at the feet of Ga-
maliel,” yet he was, similar to the mass of his nation, a most bigotted adherent to the religion of his fathers. We learn, in the 7th and 8th chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, that Saul was present at the death of the first martyr, Stephen, and kept the raiment of them that slew him; that after this he was a fierce persecutor of the Christians, and “made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.”*

On the death of Stephen, this extraordinary person, who was destined, in the councils of God, to become a most zealous and effective Apostle in the kingdom of Christ, “went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way,”—disciples of Christ—“whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou

* Acts viii. 3.
me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.”* 

In this miracle, as well as in that wrought for the conviction of St. Peter, which I shall consider afterwards, there was a provision made for carrying the miracle into effect. In the present case there was a disciple at Damascus, named Ananias, who was commanded in a vision to go into the street called Straight, and enquire at the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus, and he is, at the same time, informed that Saul had seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand upon him that he might receive his sight, for Saul, when he arose from the earth, though his eyes were opened, saw no man, but was led by the hand to Damascus.

* Acts ix. 1—7.
I would wish it to be particularly observed, by how many probable and striking circumstances both this miracle, and that which relates to St. Peter, are supported and confirmed. The first circumstance to be noticed, is in Ananias's answer; whence it appears, and of which there could have been no doubt, that Saul was well known, so far as reputation went, by the Christians, as their relentless persecutor. Accordingly, Ananias, in answer to the command of the Lord, in a vision, to seek out Saul, "answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the people of Israel; For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."* The result was, that Ananias found Saul, and laid his hands upon him, and he forthwith received his sight. And Saul stayed certain days at Damascus, "And straightway he

* Acts ix. 13—16.
preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name at Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the high priests."*

How natural is this, that all who knew of his former persecutions, and his sudden conversion, and heard him preach Christ in the synagogues, were amazed, and dwelt upon the history of his former life. It is not less natural that his brethren, the Jews, whom it is said he confounded at Damascus, should have taken counsel, and lain in wait to kill him. Nor is it probable that their watchfulness was so strict, that it was necessary for the disciples to take him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket, that he might escape from their hands. Thus was Saul able to return to Jerusalem, "and assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple, until Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the

* Acts ix. 20, 21.
way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them (the Apostles) coming in and going out at Jerusalem.” * Saul, however, could not remain at Jerusalem, for he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians; but they went about to slay him, which, when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.” †

When Saul, who was afterwards called Paul, himself related his conversion before the tumultuous multitude at Jerusalem, and spake of his former return to Jerusalem from Damascus, he says, “when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw Him (Jesus) saying unto me, make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I, imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee. And when the blood of thy martyr, Stephen, was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death,

and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”* St. Paul seems to glory in the history of his conversion, which he so often repeats, and to give glory to God that he had called him into the marvellous light of his gospel. He relates it again in his defence before Agrippa and Festus, in the 26th chapter; and often alludes to it. In his second Epistle to the Corinthians, speaking of his sufferings, he says, “In Damascus, the governor, under Aretas the king, kept the city of the Damascus with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.”† In the 1st chapter of his Epistle to Timothy the Apostle is laying it down that “the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners; and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust; and I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that

* Acts xxii. 17—21. † 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.
he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."* Do not these repetitions and frequent allusions to the fact of St. Paul's conversion afford an unanswerable argument to its truth?

If the scriptures be diligently studied, with a view to ascertain St. Paul's character, the student can by no means be disappointed. The lucid account that is given of his proceedings in the Acts of the Apostles, combined with the familiar communications with his numerous converts in his Epistles, enable us to be more intimately acquainted with St. Paul's character than with the character of many who have been personally known to us. The prominent feature in that character was zeal in a cause which he believed to be just and according to truth, which was his case before his conversion, to effect which a miracle seems to have been necessary. To those who are adverse to the introduction of miracles, the question may be put, What could have disjoined the zealous attachment to their ancient religion, both in

* 1 Tim. i. 9—13.
St. Paul and St. Peter, what could have subdued their early and fixed prejudices, less than a miracle? In both cases the interference of the Deity was clear and conclusive, and no doubt could remain that the call was from heaven, and that the heavenly call demanded instant obedience.

I shall make but one observation more relative to St. Paul, before I proceed to consider the case of St. Peter. St. Paul had some infirmity, which he calls a thorn in the flesh, and he says that it was given him lest, through the abundance of the revelations, he should be exalted above measure. "For this thing," says he, "I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul tells his converts that the punishments which were inflicted upon the rebellious Jews in the wilderness, for their iniquities, were written for their admonition; and Christians cannot but believe that the things which happened under the new covenant, espe-

* 2 Cor. xii. 7—9.
cially the teachings of God to the Apostles by his word or spirit, belong to all Christians. Every Christian, therefore, may and ought, in every difficulty and distress, to apply the words of God, spoken to St. Paul, "my grace is sufficient for thee," to himself. There is but one condition—that we believe and trust in God; for if we trust in ourselves, we shall be left to ourselves, to reap as we have sown. But he who believes that God's grace is sufficient for him, will never forget the assertion that follows—"for my strength is made perfect in weakness." This is in unison with the whole tenor of scripture, which teaches the frailty and imperfection of human nature—that man is nothing, and that God is all in all. The Apostle follows up the doctrine in the same verse: "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong."* The Christian, therefore, who can say with the Apostle, "not that we are sufficient of our-

* 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.
selves, to think any thing is of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God,”* will not trust in himself, but in Him who is mighty to save, and he shall find help in time of need.

St. Peter.

The miracles performed for the conversion of Saul, and for the conviction of St. Peter, were wrought for the same end, namely, to open their understandings, and to impress their minds with the important truth, that the Gentiles were destined to be fellow heirs with the Jews, partakers of the like privileges under the gospel, and enjoying with them the high expectation of a heavenly inheritance. But the state from which these individuals were called to enjoy this knowledge, and to be leaders, as the chosen servants of God, in the comprehensive scheme of the gospel, was widely different. Saul, as has been seen, was to the last degree prejudiced in favour of the religion he professed, and in

* 2 Cor. iii: 5.

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which he had been educated. It is hardly possible that so inquisitive a mind should not have been, in some degree, acquainted with the proceedings of Jesus; but, it is highly probable that the impetuosity of his temper, caused him, without sufficient enquiry, to believe the calumnies against him, that he was endeavouring to change their customs, and to destroy their system of religious worship.

St. Peter, on the contrary, was a chosen Apostle of Christ, who had followed him at his call, accompanied him in all his labours, an received from him, after his resurrection, the impressive command to "feed his sheep;" on which occasion he had declared his love for his master in impassioned terms. Nevertheless, this chosen Apostle was wholly ignorant of the extensive nature of the gospel with which he was entrusted. He had received it himself; he had converted many of his brethren, the Jews, to Christianity; but still he wanted to be informed of those other sheep, which were not of this fold, and which Christ came also to bring under his pastoral care. The manner in which St. Peter was enlightened, is written in the 10th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.
Here, as in the former case of Saul, there were two divine visions connected with each other. Cornelius, a devout Gentile, is told that "his prayers are heard, and his alms come up as a memorial before God;" and he is directed "to send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."* "When the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed," he called his servants, and, on the morrow, sent them to Joppa. "And as they drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house top to pray, about the sixth hour; and he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made ready he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descended unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth; therein were all manner of four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air; and there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat; but Peter said, not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean; and the voice spake

* Acts x. 4—6.
unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common; this was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven.”

It appears that while "Peter doubted what the vision which he had seen should mean, and thought on the vision, the spirit said unto him, Behold three men seek thee, arise, therefore, and get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them."† When Peter saw them, he said unto them, "Behold I am he whom ye seek, what is the cause wherefore ye are come?"‡ The men sent by Cornelius then stated their message, that Cornelius had been "warned from God, by an holy angel, to send for Peter into his house, and to hear words of him." Peter, therefore, went with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him to Cesarea. "And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends; and as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up, I myself also am a man.

And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together; and he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come to one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean; therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for; I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me.”* The recital of the narrative of the vision he had seen, by Cornelius, immediately answered this question, and put Peter in full possession of the cause of these wonderful revelations from heaven having been sent upon them. “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”† And he concludes his discourse with, “And He (Christ) commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it was He that was ordained of God, to be the judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the Prophets witness, that, through his

* Acts x. 24—29.  † Acts x. 34, 35.
name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word; and they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles, also, was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost, for they heard them speak with tongues, and glorify God.”* And the Gentiles were baptized in the name of the Lord.

Thus were these two Apostles established as leaders in the promulgation of the gospel. Then “the Apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God;”† and after they had heard St. Peter’s defence, “they glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”‡

I here take leave of my reader for the present, having completed that portion of my little work which I had contemplated.

The progress that Christianity made in the

* Acts x. 42—46. † Acts xi. 1. ‡ Acts xi. 18.
first century is generally known—that it overthrew the heathen temples, and destroyed the polytheism of the Romans; this, and what followed, are subjects of ecclesiastical history. In the present day, notwithstanding the prevalence of crime, Christians may cherish a reasonable hope that a happy era in favour of their religion is not far distant. Ancient prophecies are fulfilling; education, knowledge—especially religious knowledge, and civilization, are increasing, giving us a foretaste of that time when the grain of mustard seed shall become a great tree, covering the earth, and when the little leaven shall leaven the whole lump.

April 22d, 1834.

FINIS.