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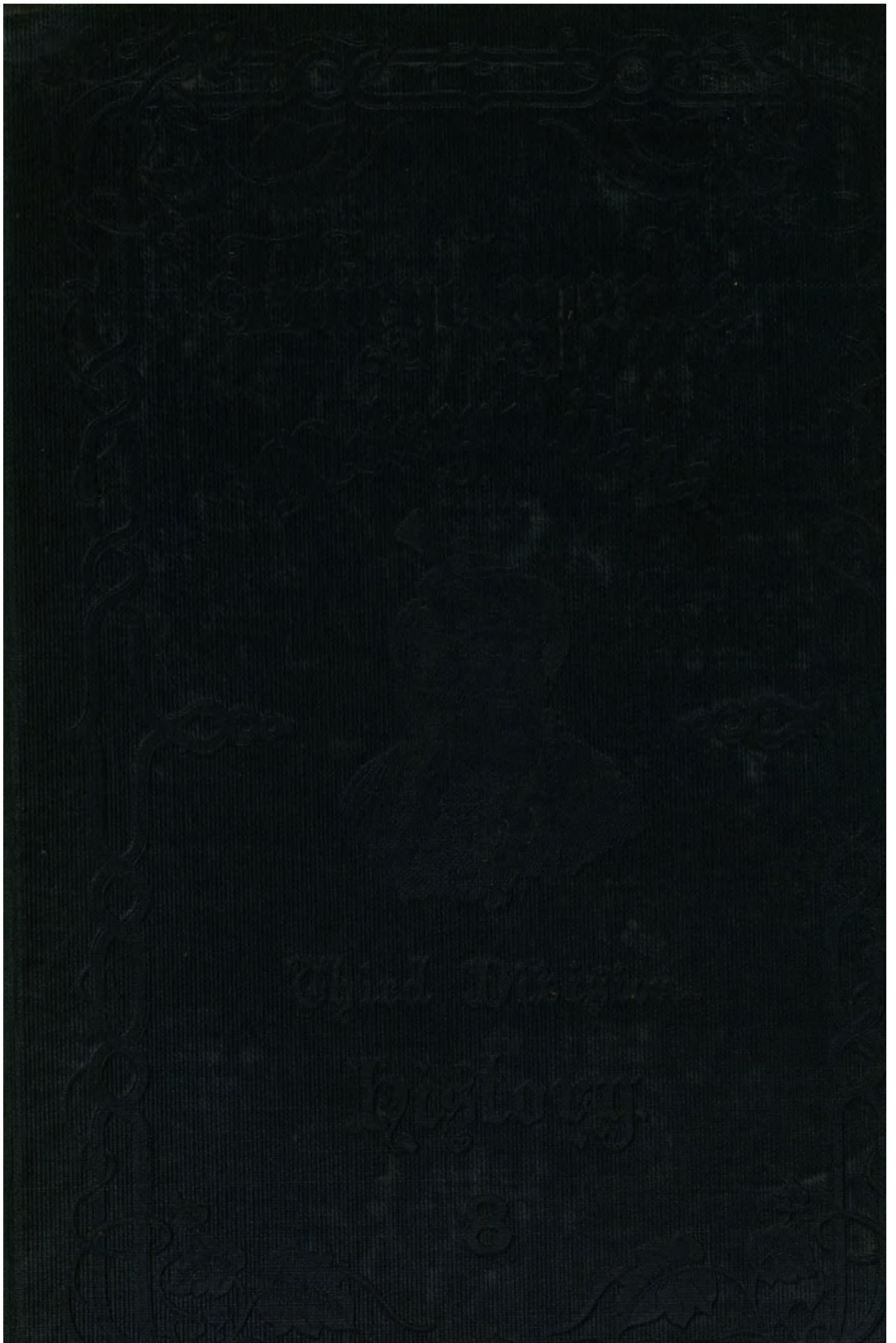
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OF THE

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OR,

System of Universal Knowledge;

ON A METHODICAL PLAN,

PROJECTED BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

~~~~~  
Φαίνεται ὅτι πέρας, ὅτε τελευτήν εχων· ὅτι πρότε τῆς ἀρχῆς ἄλλη ἀεὶ φαίνεται ἀρχὴ· μετὰ  
τε τὴν τελευτὴν ἑτέρα ὑπολειπομένη τελευτὴ· τὰ μὲν ἐλλείπειν, τὰ δὲ πλεονάζειν, θρύπτεσθαι δὲ,  
οἶμαι, κερματιζόμενον τὸ πᾶν ἀνάγκη· Οὐκοῦν δὴ φανῆναι καὶ ἀπτόμενα καὶ χωρὶς ἑαυτῶν, καὶ  
κινουμένα πάσας κινήσεις, καὶ ἰσῶτα πανταχῆ, καὶ γιγνόμενα καὶ ἀπολλύμενα καὶ μηδετέρα, ἐν  
ἐνὸς μὴ ὄντος πολλά ἔστιν;  
ΠΛΑΤΩΝ· Παρμενίδης.

“The strength of all sciences, which consisteth in their harmony, each supporting the  
other, is, as the strength of the old man’s faggot, in the band. FOR WERE IT NOT BETTER  
FOR A MAN IN A FAIR ROOM TO SET UP ONE GREAT LIGHT, OR BRANCHING CANDLESTICK  
OF LIGHTS, THAN TO GO ABOUT WITH A SMALL WATCH CANDLE INTO EVERY CORNER?”

BACON. *Advancement of Learning*, Book I.

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AND RICHARD GRIFFIN AND COMPANY, GLASGOW.

1849.

PROSPECTUS.

1. AN ENCYCLOPÆDIA is indispensable to every library, as a *concentration* of human knowledge; while to the voyager, the naval and military officer, the colonist, and that numerous class of enterprising Britons whose want of a settled residence may isolate them from the world of letters, it is the only possible *substitute* for all other books. Works of this description are therefore among those few literary projects which have uniformly secured the patronage of the public. The reason is obvious: an Encyclopædia is to the rising education of the country at once a reservoir and a fountain—it receives perpetual accessions of knowledge from the genius of the age, which it yields again in willing abundance to posterity.

2. With the ancients, the term Encyclopædia, explained itself. It was really *Instruction in a cycle, i. e.* the cycle of the seven liberal Arts and Sciences, that constituted the course of education for the higher class of citizens. Unfortunately, the inapplicability of a strictly *scientific* method to a modern Encyclopædia, such as shall include the whole of its contents, has led to the abandonment of all principle of *rational* arrangement; and it may be safely asserted of all our universal dictionaries hitherto, that the chief difference between them, in respect of their *plan*, consists in the more or less complete disorganization of the Sciences and Systematic Arts; now retaining certain integral portions of the system as integers, forming each an entire treatise, but resigning these treatises to the places severally assigned to them by the accident of their initial letters; and now splintering all alike into their fractional parts, with an arrangement merely alphabetical. Nor has the imperfection rested here. This very alphabetical position was but too frequently determined by the caprice or convenience of the compiler; inasmuch as the division of parts into minor parts had no settled limit. Thus, one technical or scientific term included as its subordinates, and to be explained in the same article, sometimes more, sometimes fewer, other terms: and the arrangement became neither properly scientific, nor properly alphabetical. It had the inconveniences of both, without the advantages of either.

3. The results are such as might have been expected, in part from the necessity of such plans, and in part from the interference of individual whim, carelessness, and procrastination, to which it afforded the amplest opportunities, and even frequent temptation. Numerous articles of important information are found where the reader could have least expected to find them; while articles of equal interest are in many cases not to be found at all.

4. A second result is, that an Universal Dictionary so constructed, equally with an Encyclopædia the most methodically arranged, requires alphabetical references; but with a twofold inconvenience, from which the latter would be free. First, the references, instead of being collected in one appropriate index, or at least in some known portion of the work, are scattered throughout the whole; and this is no slight annoyance, when a scientific term happens to have many synonyms, as, for instance, Azote, Nitrogen, Phlogisticated Air, &c. Secondly, the references must eventually lead the reader through as many volumes, as those other words happen to be placed in, which are necessary to be *previously* understood in order to a tolerable comprehension of the term first sought.

5. A third evil, resulting from the same causes, is the utter want of all proportion in the space occupied by each article, relatively either to the importance of the particular subject, or to the promised limits of the whole work. Hence, too, it arises that the proprietors are frequently reduced to a choice of evils. The work must be extended far beyond the first expectation of the purchasers, or the articles assigned to the latter volumes must be crowded in scanty and superficial abridg

ments. They contract to give the public an Universal Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences, but the execution outgrows the plan. Either openly then, or in the form of supplementary volumes (bearing perhaps a large proportion to the whole work), this pledge must be redeemed. In both cases the disorder and dislocation, and in many instances the deficiencies, remain unremedied.

6. The fourth ill consequence of this arbitrary arrangement calls for a somewhat fuller consideration. It requires but a moment's reflection to be convinced, that the most voluminous Encyclopædia which has yet appeared, is incomparably too narrow to contain an Universal History of Knowledge in its present state; and that the authors and compilers will have satisfied all rational expectations if only nothing shall be found excluded from any other cause than the higher importance of that which has been admitted; in order that on *all* subjects the ends of *general* information at *least* may be accomplished. Where, therefore, selection is so imperiously required, there must be an equal necessity that certain fixed and intelligible principles should be pre-established. An Encyclopædia neither is, nor can reasonably be considered as, the book which a man of profound science is likely to consult for those things in which he is himself eminent. He will seek for accessions to his knowledge in the works of contemporaries employed like himself in extending the pomœria of science, and will often be most interested in *speculations*, the worth and stability of which are yet undetermined. But an Encyclopædia is a *History* of human knowledge, in which therefore these intellectual embryos, which at best are (as it were) but truths in the *future* tense, have no rightful or befitting place. This, indeed, we hold to be a principle of such paramount importance, that we take the earliest opportunity of avowing our determination of a strict and systematic adherence to it; and we here give our public pledge that the ENCYCLOPÆDIA METROPOLITANA shall be so far *historical* in all respects, that only what has been *established*, or is at least already *publici juris*, and to be found in the records of Science and Literature, shall form the main body of every article; and that any opinions or speculations of the writer himself shall be declared to be such, and be given distinctly as a mere appendix of the article to which they belong.

7. We shall now particularize the evil to which we have been referring. From the licence which the planless plan of former works allows to the separate writers—in one place, instead of a systematic history of the received truths and established discoveries in the department of knowledge, which was to have been exhibited, the larger portion of the space is filled up with the individual writer's own crude conceptions and prolix argumentation—while in another, on some subject of the highest interest, lo! in tarnished fragments over the numerous volumes, an old work torn asunder by all the letters of the alphabet! and reminding the classical reader of the decrepit Pelias, whose credulous daughters were induced by the artifices of Medea to cut his aged limbs in pieces, as the sole and certain means of restoring him, like another Æson, to the blooming honours of youth.

8. The SCHEME which we propose to substitute, or the principal outlines of the ENCYCLOPÆDIA METROPOLITANA, we now lay before the reader, as follows:—The work will consist of four main divisions. The first, which for the sake of distinction we have called the Philosophical part, comprises the Pure Sciences; and the second, or Scientific part, the Mixed and Applied Sciences. The third, or Biographical part, is devoted to Biography chronologically arranged, History, Chronology, and Geography; and the concluding or Miscellaneous part, besides being referential and supplementary to the preceding volumes, will have the unique advantage of presenting to the public, for the first time, a Philosophical and Etymological Lexicon of the English language; the citations selected and arranged chronologically, yet including all the purposes of a common Dictionary. The volume of Index will complete this division. It will be instantly seen that the first two divisions of a work, thus arranged, will grow naturally out of each other; the needful references will therefore be generally *retrospective*, and rarely made to future volumes. In our Biographical department we shall teach the same truths by example, that have been evolved in the former divisions, and stimulate to the exertions that have developed them;—while in our Miscellaneous

portion or in the Index, every word will be found in its usual alphabetical place, as in any other Dictionary, with a plain reference to the volume and page containing its full explanation in the present work; together with a variety of interesting articles, either illustrative of the former divisions, or in their own nature miscellaneous. Each division of the work will be separately paged.

9. Such is the general outline of the proposed Scheme. The Table at page 13 places the principal subdivisions, likewise, before the reader's eye, with as much detail as is compatible with the limits, or requisite for the purposes, of a Prospectus. It will be seen, too, that a more particularized and systematic justification of the principles, on which the Scheme has been constructed, will be afforded in the Preliminary Treatise, or General Introduction to the Encyclopædia.

10. When the work is completed, it will appear as an orderly Digest of all the great points of human knowledge, and, notwithstanding its comparatively moderate extent and price, must form the most perfect system of intellectual instruction and entertainment, that has been hitherto submitted to the friends and patrons of Art, Science, History, and general Literature in Great Britain.

11. We would place our claims to the favourable attention and patronage of the public, on two grounds: 1. That the great outline of our plan is free from the numerous defects and inconveniences *involved* in the plan of all preceding works of the kind, or occasioned or permitted by it. 2. That the plan now substituted possesses great *positive* advantages, peculiar to itself.

12. From what has been already seen of our plan, in the necessary discussion of its relative merits, we presume that we appropriate to the work the title of an Encyclopædia by an especial right, and that of a Philosophical System on a plea of superior propriety. But we cannot neglect the argument for such a work as the present, which is derivable from the peculiar circumstances of our times. The political changes of the world have not been more wonderful than the scientific and moral revolutions that have occurred within the last few years. The new views, new discoveries, and fresh facts, especially in all the different branches of Experimental Philosophy, which every year has brought with it, are unparalleled in the history of human knowledge; and the accessions have not seldom been of such a nature as no mere supplementary postscript can embrace. For in many instances they affect the whole theory and consequent arrangement of the Art or Science to which they belong. Our project is in this respect therefore singularly fortunate in point of time. It will have to collect and combine the rich but scattered elements of future Science; while a still more important argument for our plan and for the period of its execution, will be found in the manifest tendency of all the Arts and Sciences at present, from the most purely intellectual even to the labours of the common mechanic, to lose their former insulated character, and organize themselves into one harmonious body of knowledge. The civilized world is now doing that which the ENCYCLOPÆDIA METROPOLITANA is preparing to do; and for which it is providing a correspondent repository.

13. The Proprietors have not disguised from themselves that their undertaking is of the most *arduous* kind. The mass of ability requisite, will be great in proportion to the originality of our plan; and the perseverance, harmony, and punctuality, that are indispensable conditions of its success, must be commensurate with the difficulty of uniting variety with system, and of reconciling selectness and calculated proportion with universality as a whole, and fulness in each component part. If, in addition to this, the amount of capital demanded and already dedicated to the one purpose of securing this coalition, and of overcoming these difficulties, be considered; with the number and high character of the artists, the men of science, and men of letters, on whose zealous co-operation, now pledged to us, we rest our pretension to the first acts of the public favour, and our confident hopes of continued support—not forgetting the relief and moral influence of a regular employment afforded during all seasons of the year to so many industrious mechanics as must necessarily be engaged on this work—the Proprietors of the ENCYCLOPÆDIA METROPOLITANA dare promise themselves, that by no reflecting reader will the present prospectus be deemed too serious.

14. Having explained the *Principles* on which the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* was founded, we proceed to state a few facts, in reference to the manner in which the **FIRST EDITION** of the work was executed, and the *Modifications* now intended to be made in the **SECOND EDITION**.

15. The *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* was projected by the late eminent poet and philosopher, S. T. COLERIDGE. It differs in its plan from other Dictionaries of Universal Knowledge in being strictly methodical. The contributions of the scientific and learned men by whom it was composed, are arranged, not according to the letters of the alphabet which happen to form the initials of the English names of the Treatises, but in agreement with a PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM, based on the nature of the Subjects,—a method which causes the entire work to become a rational exposition of the state of human knowledge, and the mutual dependence and relative importance of its different branches. In virtue of this classification, the work forms both a course of study for the scholar, and a book of reference for the man of business: the former has the principles of the sciences laid before him in the philosophical order of their natural sequence; the latter is enabled to find readily the specific information he requires on any subject that interests him.

16. The system, projected by Mr. Coleridge, was ably executed by the Editors * and Authors to whom the execution of the scheme was confided. To confirm the truth of this assertion, it is sufficient to refer to the names of the Authors, and to state the fact, that many of the Treatises have been admitted by the Learned throughout Europe to be of the highest order of merit, and to have enlarged the boundaries of the scientific world, and placed their authors in the first rank of men of science in the present age.

17. The following **ABSTRACT OF THE CONTENTS OF THE QUARTO EDITION**, taken from the **GENERAL PREFACE**, will show in what manner the early professions of the projector of the work were realized.

We shall speak of the four great divisions of the *Encyclopædia* separately.

PURE SCIENCES.

18. The order in which these sciences are exhibited, and the plan on which the **MATHEMATICAL** portion of the *Encyclopædia* is conceived, resemble considerably the series of Elementary Treatises projected many years ago for the University of Cambridge by Dr. Wood, the late Dean of Ely, and Professor Vince; but with this difference, that the present volumes are far more comprehensive in the subjects they embrace, and far more elaborate and scientific in their execution. But this very similarity shows that the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* has attained one of its professed objects,—systematic instruction and scientific information, conveyed—not in a confused mass, but in the natural sequence of the sciences.

Indeed this portion of the work has met with a degree of approbation in many quarters, but especially in the University of Cambridge, which no other *Encyclopædia* has ever yet received. The student who has really mastered these sciences in the systematic form in which they are arranged here, will never in the course of the longest life find occasion to *unlearn* any portion of what he has here acquired, and will find no difficulty whatever in adding to his stores any new results which the mental energy and labour of mankind may hereafter develop from principles now known. It may, indeed, be safely affirmed, that any person of good mathematical abilities, who shall follow the course of Mathematical treatises in this *Encyclopædia*, which are so arranged that a student may pursue them even without the assistance of a tutor, may become by that means a mathematician of very high character, and be enabled to master the most difficult and delicate speculations of continental mathematicians.

19. The names of the authors of the Treatises on *Pure Mathematics* are suffi-

The EDITORS of the original edition of the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* were—The Rev. EDWARD SMEDLEY, M.A., late Fellow of Sidney College, Cambridge; the Rev. HUGH JAMES ROSE, B.D., late Principal of King's College, London; and the Rev. HENRY JOHN ROSE, B.D., late Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

cient to prove that the *Encyclopædia* is worthy of the present state of science, and that its most important articles are contributed by those who have themselves been foremost in the onward march of science. The elaborate Treatise on ARITHMETIC, by the present Dean of Ely (Dr. Peacock), Lowndian Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, is interesting alike to the scholar, the mathematician, and the speculator in metaphysics. The brief but comprehensive Treatise on TRIGONOMETRY, by Professor Airy, now Astronomer Royal, is of considerable value from the general elegance of its demonstrations. The publications of the Rev. H. P. Hamilton on ANALYTICAL GEOMETRY and CONIC SECTIONS, and that of Professor Barlow on the THEORY OF NUMBERS, are so highly esteemed, that any eulogium on their papers on these subjects would be superfluous. The Treatises of Professor Levy on the DIFFERENTIAL and INTEGRAL CALCULUS are calculated to carry the student to a very high point of proficiency. The GEOMETRY, ALGEBRA, and GEOMETRICAL ANALYSIS complete the Volume in a manner worthy of the treatises with which they are associated.

20. These sciences are, however, in some degree elementary; and although by them the student would be so far advanced as to enter upon the works of some of the ablest analysts, it would be unworthy of such a publication as the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* to leave untouched or imperfectly treated, the more refined applications of the higher Calculus. It will be found, accordingly, that the highest branches of mathematical analysis have been treated by writers conversant with all its intricacies, and the mathematical student is furnished in them with results of far greater variety and of a more subtle nature than can at present be used in the application of analysis to Mixed Mathematics.

21. The CALCULUS of VARIATIONS, and the CALCULUS of FINITE DIFFERENCES by Professor Hall, are distinguished by the clearness peculiar to his treatment of these refined and subtle portions of analysis. The CALCULUS of FUNCTIONS and the THEORY of PROBABILITY are the work of Professor De Morgan. The latter (on a subject which has exercised the talents of the greatest mathematicians, even down to the times of Laplace) is, as might be expected, one of the most complete in any language. The Treatise on DEFINITE INTEGRALS completes the series of these elaborate surveys on the higher branches of Mathematical Analysis. The name of Professor Moseley is a sufficient warrant that his Essay is also of the highest character.

22. Without wishing, therefore, to offer any undue eulogium on the Treatises enumerated above, we confidently ask that portion of the public which is qualified to judge of their merits, to compare the whole system of *Pure Mathematics* here presented to them with that in any similar work, whether of this country or of the Continent, on the grounds of *arrangement, clearness, ability, and completeness*.

23. We must now allude to such of the Pure Sciences as are not included in the Mathematical department. Sir John Stoddart has given a lucid and able summary of the General Principles of GRAMMAR, or the Philosophy of Language. The LOGIC and RHETORIC of Archbishop Whately require no commendation here, as they have long since been published in a separate form, and have taken their place among the standard works of our language. The Treatise on LAW is the work of Richard Jebb, Esq., Professor Graves, and Archer Polson, Esq. It embraces one of the most difficult portions of Philosophy—the general foundations of Law and Morals; and the Editor is happy to state that testimony from the very highest quarters has been given both to the profoundness of the views entertained, and the ability with which they are developed.

24. In the present state of metaphysical knowledge, it would be presumptuous to put forth any *system* of Metaphysics; but a general HISTORY OF MORAL AND METAPHYSICAL PHILOSOPHY affords the most convenient opportunity for displaying the principles on which the greatest philosophers have hitherto endeavoured to form their systems, for pointing out their difficulties, and for marking how far each has contributed to the progress of the science. Such a sketch, however, required the hand of a master; and the Editor confidently believes that the Treatise on Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy which is here given is calculated fully to sustain the

deservedly high reputation of the Rev. F. D. Maurice. Of the Outlines of THEOLOGY, it does not become the Editor to say more than to acknowledge with gratitude the very able assistance of Professor Corrie, to whom two chapters are due. He has endeavoured to render this Treatise as practically useful as possible, not only to avoid passing controversies, but to bring forward the sound and genuine doctrines of the Church of England; and perhaps he may be allowed to add that, in pursuance of this object, he has spared no pains or labour.

MIXED AND APPLIED SCIENCES.

25. From *Pure Mathematics* we proceed in natural order to their application to physical phenomena. Of these sciences, some belong to the elementary branches of physical knowledge, and others to a higher and more advanced stage. Now, the treatises on MECHANICS, HYDRODYNAMICS, PNEUMATICS, OPTICS, and PLANE ASTRONOMY, have been written by Professor Barlow with an express view to this distinction. They are elementary enough to enable any student, with a competent knowledge of Pure Mathematics, to overcome their difficulties; and yet they are so based on scientific principles, that they will also prepare him to enter readily on the higher branches of Mixed Mathematics. In *Mechanics*, more especially, a foundation is laid for the succeeding investigations of Physical Astronomy, which is, in fact, only one of the higher branches of Analytical Physics.

26. Some of the treatises in the volumes devoted to the Mixed Sciences demand a separate notice, as enlarging the boundaries of our scientific knowledge. Of this class are the Treatises on LIGHT and SOUND, by Sir J. F. W. Herschel. The Treatise on LIGHT, by Sir J. F. W. Herschel, from the position it has already obtained in the scientific world, both in England and on the Continent, cannot require any recommendation here. The simple mention of Sir J. F. W. Herschel's name is a sufficient recommendation to the Treatise on PHYSICAL ASTRONOMY, and proves at once that it must be an Essay of the highest order of merit, and worthy of the present state of the Science; and the conductors of this *Encyclopædia* may justly be proud that that distinguished writer has contributed so largely to its pages. But although Plane and Physical Astronomy had been thus ably treated, it was considered that something more was required; and the late Captain Kater kindly furnished the very useful and able Treatise on NAUTICAL ASTRONOMY, a subject with which his acquaintance was at once profound and practical.

27. MAGNETISM and ELECTRO-MAGNETISM are treated by Professor Barlow with the same ability and research which he has displayed in the other Essays contributed by him; and GALVANISM, by Dr. Roget, whose scientific character is too firmly established to leave any doubt as to the merit of his contributions. The author of the Treatises on ELECTRICITY, HEAT, and CHEMISTRY, the late Rev. F. Lunn, was one whose merits as an experimental philosopher and chemist were not so extensively known as they deserved to be; but at Cambridge his acquirements were acknowledged to be of the highest order. The treatises themselves, it is believed, will amply justify their favourable anticipations.

28. The Third Volume of *Mixed Sciences* is chiefly devoted to the FINE ARTS; but there are two or three Essays in the early part of the Volume which belong to the more exact sciences, viz., the Essay on the FIGURE OF THE EARTH, by Professor Airy, the present Astronomer Royal, and his Treatise on the TIDES. With regard to the former much novelty was hardly to be expected; but it is presumed that this Treatise contains the most complete combination and discussion of observations relating to the subject hitherto produced in England. The treatise into which this great mathematician has thrown all his power is the Theory of the Tides. The terms in which some of the most distinguished mathematicians of Cambridge have spoken of this treatise prove that they consider it to have greatly advanced the knowledge of this difficult subject. Every previous treatise on the theory of the tides is entirely superseded by this production, and it will supply, for many years to come, the only sound foundation of our knowledge upon this subject.

29. The Treatise on POLITICAL ECONOMY was written by N. W. Senior, Esq.

30. The Treatises on BOTANY and HORTICULTURE are supplied by G. Don, Esq.,

whose profound acquaintance with every department of knowledge which belongs to the vegetable kingdom is known to all botanists and florists. The ZOOLOGY combines GENERAL PHYSIOLOGY with COMPARATIVE ANATOMY, and is the work of J. F. South, Esq., Surgeon of St. Thomas's Hospital (assisted in one portion of Physiology by Mr. Clark and Mr. Solly). The descriptions in this Treatise possess the very unusual and peculiar merit of being given by Mr. South, in every practicable instance, *from the specimens themselves*. Of the ANATOMY, by Mr. South and Mr. Le Gros Clark, and the MATERIA MEDICA, by Dr. G. Johnson, it may be said that their names are a sufficient pledge that these Treatises are of first-rate character. The Treatise on MEDICINE, by Dr. Robert Williams, of St. Thomas's Hospital, is an attempt to give a more philosophical view of the classification of disease than has hitherto been taken in any work of modern date. To W. Bowman, Esq., the Encyclopædia is indebted for an able outline of SURGICAL PRACTICE. The medical volume is closed by a comprehensive Treatise on VETERINARY ART, by W. C. Spooner, Esq.

31. The METEOROLOGY of the late Mr. Harvey, and the CRYSTALLOGRAPHY of Mr. Brooke, have been referred to respectively with especial commendation by Professor Forbes and Dr. Whewell. The names of Mr. Phillips and Dr. Daubeny will sufficiently recommend the Treatise on GEOLOGY, as exhibiting an adequate representation of that science at the time of its publication. The Treatise on MINERALOGY by Mr. Brooke; the Essays on CARPENTRY, by P. Nicholson, Esq.; on FORTIFICATION, by Major Mitchell and Captain Procter; and on NAVAL ARCHITECTURE, by the late Mr. Harvey, must not be passed over. The names of these writers guarantee the value of their contributions.

32. In this class of *Mixed Sciences* a novel feature is exhibited in the Sixth Volume of the series, viz., *A Systematic Account of the ARTS and MANUFACTURES of Great Britain*. There is probably no writer who would be able to do such ample justice to so extensive a range of matter, requiring both theoretical and practical knowledge, as its author, Mr. Barlow; but that nothing might be wanting to the completeness of this portion of the work, Professor Babbage supplied a Preliminary Discourse on the *Principles of Manufactures*; and it may confidently be asked, to what other source could the conductors of the work have appealed with equal confidence on so difficult and multifarious a subject?

HISTORICAL DIVISION.

33. It is not possible, in this rapid sketch, to specify all the papers in this portion of the work; but as nearly every contribution is assigned to its proper author at the beginning of each volume, such a course is unnecessary either for the information of the public, or as a tribute of respect to the distinguished authors themselves. Ample care has been taken to enlist among the contributors to this department writers not only of splendid endowments, but also of the highest attainments in different classes of historical knowledge. There will be found among the numerous writers in this division contributions from Bishop Blomfield, Dr. Whewell, Mr. Justice Talfourd, Dr. Arnold, Dean Hinds, Rev. J. A. Jeremie, Rev. G. C. Renouard, Rev. J. H. Newman, Bishop Russell, Archdeacon Hale, Dean Lyall, Rev. J. B. S. Carwithen, Bishop Hampden, Rev. R. Garnet, Major Mountain, Rev. J. H. B. Mountain, Captain Procter, Rev. J. E. Riddle, Archdeacon Ormerod, T. Roscoe, Esq., W. Macpherson, Esq., Rev. R. L. Browne, Rev. H. Thomson, Rev. J. G. Dowling, Rev. J. W. Blakesley, Rev. J. B. Ottley, W. Lowndes, Esq., Q.C.

34. A good work on General History has long been a great desideratum in our literature. The summaries of Tytler and Russell are too brief, and the Universal History, independently of the heavy manner in which it is written, is too long. It is presumed that the Historical Volumes of the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* will be found to meet this want in an efficient manner. They are written by men of undoubted ability; they exhibit the history of the world at first in a series of biographical sketches, and then in a continuous history of each remarkable country, combined with an Ecclesiastical History remarkably full and rich in the most interesting epochs of the Christian Church. Dissertations of great importance in a

philosophical point of view, such as those on Ancient Philosophy and Literature, on the Crusades, the Feudal System, and the Scholastic System, are introduced into the text at the most convenient periods, for the illustration of the respective subjects.

MISCELLANEOUS PORTION.

35. Although the *Miscellaneous Division* of this *Encyclopædia* occupies a larger number of volumes than any other, it requires a less extended notice. It appears, however, desirable to explain in some degree the *principle* on which this portion of the work was executed, and to indicate the authors of some of the most remarkable series of papers.

The leading features in this division of the *Encyclopædia* are—

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. The ENGLISH LEXICON. | 3. The NATURAL HISTORY. |
| 2. The GEOGRAPHY. | 4. The MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES. |

The universal approbation with which the LEXICON, compiled by Dr. Richardson, has been received, precludes the necessity of enlarging either on the plan itself or on the gigantic labour involved in its execution. The plan of giving the quotations of each word *chronologically* has the advantage of embodying in a philosophical Lexicon a *History of our own Language*.

36. For the whole of the Articles on GEOGRAPHY, the proprietors feel that they may fairly advance the claim of having obtained the co-operation of persons more than competent to bring forward whatever is most valuable for a work like this from all usually accessible sources of information. In this respect, the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* claims to take a high station among similar works; and the names of the contributors of the Articles on *European* and *American Geography* are a sufficient pledge of the ability and care with which they are executed, viz.:—T. Myers, Esq., Captain Bonnycastle, R.E., C. Vignoles, Esq., C.E., H. Lloyd, Esq., G. H. Smith, Esq., A. Jacob, Esq., W. D. Coolie, Esq., and Cyrus Redding, Esq.

One class of Geographical Articles demands especial mention, and may be said to be wholly without a rival in any similar work in our language, viz.: those on *Ancient, Oriental, and African Geography*, which were entirely supplied by the Rev. G. C. Renouard (of Cambridge, formerly Chaplain at Smyrna), and evince the most extensive familiarity with every variety of language, ancient and modern. The Editor believes that if these essays were collected together, and published as a system of Oriental Geography, they would surpass in accuracy and value anything at present existing in our own or any other European language.

37. The section of NATURAL HISTORY is divided chiefly into *Botany* and *Zoology*. In these two sciences the *Genera* will be found described in their alphabetical order, while their scientific arrangement and the principles of the sciences form part of the treatises in the volumes devoted to the *Mixed Sciences*. For these two departments, the services of several eminent naturalists were engaged. In *Botany*, T. Edwards, Esq., and G. Don, Esq., &c. In *Zoology*, T. Bell, Esq., F.L.S., &c., J. E. Gray, Esq., F.L.S., &c., of the British Museum; J. F. Stephens, Esq., and J. F. South, Esq.

38. The highly-gifted individual to whom this *Encyclopædia* owes so many of its attractions—the late Rev. Edward Smedley,—enriched the *Miscellaneous Division* with a series of articles which embody a vast store of curious and recondite information, communicated in a manner at once instructive and agreeable. Besides these articles, the *Geographical Gazetteer* and the *Dictionary of Law and Political Philosophy*, a large number of very important and valuable articles will be found scattered through the volumes of the *Miscellaneous Division*. Attention may be called, amongst a variety of others, to the *Biblical Articles*, by the Rev. T. H. Horne; to the *Philological and Oriental*, by the Rev. G. C. Renouard; the *Scientific Articles*, (as *e. g.*, *Dialling, Surveying, Weights and Measures, &c.*) by Mr. Barlow; *Meteoric Stones*, by Professor Miller; *Stove and Ventilation*, by C. Hood, Esq., F.R.S.; *Stucco*, by T. L. Donaldson, Professor of Architecture in University College, London; the *Theological Articles*, by Archdeacon Hale; *Essays on Engineering*, by C. Vignoles, Esq., C. E.; and *Writing*, by the Rev. R. Garnet.

THE PLATES are for the most part the work of those two eminent engravers

Messrs. Lowry. They require only a simple inspection to prove their beauty and excellence.

The GENERAL INDEX was, at an early period in the publication of the *Encyclopædia*, intrusted to the Rev. J. Hindle, and occupied the attention of this very competent person for several years. It will be found to contain ample reference to all that is most important and interesting.

From this review of the FIRST EDITION of the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, we proceed to describe the peculiarities of the projected SECOND EDITION.

39. THE SECOND EDITION of the ENCYCLOPÆDIA METROPOLITANA will be handsomely printed in a series of CABINET VOLUMES, in CROWN OCTAVO, in the style shown by the SPECIMENS on pages 14 and 15.

40. The whole work will be THOROUGHLY REVISED; many NEW TREATISES will be added; and the Articles will all be provided with comprehensive INDEXES, or with analytical TABLES of CONTENTS.

41. It will be abundantly illustrated by Maps, Woodcuts, and Engravings.

42. It will be published in WEEKLY PARTS, PRICE ONE SHILLING, and in MONTHLY VOLUMES, varying in price according to the number of Parts contained in each.

43. **METHODICAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE SECOND EDITION.**—In preparing the SECOND EDITION of this *Encyclopædia* for publication, very little change will be made in its SYSTEM. The peculiar characteristic impressed upon it by Mr. Coleridge—ITS METHODICAL ARRANGEMENT—will be followed strictly. Indeed, the chief difference that will appear between the arrangement of the Second Edition and the First, will proceed from a more rigid adherence in the Second Edition to the *principles of Method* established by Mr. Coleridge, than it was possible to attain in the First Edition. The work being wholly original and composed by more than a hundred Contributors, it happened, during the first publication, that many of the articles, either because they were not produced in proper time to be incorporated in their systematic places, or for other unexplained reasons, were cast into the great "*Alphabetical, Miscellaneous, or Supplementary Division*," where they are connected together by no stronger scientific bond than their alphabetical initials. But now that we have the whole work before us, complete (as respects the First Edition), and capable of re-arrangement, we propose to rectify these accidental departures from the true method of the *Encyclopædia*, and to transfer, from the Alphabetical Miscellany, every article that is capable of transference, to its appropriate position in the Philosophical Classification. Thus, the Article GEOGRAPHY, properly organized, will form a new division, complementary to that on History, as was originally intended, see § 8; the details of NATURAL HISTORY will be grouped with the General Treatise on that science; the art of Diplomacy will be subjoined to the science of the Law of Nations; and so on. What remains in the Alphabetical Division, after this effective re-arrangement has been made, will form a SERIES of DICTIONARIES, Lexicographical, Classical, Theological, Technological, &c.

44. **REVISION AND ENLARGEMENT.**—Though the changes contemplated in the *General System* of the *Encyclopædia* are not important, the improvements to be made in the *details* will be considerable. In all possible cases, before the articles are reprinted for the Second Edition, they will be thoroughly revised, either by their authors or other competent persons, and Indexes and Tables of Contents will be added; the Historical series will be completed and re-arranged; the Treatises on the Natural and Experimental Sciences will either receive important amendments,

or be replaced by others entirely new; while the Mechanical and Chemical Arts, and the applications of the sciences to affairs of public utility, will be treated of in the Second Edition, much more practically than they were in the First Edition.

45. PROPOSED EXTENT OF THE WORK.—The series of scientific and historical TREATISES on the important SUBJECTS comprehended in the philosophical scheme of this work (page 13), which form indispensable links of the great chain of human knowledge—the Series necessary to complete the *circumference* of an Encyclopædia—cannot be compressed into *fewer* than EIGHTY CABINET VOLUMES. That is the *minimum* extent. But since the methodical plan of the work, as developed in this Prospectus, will permit at all times of the incorporation of such additional Treatises, as may be requisite to keep its scientific principles and historical facts in accordance with the progress of the age,—a permission of which the conductors will freely avail themselves,—it is impossible to state what may be the *maximum* number of its volumes. An Encyclopædia intended to reflect always the existing state of human knowledge, “to act,” (in the language of Mr. COLERIDGE,) “at once as a reservoir and a fountain,—to receive perpetual accessions of knowledge from the genius of the age, and to yield the knowledge again in willing abundance,”—such a work can never be effectually “*completed*.” That word applies with as little propriety to such an Encyclopædia, as it does to the Times Newspaper or the Philosophical Transactions; for, like those celebrated journals, this Encyclopædia will be at all times ready to incorporate an account of every important Event and new Principle that Time and Discovery may furnish, and for which its philosophical system provides an adequate Repository.

46. IMPROVED PLAN OF PUBLICATION.—A great alteration, and, it is hoped, an important improvement, will be made in the METHOD OF PUBLISHING the Second Edition, as contrasted with the method adopted for the first edition of this Encyclopædia. The PARTS of the CABINET EDITION will not, like the Parts of the Quarto Edition, contain letter-press and engravings belonging to different subjects or different Divisions of the Encyclopædia, forming a heterogeneous and unreadable mixture of fragments of many Treatises; but *each* PART will relate only to *one* subject; and whenever it is possible, *each* VOLUME of the CABINET EDITION will embrace ALL that relates to one subject. That, however, will necessarily depend upon the nature of the Subjects and the consequent extent of the Treatises. Very frequently several will be comprised in one Volume, and occasionally an important subject,—the principles of a leading Science, or the History of a great nation,—will occupy two volumes. But care will be taken to ensure a due proportion in size among the several Treatises, to avoid unnecessary prolixity, to combine comprehensiveness in matter with convenience in form, and to avoid the incongruous binding together of Treatises on irrelative Subjects—such, for example, as occurred in Vol. 5 of the First Edition, where the Treatises on the FINE ARTS were combined with two profound MATHEMATICAL TREATISES belonging to the Department of ASTRONOMY.

47. ADVANTAGES TO THE SUBSCRIBERS.—Those who subscribed to the original edition, and who remember how it was contrived to convert the most *Methodical* of Encyclopædias into the most *Immethodical* of Publications, will readily recognise the importance of an alteration, which INSURES TO THE SUBSCRIBER TO THE SECOND EDITION the possession of a complete readable portion of the work in recompense for every Subscription he is required to make.

48. ORDER OF PUBLICATION.—It seems not unnecessary to call the attention of intending Subscribers to the difference that exists between the *order* in which the SUBJECTS occur in the general system of this Encyclopædia and the *order* in which it may be *advisable* to publish the TREATISES on those subjects. In consequence of the different amount of corrections that will be required by the various Treatises that compose the Encyclopædia, and the circumstance that many Treatises on subjects that demand extensive investigation must be written entirely anew,—it would be impossible, without submitting to great delay and irregularity, to publish the revised Articles and new Treatises in Weekly Parts, in the exact order in which the subjects occur in Mr. Coleridge’s methodical plan. Neither is it desirable

to adhere to that order pertinaciously, because it would not be agreeable to the great body of the SUBSCRIBERS to so comprehensive a work as this ENCYCLOPÆDIA, to receive, for months together, a series of WEEKLY PARTS relating solely to Mathematics, or to Geography, or to History, or indeed to *any* Department, in its order—*all other subjects being, for the time, systematically excluded.* A proceeding of that sort could hardly fail to excite dislike or indifference to the work in the FAMILIES of many of the SUBSCRIBERS. The Proprietors consider, therefore, that they will consult the general convenience, both of the Authors and the Subscribers, by publishing the Treatises in an indeterminate order,—giving History, Science, and Art alternately, but carefully indicating on the title-page of each Volume its exact place in the entire System, in accordance with the Plan given in page 13. In order, however, to prevent mistakes, every PART and VOLUME of the work, *as published,* will be marked with a running Number, simply to indicate the order of Publication, and irrespective of the ultimate Philosophical Arrangement of the articles. The Parts that constitute a Volume will be published as near together as circumstances permit, and, from time to time, General Title Pages and Tables of Contents will be supplied, to complete the Volumes of the several Divisions.

49. REGULARITY OF PUBLICATION.—The vast amount of original writing of the highest class, in every department of literature and science, which is comprehended in the First Edition of this Encyclopædia, and the proved excellence of its methodical plan, will so greatly facilitate the preparation of the CABINET EDITION, that the Conductors trust to be enabled to issue the WEEKLY PARTS in uninterrupted succession,—correcting in the work, as they go on, what requires correction; retrenching what is superfluous; and supplying what is deficient; so as to bring the whole more strictly into accordance with Mr. COLERIDGE'S great idea of the essentials of an Encyclopædia, and producing, if possible, a "SYSTEM OF UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE," more philosophical in its plan, more ably executed in its details, more convenient in size, and more economical in price, than any work of the kind that has ever hitherto been produced.

50. We conclude this Prospectus with a short extract from the Preface to the First Edition of the Encyclopædia:—

"The foregoing enumeration of the principal parts of the Encyclopædia embodies all the observations which the Editor considers it necessary to make in recommending the work to the patronage of the public. The exertions made by the Proprietors to procure the just fulfilment of the high expectations formed of the work, and of the promises they had made, as well as the perseverance with which they have conducted this important publication to its completion, amidst the many obstacles which must necessarily arise in so extensive an undertaking, entitle them to high consideration from that portion of the Public which is interested in works of a sterling and substantial character. From the present position of Literature, and *the system now in fashion of publishing small and superficial works which may be cheaply produced, and are really of no intrinsic value,* it is probable that a long period must elapse before any similar undertaking will be entered upon, from the enormous outlay of capital it requires, and the uncertainty of remuneration which it offers. It is hoped, therefore, that this GREAT NATIONAL WORK, for such it really is, may meet with that patronage which the Proprietors feel confident it fairly and fully deserves. They feel assured that, whether it be viewed as a whole or in its separate divisions, *it embodies a mass of information at once extensive, accurate, and scientifically arranged, which must place it in a pre-eminent and triumphant position.* Whatever its measure of success may be in a pecuniary point of view, they may justly feel a high gratification in having been instrumental, under Providence, in bringing to a successful termination *a work which, whether its LITERARY MERIT OR THE SOUNDNESS OF ITS MORAL AND RELIGIOUS VIEWS be regarded, must ever be considered as an INESTIMABLE BENEFIT TO THEIR COUNTRY AND A PERMANENT ORNAMENT TO ITS LITERATURE.*"

London, October, 1849.

PLAN OF THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA METROPOLITANA.

The INTRODUCTION.—On the Laws and regulative Principles of EDUCATION; or in the Language of the Schools, the Elements of METHODOLOGY.

<p style="text-align: center;">FIRST DIVISION.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">PURE SCIENCES.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION I. FORMAL SCIENCES.</p> <p>Philosophy of Language. Logic. Rhetoric. Mathematics :— Geometry. Arithmetic. Algebra. Geometrical Analysis. Theory of Numbers. Trigonometry. Analytical Geometry. Conic Sections. Differential and Integral Calculus. Calculus of Variations. Calculus of Finite Differences. Calculus of Functions. Theory of Probabilities. Definite Integrals.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION II.—REAL SCIENCES.</p> <p>Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy. Law :— General Principles of Law. Roman Law. English Law — Laws of England. Laws of Ireland. Laws of Scotland. Colonial Law. Canon Law. Politics :— Law of Nations— Diplomacy. Political Philosophy— Statistics. Political Economy— Commerce.</p> <p>Theology :— Natural Theology. Evidences of Revelation. Scripture Doctrine. Biblical Literature. Biblical Antiquities. Religions and Religious Customs.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">SECOND DIVISION.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">MIXED AND APPLIED SCIENCES.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION I. MECHANICAL PHILOSOPHY. (Mixed Mathematics).</p> <p>Mechanics. Hydrostatics. Pneumatics. Optics.</p>	<p>Astronomy :— Plane Astronomy. Nautical Astronomy. Physical Astronomy. Figure of the Earth. Tides and Waves.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION II. EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY.</p> <p>Magnetism. Electro-Magnetism. Electricity. Galvanism. Heat. Light. Chemistry. Sound. Meteorology.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION III.—THE FINE ARTS.</p> <p>Architecture Sculpture. Painting. Heraldry. Numismatics. Poetry. Music. Engraving.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION IV. THE USEFUL ARTS.</p> <p>Agriculture. Horticulture. Floriculture. Arboriculture. Carpentry and Joinery. Fortification. Engineering. Naval Architecture. Manufactures. Mechanical Arts. Chemical Arts.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION V. NATURAL HISTORY.</p> <p>Inanimate :— Crystallography. Mineralogy. Geology.</p> <p>Insentient :— Botany.</p> <p>Animate :— Zoology. Physiology. Comparative Anatomy.</p> <p>Vertebrals : Mammalia. Reptiles. Birds. Fishes.</p> <p>Invertebrals : Molluscs. Spined Skins. Insects. Sea Nettles. Crustaceans. Infusories. Arachnidans. Polyps. Myriapods.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION VI.—APPLICATIONS OF NATURAL HISTORY.</p> <p>Anatomy. Materia Medica. Pharmacy. Medicine. Surgery. Veterinary Art.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THIRD DIVISION.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p>INTRODUCTION :— On the Uses of History. Chronology. Chronological Tables.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p>ARCHÆOLOGY. —</p> <p>ETHNOLOGY. —</p> <p>ANCIENT HISTORY :— Sacred History. The Jews. Greece. Greek Literature. Greek Philosophy and Art. Ancient Oriental Nations. Rome. Roman Literature. Roman Philosophy. Classical Antiquities. Heathen Mythology.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p>MIDDLE AGES. —</p> <p>MODERN HISTORY :— The Christian Church. Greek Empire. Ottoman Empire. The Crusades. Italy. Germany. France. Spain. Portugal. Netherlands. Switzerland. Britain. America. India.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">FOURTH DIVISION.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">GEOGRAPHY.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p>PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY. —</p> <p>POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY :— European. American. Oriental. African. Classical.</p> <p>BRITISH TOPOGRAPHY. —</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">FIFTH DIVISION.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">LEXICOGRAPHICAL.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p>English Lexicon, &c. &c. &c. See Prospectus, § 43.</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">GENERAL INDEX.</p>
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derived from them the greatest encouragement to carry on the war against Darius, not doubting but that he was the person described in the prophetic books.

Alexander's
favour to the
Jews.

At his departure these circumstances so effectually recommended the Jews to the favour of Alexander, that when they petitioned him to allow them to live under their own laws, and in the free exercise of their religion, and further to be exempted from tribute every seventh year, because their law forbade them to cultivate the soil in the year of the sabbath, he immediately complied with their request. The Jews further implored his protection for their brethren whom he would find settled in Babylon; and many of them, won by his kindness, enlisted as soldiers in his service, and accompanied him on his expedition.

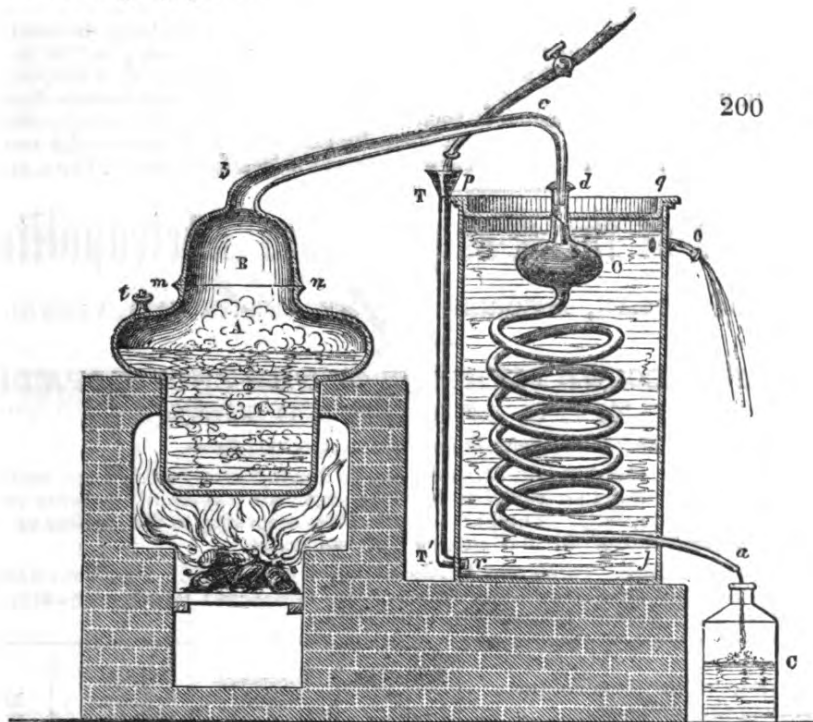
His
behaviour
to the
Samaritans.

The Samaritans envying the Jews the favour they had so unexpectedly gained, and jealous of the distinction conferred upon them, thought by a similar line of conduct to gain as much influence with the king. They met him as he returned from Jerusalem in a solemn religious procession, and professing their kindred with the Hebrews, sought from him a grant of the same privileges which he had given to their brethren. Alexander excused himself from paying attention to their request till after his return from Egypt; but, during his absence, a rebellion taking place in the city, in which Andromachus, the governor, perished, at his return he caused all those who were concerned in the disturbance to be put to death, and driving out the Samaritans, planted their city with Macedonians: those who survived retired to Shechem, under Mount Gerizim, which from that time became the metropolis of the Samaritan sect, and continues so to this day. The eight thousand Samaritans who had joined Alexander at Tyre, and had been with him ever since, he settled in Thebais, the remotest province of Egypt, lest their presence in Samaria should revive the mutinous spirit of their countrymen. This treatment contrasts strikingly with that which the Jews subsequently received, for when Alexandria was built, he settled therein many of that nation, giving them great privileges, and allowing them not only the use of their own laws and religion, but also the enjoyment of equal franchises and liberties with his own people, the Macedonians.

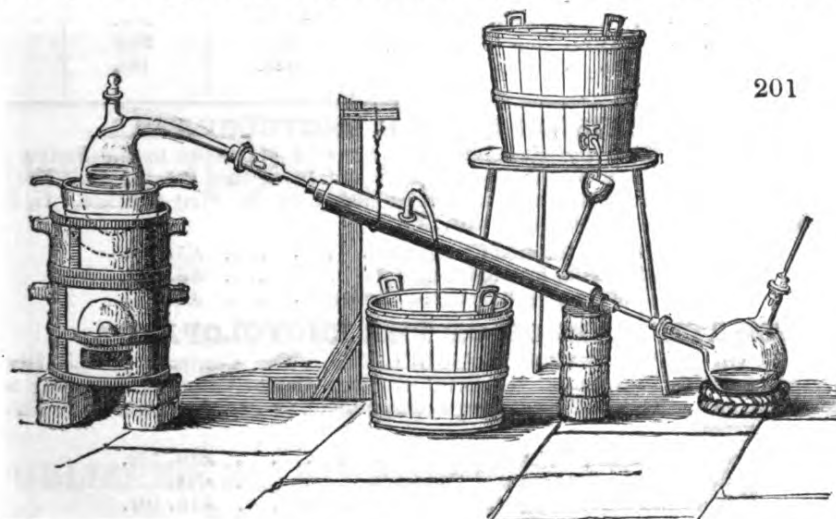
Influence
of the
preceding
events upon
Alexander's
conduct.

It does not fall within our province to pursue the narration of Alexander's conquests, or to trace him in his rapid progress to the highest pinnacle of martial glory; one part, however, of his character is so closely connected with the occurrences related to have taken place on his arrival at Jerusalem, that we cannot forbear stopping to direct the reader's attention to it. It has often created surprise that a man of Alexander's strength of mind, should have been guilty of such folly and weakness as to feign himself to be the son of Jupiter Ammon, and to undertake a most laborious expedition to his Temple, which was situated in the midst of the deserts of Lybia, and twelve days journey from Memphis, for no other purpose than that of procuring himself the title of son of Jupiter.

The water to be distilled is poured into the Still at the opening marked *t*. The water of the Condenser is continuously renewed by the supply-pipe *T T'*, and when heated by the steam, it is suffered to run off by the escape-pipe *o*.



It is frequently necessary, in the laboratory, to distil volatile liquors, in which case the condensing power must be very effective, that loss be not occasioned by the escape of uncondensed vapour. For such operations, the apparatus represented by fig. 201 is employed. The



liquor to be distilled is placed in a glass Retort, the neck of which is connected, by means of an adapter, to a straight Condenser, consisting

ENCYCLOPÆDIA METROPOLITANA.

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The PLAN and the LITERARY MERITS of the Encyclopædia Metropolitana have been sufficiently dwelt upon in the PROSPECTUS. After twenty-eight years of arduous labour, the work was completed in 1845. The expenditure upon it amounted to £26,000 for authorship, £7000 for designing and engraving the Plates, and £11,000 for stereotyping the letter-press, a total of £44,000, exclusive of the cost of paper, printing, binding, and publishing. These facts are cited to show how earnestly the Proprietors endeavoured to do justice to their undertaking. The work contains 23,000 quarto pages of letter-press, and above 600 quarto engravings by Lowry, of great beauty and accuracy; the whole forming Thirty large Volumes. The original form of publication was in 59 Parts, at 21s. each.

Re-Issue of the Encyclopædia Metropolitana,

ON A METHODICAL PLAN, ACCORDING TO MR. COLERIDGE'S ARRANGEMENT

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SACRED HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY



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THE Editor of the present Volume having been also one of the original editors of the Encyclopædia, and contributor of several of the miscellaneous articles, it might be supposed that he could have furnished the names of each writer to the publishers; but at this distance of time he has forgotten many. It has been determined, therefore, to issue this edition in the same anonymous form as at first. Of the article MOSES, and some others, he can with certainty claim the authorship; and has now added the Seventeenth Chapter, on "The Illustrious Women of Ancient Israel." The Index and other minor improvements will, he trusts, be found to enhance the value of this edition.

F. A. C.

HACKNEY, *March*, 1850.



SACRED HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY:

FROM THE ANTEDILUVIAN PERIOD TO THE TIME OF THE
PROPHET MALACHI.

A.M. 1 TO A.M. 3607, B.C. 397.

EDITED AND PARTLY WRITTEN

By F. A. COX, D.D., LL.D.

HACKNEY.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

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INTRODUCTORY DISSERTATION :

ON

THE CLAIMS AND USES OF SACRED HISTORY.

SACRED HISTORY is that narrative of events, commencing from the creation of the world, which is recorded in the Bible, and is so called, because it is assumed to be written under divine superintendence, and is evidently associated with the being, perfections, and plans of Deity. All other History details facts simply, but Sacred History combines them with the doctrine of providence, and demonstrates the event to be coincident with the purposes of an infinite mind. Sacred History Defined.

The connection of every mode of communicating the will of God to man with moral and eternal purposes, is a feature of divine revelation never to be overlooked; and sacred history is but a part of that revelation. In preparing mankind for another world, the Universal Parent has adopted and recorded a certain process with individuals, with families, and with nations in this: and as the distinctive Claims and Uses of Sacred History originate from its connection with the general subject of Revelation, we may be permitted to advert to that subject briefly, while further than this it is not here our province to pursue the argument.

It is a striking fact, that upon the great subject of morals, philosophers who, upon the whole, were agreed as to the amount of individual and social duties, were at variance with regard to the basis on which they should be constructed. Unless men concur in their standard of moral duties, they must be doubtful as to the extent of their obligation; and when the most eminent of mankind were found to question what was the rule by which they ought to be guided, variance and opposition among those who looked up to Necessity of Revelation.

Necessity of Revelation. them as teachers, became inevitable. When once the passions are moved, cool and rational discussion ceases: and when the individual becomes anxious to support the system which he has adopted, and is prejudiced against every argument which tends to render it doubtful, he but increases the distance from his object the further he pursues it. The great ends for which the disputants set out, the universal duties and benefit of mankind, are lost in the disputations between the Grove, the Porch, and the Lycæum. The object becomes less to elicit truth, than to establish a party. Besides which, what standard can be obtained? Is it nature? She is found under the government of the passions, rather than of the reason, and those passions manifest themselves to be corrupt. Is it the fitness of things? How shall this apply to the savage who has no means of comparison? The most intellectual, as they possess the greatest power of ascertaining what is fit and harmonious, ought, on this principle, to be the most moral; but they are not so.² Is it conscience? Alas, who is not aware that this moral power may be vitiated? that conscience may be depraved, perverted, extinguished? Is it philosophy? Philosophers are not agreed on this momentous point. Where is the standard then? Socrates observes, there can be none unless it be revealed; and he, therefore, expected a divine teacher. This is the tribute of reason to the necessity of revelation.

No other Standard of Morals.

Origin of the Universe. But morals are not the only subject of human investigation that require revelation. God has connected them with the most interesting and the most ancient records of the human race. The origin and destination of the material universe, lie hid in shadows, which no light can disperse, but "the day-spring from on high." Some philosophers contended that the beautiful order of nature was the result of chance; and that the grand machinery, so admirably filling up all the purposes of its construction, was nothing more than an effect produced by the fortuitous concourse of certain solid and indivisible bodies, necessarily moved by the force of their natural gravity. This was the doctrine of the Epicureans. Cicero justly asks, "if this concourse of atoms can make a world, why does it never form a portico, a temple, a house, or a city, which are certainly much easier to be effected?"¹ Others held the eternity

Epicureans.

¹ Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. 37.

of the world. Among these, Aristotle has been classed. But his representations are so different on various occasions, that one can hardly decide, whether he meant to say, the matter out of which the universe was composed was eternal, or the form itself in which it subsists. The latter has been generally understood: and if so, he maintained his position in the face of reason and of facts; for it is reasonable to conclude, that whatever is eternal should be also unchangeable² and it is the fact, that the material world, which he assumes to be eternal, is every day undergoing some alteration.

The Egyptians held, according to Diodorus Siculus, that man ^{Egyptians} sprang from the earth, when it was in a miry, and almost fluid state, as insects exude from the mud of the Nile, when the intense heat of the sun causes putrescences to be formed out of it. Why marshy places, acted upon by the heat, do not produce men and women now, if this hypothesis be rational, remains to be explained: as also, since none of those productions are to be met with in the present day, and the laws of nature are assumed by such reasoners to be immutable, when, and from what cause, the earth lost her power to generate human beings, while she retains that of producing vegetables. Amidst these and other contradictory theories, the result of much study, and defended with no inconsiderable zeal, was it not essential to man's happiness that the questions, "Whence am I? What am I," should be answered? "Whence are the existences around me? What is required of me? Whither am I tending? In what shall these things terminate?"—The greater part of the observances of the ancients so completely originated in tradition, that their most distinguished men confessed they were unable to account for usages which they practised. Plato, Pythagoras, and Porphyry, expressed their astonishment at the universal prevalence of sacrifice, and their entire ignorance as to its origination. Whatever related to futurity, as it could be reasoned upon with so little satisfaction, was examined in its traditional shape, and adopted with an eagerness that proved at once the importance of the subject, and the scantiness of their information. "Being of Beings," said Aristotle, "have mercy upon me!" What would such a philosopher have given for "a sure word of prophecy?" And can it be imagined that the Parent of the universe should leave his children destitute of that information which is so essential to their

present well-being, their comfort in dying moments, and their interests in eternity? If revelation be necessary (and after such considerations, furnished by reason, philosophy, facts, the concurrent testimony of antiquity, and the actual condition of human nature, the position is no longer problematical,) can it be imagined that such a revelation has not been granted? and if it has been given, where shall we look for it but as it rises in the fountains of sacred history? For all its doctrines are essentially connected with its FACTS.

The Bible.

If the question of revelation be conceded, it will then be seen that no pretensions to it have been tenable, not to say established, but those advanced by the *Bible*. The Hindoo institutions, usually deemed the most philosophical and intellectual, have no sustainable antiquity in comparison with those of Moses. The boasted Koran of Mohammed, is evidently of later date—borrowed in its most important facts and precepts from the book which it attempts to rival: the whole work is too contracted to apply to universal man; too mean to support the claim of inspiration; and too sensual to emanate from the pure and infinite Spirit. Other assumptions, among different nations, when brought to the test, will be found to be no less defective; and if placed in comparison with scripture, will only confirm its claims.

Inspiration.

The question of *Inspiration* arises out of revelation, and is inseparable from it. Revelation must be either immediate or transmissive: it must be communicated to the human race one by one, individually and immediately; or be committed to a few, by them written down, and thus circulated and perpetuated. The first supposition requires perpetual inspiration in respect of every man; the last is that which is claimed by the Bible, and connected with the character of sacred history. We cannot have a revelation without inspiration. All that reason could achieve has been attempted by philosophers of various ages and countries; and the sacred historians could have no advantage over others, excepting on this ground. Whatever superiority of information distinguishes the Bible, must be inspiration—whatever inspiration rests upon the whole, must belong to its history, as a part of that whole:—and in so far as this is true, it not only gives the facts recorded a superhuman authority, but imparts a different character to the historians themselves. The character of the *narrator* in all history stands first in point of order.

He must possess integrity, or we cannot rely upon his representations; wisdom, or we cannot confide in his discrimination; an unbiassed mind, or we shall only obtain partial statements. The narrator in this case is *God himself*, the Fountain of Truth; to whom all things are open, who is incapable of error, and whose authority is impressed upon the whole communication. The historian becomes no more than the medium through which inspiration acts; and all his faculties are under the direction of a power superior to themselves. His memory acquires a supernatural extent; while “all things are brought to his remembrance” in their order, and are recorded with an accuracy unattainable in any other way, unimaginable on any other principle. They are not original authors, but scribes to the Great Narrator. And if the principle be not carried so far—if in cases of which they were eye-witnesses they may be said to be authors—the admission of their statements into revelation supposes that their natural faculties were under a superior influence, preserving them from those errors to which human infirmity, with the very best intentions, renders the mere human historian liable. This superintendence comports with leaving the writer to choose his own words, and retain his own style and manner. It is obvious, with regard to the prophets, that, although they record events so evidently out of the reach of human prescience at the time when they wrote;—events unconnected with any existing train of circumstances which could give countenance to them as probable, much less enable the writers to embody them from futurity;—they nevertheless retained their several peculiarities of style, and are as distinguishable from each other in manner and language as any other writers. Prophecy puts their inspiration beyond doubt; and the retention of their peculiarities by each, as clearly evinces that inspiration does not necessarily interrupt the usual manner of the historian.

Even had it been otherwise, and were we required to waive the plea of inspiration altogether, the natural character of the sacred historians ranks them with the first of human beings. In point of grandeur and sublimity of conception, of the power of discrimination, of unaffected simplicity, of ingenuous disinterestedness, of unbending integrity, of successful execution, they are unrivalled; and it is only necessary to compare their productions with the most admired labours of antiquity, to assign to them unhesitatingly the preference.

Character of
the sacred
historians.

From the enactments of Moses, almost all legislation has been drawn, both as to principle and to form; and where any departure from his grand outline is attempted, the change has been perceptibly for the worse: while the most elegant critic of the heathen world has produced the opening of his narrative, as the most striking specimen of the true sublime, which could be presented.—“God said—what? Be light—and light was. Be earth—and it was so.” Few will dispute the authority of Longinus on such a subject; and none can doubt his taste and judgment. If sacred history be tried by the character of its narrators, it wears the marks of undoubted authenticity.

Events
narrated.

Let it be tried by the *events narrated*, another important criterion of history. The earliest and most interesting events form the subject of its record. It begins where revelation must be supposed to commence its testimony, with the origin of the visible creation. The first inquiries of man are directed towards the material universe, himself constituting so noble a part of it, and its destinies being so inseparably associated with his own. Urged by a nobler impulse than curiosity, he endeavours to retrace the stream of time to its fountain, and to penetrate even to the Infinite Cause, by whom all events are generated. What was to the philosopher a subject of speculation, giving birth to numberless and contradictory hypotheses, is to Moses simply a subject of history. The first sentence of his narrative unveils the hidden and eternal cause, settles the disputes of philosophy, assumes the fact of the creation, declares the Creator, and proceeds to a detail of the circumstances attending this stupendous transaction. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth;”—a grandeur of expression, not inferior, perhaps, to the celebrated passage so distinguished by Longinus. Around this revealed truth, as a central point, the scattered schemes of philosophy rally; correcting their errors, reconciling their differences, and contributing their researches: science finds the base upon which to place a fulcrum that can raise the world; history discovers the spring of the ever-flowing tide of time; and chronology the *punctum stans*, the fixed, determinate, immoveable point, whence all her dates are deduced, and to which all divisions of time are to be referred. This great fact being established, the historian proceeds briefly, yet distinctly, to enumerate the leading particulars of this operation; passes on to a consideration of man’s primeval state; unfolds the

facts attending his degradation, leading to the miseries to which he is exposed, and accounting for the thousand natural shocks that "flesh is heir to."—The narrative thus instantly connects itself with the scheme chosen for his recovery, into which all other events necessarily resolve themselves; and the grand march of providence is distinctly visible, through all the shadows of ages; from the chorus of the sons of God at the birth of nature, to the final shout of the archangel, and the trumpet which shall awaken the dead.

To go over the various periods of this history is not the business of a preliminary dissertation; but to advert to them thus generally, at this early stage of the discussion, is sufficient to establish the position, that the events recorded are such, in their nature, as might be expected from revelation, and as are suitable to the dignity and the purposes of history. To apply to them the general rule of historical judgment, they have all the *collateral evidences* of which such facts could be capable. Moses has no contemporary historian; the most ancient writers fall centuries after him; and he records events which took place centuries before his birth. The deluge forms the common epoch from which all nations commence their records; and under different names, Noah is the first monarch announced in history. Traditions relative to the creation agree with the narrative of Moses, in all essential points, and even in form, whatever speculations and fables may disfigure the simple account. Historians, and poets more ancient than historians, drew from this common source. Traditions of the fall are to be traced over all the East, and among the Western nations; they traverse the north, and occupy the south: they have penetrated the wilds of America, and are planted in the islands of the Pacific Ocean: in truth, the forms of worship and observances added to these traditions, every where authenticate the Mosaic narrative; and from their universality, which would have been *impossible* had they not originated in fact, a sanction is given to sacred history, which could scarcely have been expected, and which is altogether unexceptionable, because it is indirect in its nature, and infinitely diversified in its form.

It is no small collateral proof of the truth of sacred history, that it furnishes a *clue* to many facts, which although known, could not have been understood without its assistance. It serves to correct other historians, and in every instance into which the sacred writings and general history come in contact, it is to them what the chro-

Collateral evidences.

Sacred History a clue to all other.

nometer is to the common watch ; it measures the same period, but does it with superior precision ; it relates the same events, but with greater accuracy. Still further, as the floating traditions of the heathen world bear upon the facts recorded in the Scriptures ; so, by a reaction, sacred history develops the hidden import of many an ancient institution, the intention of which was not comprehended by those who lived under it,—nor could it be otherwise understood ; and gives consistency and reality to the traditions of antiquity. It brings distant occurrences to bear upon each other ; it discloses political interests jarring among themselves, all tending to the harmony of the universe, and the ultimate amelioration of the human race. It supplies, in short, to time, what gravity is to space—the *principle* which holds and draws every thing together.

Fidelity of
narration.

If we examine the *manner* of narration ; one of the most striking features of sacred history, which, while it demonstrates its authenticity, renders it invaluable, is the *fidelity* with which it relates occurrences offensive to the existing powers, and not always honourable to the historian himself. Patriotism is evidently a moral principle highly appreciated by Moses ; yet he disguises nothing that reflects disgrace upon his country. While he could even desire to sacrifice himself for the interests of the people whom he governed ; yet he never conceals and never palliates their rebellions, their ingratitude, and their vices. Self-love cannot be supposed to have been extinguished in the bosom of the historian ; yet he records his own follies and infirmities, with the same simplicity and sincerity with which he wrote down the sins of his countrymen. What a principle must that have been, which could thus absorb the prejudices of the writer, and induce him, with whatever painful feelings, to give his testimony alike against himself and his people ! This faithfulness is especially exhibited in the *Biography* of the Old and New Testaments. It is more difficult to be honest in this, than in almost any other species of writing. In history the disgraces of a country are borne by multitudes ; the guilt of a people, large in itself, is so divided among them, that the individual participation appears comparatively small, while our self-love induces us to take more than our share of its honours : but in biography the attention is fixed upon an individual ; to whom the whole praise or blame exclusively belongs. The writer also, in most instances, stands in some personal relation to him. If as a friend, he too

Biography.

frequently gives the *beau ideal*, the creature of his own imagination, instead of the living being, whose characteristics he professes to have marked as they arose, and to have written down in all the reality of their existence. If as an enemy, it is difficult for him to perceive, and still more difficult to record, real excellencies. He sometimes dips his pen, not in ink, but in the gall which flows from an envious heart; and in no instance fails to give a tone to his narrative corresponding with the actual state of his feelings in respect of his subject.

In this, as in all other cases, sacred history maintains its high Instances. purity of character; and the same inflexible adherence to facts, and the same simplicity of detail, pervades its biography. The writer is indeed always a "man of like passions with others," but his passions are subordinate to sincerity and truth. Abraham, "the friend of God," shall be placed before us in all the pusillanimity of his equivocation, as well as in all the strength of his faith;—Balaam, the adversary of Israel, shall be delineated by the Jewish historian in all the intellectual grandeur of his mind; and his sins, and his talents, shall be given in the same clear and undisguised language.

We have noticed the moral purposes to which it is one of the decided excellencies of the Scriptures to subordinate every thing. Frankness of Scripture in every thing. Hence the space assigned to the life of Abraham in the book of Genesis, and to that of the Jews as a people in the subsequent portions of scripture history. Upon that people were suspended the moral destinies of the world. But the most important objects that are held in view are never inconsistently pursued. They mislead us in nothing, they disguise from us nothing, to subserve *any* purpose. Unquestionably, the great object for which the whole narrative is placed before us, is to impress the claims of truth and virtue on the mind, and to win us to the path of wisdom by exhibiting its rewards. But the difficulties of a wise and virtuous course are not disguised. The total failures of some who have entered upon it: the partial failures of all. Cain, and Esau, and Lot's Wife, and Balaam, and Saul, stand in faithful record of a total departure from what most men would have thought the fear of God;—while the scripture history of Noah, and of Abraham, of Lot, and of David, and of Solomon, as faithfully exhibits the temptations that have charms for us all, and the failures of God's most favoured children. The whole Bible breathes the same tone of noble frankness. In the

New Testament we have a Judas and a Peter; a Demas and a Barnabas; a Simon Magus and an Apostle Paul! One is constantly reminded of God, who CANNOT lie.

And why—perhaps we may be permitted to ask in this place—does the Holy Spirit of God, whom we have seen to be the real historian of this volume, thus appear almost solicitous to detach our entire confidence from its greatest names? Because, in point of fact, even they were not worthy of *that* confidence—because other names less worthy had then claimed our unqualified imitation with some sort of specious precedent; but above all, because there was “a Name above every name,” toward which human attention was at last to be directed, and in which the most unhesitating confidence might be placed with safety.

Rules of
trying
Sacred
History.

The *rules* of interpreting Sacred History must arise out of itself, and the peculiarity of its character. If its pretensions be established, so is its authority. It must be permitted to assume its own principles, and to furnish the data upon which it should be judged. To every science something is conceded, as the axioms whence its truths are demonstrable, or the reasoning process cannot advance, nor can any certain deductions be made. Its claims as revelation are first to be examined; and if these be granted upon satisfactory evidence, it must state its own principles; it must be compared with itself; and it must be judged by its agreement, or the contrary, with its own pretensions. This mode of investigation applies as well to its history as to any branch of its information; with this difference, that on certain doctrines, or descriptions relative to the Deity, to eternity, and to spiritual subjects, we can have no other evidence than that which arises from the consistency of its own testimony, the harmony of the parts of the system with each other and with the whole, and the inherent dignity of the subjects themselves; but its history is capable of corroboration, from many collateral circumstances, and from external and foreign testimony. While, therefore, it must be judged upon its own principles, it does not shrink from critical examination; and we should avail ourselves of the confirmations afforded by contemporary historians, so far as they reach, and of the most ancient writers, relative to more remote facts, which they only learned from tradition.

Its charac-
teristics.

Already its *characteristics* have been adverted to; and those points in which it is distinguished from all other history, are of no

small moment, in forming our judgment respecting its excellence and superiority. It is more *extensive* than any other record. It has rolled back the cloud which hung over the earliest periods of time, and unveiled the fountain of being. It deduces the human race from one man, and not only traces all nations to a common stock, but discloses the political origin of the most distinguished among them. This is not the place to enumerate these, as they sprang from the sons of Noah, and were dispersed from the plains of Shinar, over the world: it is sufficient, at present, to advert to the fact. Herodotus, the father of Grecian history, did not flourish until after the regular records of the Bible had closed with the captivity of Judah; and Orpheus, if he ever existed, lived probably in the days of David or Solomon. Homer did not write until about eight centuries and-a-half before the christian æra. The earliest records of Egypt, of China, and of those nations which have assumed the remotest antiquity, have convicted themselves of misrepresentation in point of chronology; and by comparing their assumed dates with known ones, especially with astronomical observations which they have recorded, it is demonstrable that no historical fact exists which can be traced further than about two centuries later than Noah; while the usual origin of Ancient History is at least eleven hundred years later than Moses; or even calculating the traditions of the earliest Grecian poets, Hesiod himself did not write until seven centuries after the birth of the Jewish legislator; that is, about fourteen centuries after the flood: the renowned Grecian historian not flourishing until nearly nineteen hundred years subsequent to that grand event. Sacred History begins not with the narrative of any particular people, but is a history of the whole human race, until long after, when they were dispersed abroad, and the vast family of mankind divided into nations, it selected the illustrious ancestor of the Jews, and confined its attention principally to that people, as the stock whence the Messiah should spring, "in whom all nations of the earth are to be blessed." Such is the extensive character of sacred history, and upon the principles already laid down, for reasons arising out of its inspiration, it must be more *certain* than human record.

Characteristics of Sacred History. It is extensive,

and certain.

It may be asked, how far its belief is matter of reason, and how far matter of faith? This is an important inquiry; for sacred history, being such as we have described, is the object of both. On

Its belief matter of reason.

Its belief
matter of,
reason,

points purely rational, its belief is undoubtedly as much matter of *reason* as any other history. Most events are in the ordinary course of nature: its record of them is simple testimony, subject to the rules applicable to any other record. Here one naturally inquires, whether the writer witnessed what he relates? If so, whether he were a competent judge of that which he witnessed? If he were not an eye-witness, through what medium he received his information? Whether the sources whence he derived it, were to be relied upon? In almost every case, these questions are rendered unnecessary by the fact, that the writer himself witnessed the event, that he recorded it at the time, and that his simple narrative gives no opinion, but leaves every man to make his own reflections upon it. The history grew, therefore, after the book of Genesis, (and it might be shown through what channel Moses probably received his information of the facts therein recorded,) under the hand of the Jewish legislator, and succeeding rulers of that nation, from year to year, until it acquired the bulk and harmony in which it is now presented to us.

and of faith. There are, however, parts of the history, the belief of which, as they relate to events out of the ordinary course of nature, and to spiritual subjects, must be matter of *faith*. In these we must repose upon the tried veracity of the historian; at the same time remembering whom he introduces as the agent. Doubtless with God all things are possible. It remains, therefore, only to satisfy ourselves as to the fact of his interference. The laws of nature are nothing more than her ordinary course, and they originate in the Divine volitions. The will of God is the great law, by which the whole machinery of the universe is governed. It would be too much to presume, either that these things are unalterable in themselves, or that they had never deviated from the course which we see them take, when the testimony of men of acknowledged veracity in every other case, is direct to the contrary. Miracles are capable of evidence; and when we say, that these things are subjects of faith, we by no means wish to exclude the exercise of reason. In short, in relation to the Scriptures, there must be an *union of both*. Revelation does not violate reason, but exceeds it; faith is, in this respect, but reason matured; carried into an element purer than her own, and ripened into religion. As sense rises to reason, and reason soars beyond the sphere of sense, faith is but the higher sense; and

of stronger pinion than reason, takes her flight where reason cannot reach. These are the gradations by which we ascend to the invisible God, from the footstool of his works, to the throne of his glory.

A question remains, whether there are *degrees of credibility* in Sacred History; and if so, what they are; to what extent they reach; and by what standard they are to be measured. The answer to this inquiry must depend, first, upon the concession or denial of its character as a revelation; as conducted under divine superintendence, or as left to itself. If the fact of its inspiration be granted, it is futile to speak of degrees of credibility: the evidence belonging to the subject is complete in all its parts; every thing becomes absolutely certain; every thing must be admitted as infallibly true. Upon this point, we have given neither a sparing, nor a doubtful opinion. We have argued its inspiration, and have intimated its corresponding claims.

Degrees of
credibility
in Sacred
History.

It may nevertheless be conceded, and this will be found to be the fact, that there is stronger evidence for those portions of sacred history which most require it, than for others in which we have either an inferior interest, or are capable of gathering testimonies nearer home, or from existing circumstances. The Pentateuch, for instance, as relating to a remoter antiquity than any other portion, and to events connected with the very birth of time, comes before us guaranteed by a more ample scope of evidence, than any subsequent part of the Bible. It is also no less true, that certain leading facts in these books, are more strongly attested in themselves, and more supported by collateral evidence, than others of less moment to the world. Such as the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Dispersion of the People, the Birth and Life of Abraham, the History of Joseph, the Miracles of Moses in Egypt, &c.; all of which are preserved in various ancient records under different forms. Other facts are not weakened by the strength peculiarly attached to these; their prominence arising from their pre-eminent importance in themselves, and to mankind. And it is evident, that if the remarks which have been made, apply to the Bible at large, they have peculiar force when directed to the New Testament. But this subject will be fully treated in a separate Essay, on the Historical Evidences of Christianity.²

Strength of
the evidence
for the
Scriptures.

There are peculiarities belonging to sacred history, so remote from

² See the History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity, by Bishop Hinds.

Its
knowledge
the heart.

every thing seen among men, and such an unearthly character is given even to its relation of ordinary concerns, that the most superficial observer can scarcely fail to distinguish it from every human production. Its true and faithful portraiture of our own nature, its appeal to the heart of the reader, alone suffices to establish this observation. There is a knowledge of the human heart, a master-key to its subtlest recesses, which not only surpasses human penetration in its origin, but astonishes while it terrifies the individual whose bosom is laid open to his own inspection; and who finds himself a stranger, where he had thought himself most at home. Perhaps this is a fact more striking than even its impartial delineation of the character of others—and incomparably more important to us. Not a lurking passion is suffered to remain undetected in its living pictures. Motives which we should be ashamed to avow, are dragged before our conscience, in the history of another; and while his sentence is passed, we feel a personal condemnation. This is, indeed, the true and highest use of History: to speak to the heart through the understanding; to make every character that is brought before us, promote the formation and consolidation of our own.

SACRED HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

ANTEDILUVIAN PERIOD.

B.C. 4004.

IF the principles advanced in our introductory essay are just, it will follow, that we have no history of many hundred years from the beginning of time, excepting that which is contained in the Scriptures. The distinction of Sacred and Profane History, is inapplicable to facts at this period—one source of authentic information alone subsisting; we may enter, therefore, at once upon our design, by breaking up the fountains of all human events, as they are discovered by Moses. At the same time, we shall not overlook those traditional circumstances which bear upon these earliest records; and which are noticed and presented, under various forms, by the poets and historians of remotest antiquity. These, confessedly later than Moses, amidst all the variations of their respective fables, have agreeing features, which show their alliance to each other, and betray the common source whence they were borrowed.

History rises
from the
Bible.

The world was created; and was not, as some of the heathen philosophers affirmed, eternal. It was the result of design; and not, as the Epicureans held, the fortuitous combination of atoms impelled together by their own gravity—the production of chance. It was the work of one Being, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness. “In the beginning, GOD created the heaven and the earth.” Whether the matter of the world were, before the era of this great transaction, in a chaotic state, has been the subject of much dispute in all ages; to some it seems most consonant with the simplicity of the only authentic record upon this subject, to conclude, that the materials were created, at the time when they were employed to frame this beautiful world. This could be effected by Omnipotence, and in a moment; but recent discoveries in geology have tended to show that *at that period* it was only a new arrangement. The state of primeval matter was confused, the elements of all things commingled in an indistinguishable and inert mass covered with darkness—empty, unformed, unfathomable.

Creation.

A.M. 1.

B.C. 4004. The period at which this beginning is to be fixed is not now an object of inquiry; it would lead us too far, and it will find its proper place of discussion in our separate treatise upon CHRONOLOGY. It may suffice for the present to observe, that the pretensions of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Chinese, are unsupported by any rational evidence; that some of their remotest dates may be traced to certain events recorded in the Scriptures, and consequently falling within its system of chronology; and that considerable confusion has arisen by regarding these ancient records as relating to remote sovereignties, when in many instances, they respected particular families, which governed at the same time several principalities, (answerable to the Saxon Heptarchy,) but which were represented by the Egyptians as successive, while they were in truth contemporary. Bochart indeed has shown, that the earthly reigns assigned to the Egyptian gods, the oldest of their dynasties, extend not beyond the time of Joseph.

Chaos. The idea of an original chaos, without any very material variation, except as to form and expression, has been adopted by the most ancient writers, as well by the poets, as by historians and philosophers. Orpheus and Hesiod, among the first; Sanchoniathon, Mochus, and Manetho, among the second: and among the last, by no less a person than Plato himself; who says, that "chaos, or first matter, was the *γενος*, *stock*, out of which every thing was composed." These writers, indeed, differed as to the first principle, whether it were water or fire, or a commixture of elements—a sort of fluid earth—and the last seems to have been the prevailing opinion of the poets; whose general conclusions on this subject, may be found concentrated in the eloquent opening of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Progressive creation. The work of creation was progressive. The whole was reduced to order in six days. The agency employed is, the Word of God—"He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast;" and the "Spirit of God, moved upon the face of the waters." These representations accord also with the mighty *fiat* imagined in antiquity—expressed by Ovid—traced to Moses—applauded by Longinus: and, with the universal idea of a first principle, called by some, *a wind*; by others, *love*; impregnating the chaos, and giving birth to nature. We cannot consent to understand the six days mystically. The simplicity of the terms requires a plain and literal interpretation. He who formed matter out of nothing, could, by the same power with which he constituted the materials, have given form to the creation. But he chose to interpose a sensible space of time between those works, which he could as easily have effected by a single act of his will.

The first command issued by the Eternal was "Let there be light;" or in the sublime brevity of the Hebrew expression, *אור* *Be light!* This is mentioned before the creation of the sun, or of the stars. Some have conceived that the sun was then in existence,

but had not yet become visible, except through a dense atmosphere, which gave the appearance of a diffused twilight, while the body whence it emanated was unseen. We cannot adopt this idea, but adhere to the literal history, and in so doing must conclude with some of the best critics that the light in question existed at the time of its primary production in a diffused state, and was afterwards collected in the sun. The means by which such a result was effectuated must be unknown to us, who are not yet agreed as to the sun itself, what is its nature, and how it produces or communicates light. The fact is simply, we have light mentioned on the first day, and the creation of the sun on the fourth. After the grant of light, we have the division of it from darkness; the names of Day and of Night imposed; “and the evening was, and the morning was—one day.” This mode of reckoning from the evening to the morning, and of placing the darkness first, accords with all the usages of antiquity; and gave birth to its mythological representation of *night* as the elder-born of nature. This was the work of the first day.

Order of creation.

First day.

On the second day, an *expansion* was made; for so the word (רָקִיעַ) rendered “firmament” signifies; and seems to refer to the atmosphere encircling the globe, possessing density sufficient to support the clouds; drawing up particles of water, until the accumulation is too great for it to sustain, and then suffering them to fall in showers of rain. This appears to be the import of the separation which it was said to make between the higher and the lower waters; unless, indeed, there is reference to an accumulation of waters in the heavens, supposed by some to have subsisted originally, and to have been expended at the deluge.

Second day.

The work of creation proceeded on the third day, to gather the waters, before universally diffused, into their grand receptacles, imposing upon them the name of “seas;” and to render the earth, thus made visible, and which now received its distinctive appellation, capable of producing, at the divine mandate, herbs, plants, trees, the innumerable varieties of vegetation; each possessing in itself the seeds of reproduction, and bearing the fruits correspondent with its kind.

Third day.

On the fourth day, the sun and moon were created: which are described by the historian according to their visible appearance, as “the greater and the lesser lights”—his language being accommodated to the popular sense, rather than confined to philosophical precision: the moon although much less than the sun, approaching so near us, appears of almost equal magnitude; and, far inferior in dimensions to those heavenly and distant bodies which are so insignificant to the naked eye, she yet occupies a more important and useful station to us, in her immediate connection with the globe which we inhabit. Such a mode of expression, conformed to ordinary appearances, is perfectly allowable, interferes with no

Fourth day.

system of philosophy, and is rendered more valuable, as it descends to the level of the meanest comprehension. The heavenly bodies are evidently represented, in their immediate relation to *us*, when their uses are specified, "to give light upon the earth" to distinguish between day and night—to measure out, and to regulate the seasons of the year. The ancients regarded them as signs of another order; and built upon this imagination the splendid, imposing, but unphilosophical and futile theory of astrology. "He made the stars also;" but whether on that day, or whether the account extended to the entire universe; to the sun, moon, and earth only, or only to the solar system, of which our globe is a part, and which some celebrated writers have considered as most probable, the history does not determine. Of the same order is the inquiry, whether angels were created on the first day, and as the first work of that day;—or whether they subsisted before, and were called into being at some unknown and more remote period selected from eternity. We only know that they witnessed the process of the creation—which, indeed, they might have done had they been only the first-created on the first day. Of their creation Moses does not speak; but Job assures us, (or rather God, addressing himself to Job,) that at the creation of the earth, "the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Our speculations must be utterly unavailing upon a subject, respecting which the historian himself is wholly silent.

Fifth day. The fifth day produced from the waters the inhabitants of the deep, the fowls of heaven—and, perhaps, insects are intended by "the moving creature that hath life," as found in connection with winged animals; the fins of those which inhabit the water, being only wings adapted to the element to which they are confined.

Sixth day. On the sixth day, all terrestrial animals were formed—both beasts and reptiles: then, also, man was made, "of the dust of the earth," and animated with "a living soul."

Man formed in the Divine Image. As this creation of man was the most sublime work, and the very end of all other of the divine operations, a more enlarged account is given of it than of any of the rest; the historian resuming it, after he appeared to have rested from his short but comprehensive narrative. The particulars stated are few, but they are most interesting. "God created man in his own image." There were striking points of resemblance, between what we know of man, in his original state, from this historical record, and what we conceive of Deity, as essential to his nature and sovereignty. In his *intellectual* endowments, in his *dominion*, in his *felicity*, he was made after the image of God; but we apprehend the point of resemblance particularly intended is his *purity*. "Male and female created he them." In regard to this clause of the record, it evidently implies, that whatever is intended by the image of God is alike applicable to both sexes: he was created male and female; but *man* is his

general title, and man, in this sexual distinction, is formed after the divine resemblance. From these expressions arose the monstrous fable, imagined by the Jewish rabbins, adopted by Plato, and very generally diffused in tradition, that the first man united in one person both sexes—(αὐδρογυνον);—a singular and striking evidence this, that the history of Moses had not only been traditionally circulated in substance, but received even in form, since its *expressions* were so misunderstood and misapplied.

The woman was formed out of the side of the man; but at what time is not absolutely fixed. He was first created; he was placed in the station which he was to occupy; he was there long enough to feel the barrenness of solitude, and to learn that it was not good for him to be alone. Cast into a deep sleep, the Creator took one of his ribs, and fashioned it into woman. For reasons which cannot be fathomed, he chose means to produce an end to which they were in themselves wholly inadequate: he who employed six days in the creation, could have effected it at once; and he who formed the female from a rib, in the ordinary process of nature by which man is yet produced, evinces no less an act of creation, and from materials as disproportionate to the work. Woman.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” When the great design was completed, God was said to rest from his work; an expression, doubtless, accommodated to the common forms of speech, and our conceptions; for “the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not; neither is weary.” In commemoration of this consummation of his plan, “God blessed the *seventh day*, and sanctified it.” This fact is established by observations kept up until the resurrection of Christ—by the separation of a seventh part of our time still, to religious purposes; although, for sufficient reasons, the day has been changed; and by the otherwise inexplicable circumstance of the universal practice, from time immemorial, of considering the number *seven*, as a number of perfection. The *food* allotted to man, was vegetable;—“every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth,” and the “fruit of every tree.” The ancients all agreed in this fact. Poetry and philosophy contended that man lived upon the produce of the earth only. Pythagoras built his plea for abstinence from flesh, as much on this tradition as upon his doctrine of metempsychosis. Completion.

Man thus created, male and female, was placed in a garden “eastward in Eden.” The human race were all derived from two persons, Adam and Eve; who were endowed with all perfections of mind and of body, and encircled with every arrangement of circumstances which could conduce to their felicity: heaven within, and paradise around. Some have imagined that the whole of these representations are allegorical, and that there never was a local paradise. If these incipient records are allegorical, all that follows may be so, for any sufficient reason that can be assigned to the Seventh day.
Food.
Eden.
Not allegorical.

contrary. But to put this speculation at rest, it is evident, that subsequent parts of the Bible speak of those events, and others which followed, as facts—that the apostle Paul so reasons upon them, and traces analogies between them, the scheme of salvation, and the person of Christ: and that to regard these narratives as metaphorical representations of man's primitive state, is to destroy the authenticity of the history, and to leave us without a record of the most important transactions in the infancy of time; and in which the human race has the deepest interest. Others, have transferred this blissful habitation, from the earth, to we know not what unknown regions,—in the moon—the immeasurable expansion of space—the third heavens.

Several
Edens.

There are several places which have borne the name of Eden: some have been mentioned in the Scriptures; others by different writers. These sometimes appear under a little variation, being written Addan, and Aden, as well as Eden. It seems to have been a name applied to various situations distinguished for beauty in themselves, or for their superiority over the surrounding scenery: thus perpetuating, through all generations, and in all countries, the memory of this original garden of delight. The name of paradise has the same universality of application.

Local.

It is evident that the historian speaks of it as a place upon earth; and distinguishes its locality by assigning countries and rivers as its boundaries, which were well known in his day, at least traditionally, and for ages afterwards.

Conjectures
as to its
situation.

The conjectures as to its situation have been unbounded. Asia, Africa, and Europe, have all been honoured with the imputation of bearing it on their bosom; and America, since her discovery, has not been excluded a share in the distinction. Persons have been misled, sometimes by similarity of names given to rivers and districts in different countries; others by geographical resemblances of certain portions of the earth to the sketch of the site of Eden, as given by Moses; others, again, by the produce of certain spots, abounding with gold or precious stones—conforming, in their imagination, the particular gems of the selected country, to the unknown words by which the riches of paradise are described, and which are rendered in our translation, “bdellium and the onyx-stone.”

Cannot be
determined.

The general opinion seems to lean towards Persia, which Sir William Jones is inclined to think was the fountain of knowledge to the world. But it is impossible to arrive at any certain conclusion on this point. The deluge must have made such an alteration on the face of the earth, as to have swept away all traces of local scenery. And here we differ *in toto* from the respectable and learned writers of the Ancient Universal History, who impugn this argument, and maintain “that Moses described things as they were supposed to be when he wrote.” To constitute it a correct history, especially with its distinct claims to inspiration, he must have designed to describe

the place as it really was originally situated. And we have said, that its boundaries were *traditionally* well known in his day, because they may be supposed to have been so distinctly marked, as to be easily traced until Noah; by whom the knowledge of them generally might afterwards be transmitted through his family, although no features of the actual scenery remained; and with sufficient distinctness to guide their posterity of the earlier times, so far towards the spot where Eden once stood, as to enable them to fix upon some existing rivers to denote generally what could not be precisely determined. For when the garden itself perished, it seems reasonable to conclude that its express local boundaries should also disappear.

Tradition furnishes among the heathens abundant testimonies, both to this garden, and the blissful condition of its innocent inhabitants. Who can doubt that the golden age, celebrated with so much poetical fire, and adopted so universally by philosophy itself, originated in the state of primeval felicity appertaining to the progenitors of the human race? The Elysian fields, and the garden of Adonis, seem to refer to their paradise; for Bochart shows that the name *Elysian* is Phœnician, and of similiar import with the Hebrew term *Eden*, implying a garden of delight. To these we may add the garden of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands, Ogygia, Taprobane, and other celebrated bowers of happiness, conceived by the ancients, whose substance, if they were more than shadows, must be looked for in the paradise of Moses.

Heathen testimonies to these facts.

It may be necessary to add, that from the fact of the connubial union of Adam and Eve, and the circumstances in which it originated, the historian takes occasion to establish a grand article of jurisprudence, as it has proved in the event, by its adoption into all well-cultivated states, regarding marriage; which demonstrates that the law of morals and the law of nature are in fact coincident; and that we come nearer the one, as in its detail we approximate to the other. "Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." It is remarkable that Jesus Christ adopts this sentiment, and with it the express language; thereby giving his august and indisputable sanction to the Mosaic History as a narrative of facts, in form as well as in substance, when he quotes this passage literally, and affirms that the departure from it in some respects in the law of Moses was compelled by the peculiar circumstances of the case, and "the hardness of heart" (to use his own terms) of the people over whom this distinguished legislator presided; but that the institution, as here recited, is the genuine law of morals, and should be that of society, as conformed to the law of nature, "from the beginning."

Marriage.

The state of innocence is justly described as one of great simplicity, as well as purity. "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." Such a representation accords with the

State of innocence.

circumstances supposed; and no other could be imagined conformable to truth. Plato, probably gathering this fact from tradition, but certainly adopting it, from whatever source he derived it, as amongst the features of that state of primeval innocence which he imagines to be the golden age, describes the first inhabitants of the world in similar language. "They lived," said he, "naked and exposed—uncovered to the seasons," for no storms were there! (*γυμνοὶ δὲ καὶ ἀστρωτοὶ θυραυλοῦντες τὰ πολλὰ ἐνεμοντο.*) The earth was then also represented as producing spontaneously all necessary things; a renewal of which Virgil anticipates in the latter days, in the eclogue *Pollio*, and in language taken partly from the prophetic descriptions of the future reign of the Messiah; known to him, possibly, through the Greek translation; and certainly from the fables of the poets relative to the golden age, which he expects to be revived, and which we now see sprang from tradition, flowing from this primeval state. That he refers to those delineations of the golden age is evident, when he describes his hero as one

—————quo ferrea primum
Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo—

"by whom the iron years shall cease, and the *golden* age arise upon all the world;"—and as one of its principal features, he supposes

—————omnis feret omnia tellus;
Non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem—

"every land shall produce all necessary things; the ground shall not endure the harrow, nor shall the vine need the pruning-hook."—Inspired by his subject, he seems to have caught the spirit of prophecy, while he details also the ancient representations of man's original state—

At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu,
Errantes hederas passim cum baccare, tellus,
Mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.

—————nec magnos metuent armenta leones.

"The earth shall pour before thee, sweet boy, without culture, her smiling first-fruits: the timid herds shall not fear the formidable lions."—The golden age, so conceived, is evidently borrowed from the paradisaical state.

The fall.

Such was the primeval state of man.—He named the various animals as they were summoned before him, by some kind of immediate intuition, without which it would also be difficult to account for the origin of speech. He received the partner of his life and fortunes in the way which has been described; who proved, alas! the companion not only of his weal, but of his woe. His habitation was paradise; his occupation to "dress the garden, and to keep it;" his food was the spontaneous bounty of the earth; his prohibition, one only law—that, of a single tree in Eden "he should not eat." The prohibition was a test of obedience—the penalty was

death. The test was conformable to the simplicity of man's original state; and it is difficult to conceive what other test could have been applied to a moral agent in such a situation. It must be a test addressed to the senses, for to it alone could temptation attach. In all its simplicity, it was a covenant acknowledging the sovereignty of the Creator and the allegiance of the creature; demanding the seal of obedience, involving the happiness or misery of the subject, and attaching to it penalties and rewards. In proportion to the simplicity of the law was the criminality of the breach of it; its violation was an impeachment of divine truth, a suspicion of the wisdom and goodness of God;—a defiance of his authority, a dissatisfaction with their state, an ambition to surpass it: the breach of a positive law, with all its obligations, and an open renunciation of their allegiance to the Creator. We have ventured these remarks upon the facts about to be stated, because their simplicity has been objected against the Mosaic History, by those who have not considered that the spirit of disobedience did not depend upon the extent of the actual offence, and that the act must of necessity conform to the simplicity of the state in which the moral agents were placed.

The history of this melancholy transaction cannot be better given than in the words of Moses.—“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that, in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw, that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat.”—Such is the history—which we cannot conceive to be allegorical for reasons already assigned; the simplicity of which accords, as we have shown, with the primeval state of man; and if it be rejected, we have no history whatever of what we were, or the way in which we became what we are. The serpent, described only by his subtlety, was originally a very different animal from what he now is—and he is still, in some countries, a very beautiful one. Some species of serpents bred in Arabia and Egypt have an unusual brilliancy, and are of a golden colour, reflecting the sun-beams with amazing splendour. The fiery, flying serpents, which are supposed to have been of this order, are called by Moses by the same name (in Num. xxi. 6.) as is applied to the highest orders of angelical existences—*seraphim* (שרפים)—an appellation which would never have been selected to describe celestial beings, had not the creature

Mosaic
History
of the Fall.

Speech of
the serpent.

itself been transcendently beautiful. The serpent could be no more than the organ of an invisible agent; and we have here the first intimation of a spiritual being fallen from rectitude, becoming the tempter of innocence; having involved others in his ruin, desirous to augment his victims; and subsequently spoken of in the Scriptures under the form in which he seduced our first parents. That the serpent should speak is a difficulty which has induced some to suppose, that all animals had originally the gift of speech; others, that no speaking took place, but that the motions of the animal indicated his intentions; and others, that he spake, and accounted for it as the virtue of the tree which he recommended, and of which he professed to have eaten. Moses said—he spake: to the rest we can say nothing, since it is not for us to supply what the history has left untold.

Trees—of
life and
knowledge.

As to the trees, it is probable, that the one was planted as the preservative of man's immortality; its fruit being designed to invigorate him, and ward off decay: the other, being the test of his allegiance, in allusion to that, and to the consequences of his disobedience, was denominated "the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Sentence.

Man transgressed—and felt the first consciousness of guilt. Summoned by his Creator, he could not deny his offence; but he endeavoured to transfer the blame to the woman, by whom it was cast upon the serpent; both excusing themselves by referring to the organ of their rebellion, neither denying the fact. Sentence was passed upon the serpent, that he should be degraded from the rank which he held in the creation, whatever it was, and become a grovelling reptile; upon the woman, that the pangs of child-bearing should be entailed upon her, and her posterity: upon the man, that he should be driven from paradise, exposed to hardship, earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and labour upon the soil which was cursed for his sake; upon both, that they should die, and return to their dust.

Conse-
quences.

Such was the fall; of the consequences of which they became immediately sensible in various ways. Shame took possession of them; their bodies no longer were guarded against the elements, which now changed; they needed a covering, and received it, from interwoven leaves and the skins of beasts. They were expelled from Eden, and forbidden ever to return; a fiery guard of cherubim was placed to guard the hallowed spot, and its original possessors became (what men have ever since been) pilgrims upon the earth.

Tradition.

The principal features of this disastrous event are preserved in tradition. Plato represents them in his *Symposiacs*. "Porus being drunk with nectar, enters the garden of Jupiter, is circumvented by Penia, and thence cast out." This fable is mentioned by Origen, as referring to the fall. The deterioration of human affairs, is generally stated by the ancients, in the golden age yielding first to

that of silver, finally to that of iron. The history of Adam and Eve, of the tree, of the serpent, of the circumstances of the fall, is blended with Grecian ceremonies; the very name of Eve being preserved in their observances, and the symbol of the serpent employed in their mysteries. It is even to be traced amidst the traditions of Peru, and of the Philippine Isles; thus penetrating the idolatrous recesses of the new world.¹

The historian does not determine the residence of the first parents of the human race, after they were expelled paradise—it is probable that they would not wander far from a spot so endeared to them by recollections at once pleasing and painful; and tradition seems to fix their earliest abode somewhere in India.

The first-born of Adam was Cain—the second, probably about a year later, Abel. The name of the first, *possession*, indicates the fond expectations of the mother—that of the second, *vanity*, seems to intimate some early disappointment of her hopes. The youths grew up to manhood; they chose their occupations; the one was a husbandman, the other a shepherd. How long they lived together before the fatal catastrophe which rendered the one the first victim of death, and the other a murderer, cannot be decided: it may be inferred, that several years had elapsed before this event, since Cain expressed apprehensions subsequently, which implied some considerable population on the earth. The brothers brought an offering each to God; the one appears to be an acknowledgment of the Creator, in the presentation of the fruits of the earth; the other *a sacrifice*, offered as the apostle assures us, in faith, and therefore acceptable, and looking forward to the great atonement which should eventually be made for sin.² The characters of these brothers were very different. In the gracious expostulations of the Deity with Cain, and in the express testimony of St. John, connected with that of St. Paul, we are assured of what the tenour of the history would have allowed us fairly to infer, that the one was righteous, and the other wicked; Abel obtaining the witness of God in his favour. The offering of Cain was rejected, while that of his brother was regarded with approbation. The bad passions of this wicked man became infuriated; and were written in dark and legible characters upon his countenance. A conference between God and this rebel took place. Who shall say in what way it was conducted? for who can tell the inconceivable and innumerable channels of access which the Father of Spirits has to the spirits which he created? It seems to have been by an audible voice; it appears as though Deity had not yet left off conversing with his fallen creature immediately. Every appeal was made to his reason, and to his conscience; and every appeal was in vain. He was told of the equality of divine dispensa-

Cain and
Abel.

A.M. 2.

B.C. 4003.

¹ See the testimonies of Maimonides, Sanchoniathon, Plutarch; collected by Le Pluche, Grotius, and others.

² Magee on the Atonement.

tions; of the equity of the divine character; his pretensions as the first-born were allowed, and the homage of his brother guaranteed; the unreasonableness of his displeasure was stated; and of the perilous circumstances in which his untamed passions placed him, he was admonished. All proved unavailing. Sin had "conceived," and it "brought forth death." Smothering in his own dark bosom his malignant design, Cain invited his brother Abel into the field; and when they were distant from human habitations, assaulted and slew him. This was the first appearance of man's last enemy; and could mortality assume a more terrific shape than murder? Murder by the hand of a brother? We must not trust ourselves to detail all the emotions which we cannot but associate with this transaction. What family became fatherless in consequence of this fratricide, the historian has not said—his narrative is brief, and he hastens on to events more nearly approaching his own times: but it is not likely that Abel should have been unmarried, or his marriage unfruitful, although the history is silent on these particulars; especially as it is evident the world had no inconsiderable population at that time.

Sentence of
Cain.

This atrocious crime could not be concealed. The eye of God was alike upon the murderer and his victim; the earth drank, for the first time, human blood; but not before its voice had pierced the heavens. The murderer was sentenced to quit for ever the domestic circle which he had diminished, and the advantages of society, whose laws, written upon the heart, he had broken; and to wander a vagabond over the face of the earth, rendered, as to the spots which he had been accustomed to cultivate, barren; hated, feared, and shunned by all. A dreadful sentence; and felt deeply by the fratricide.—His apprehensions were excited lest he should meet the retribution of death for his crime: and this fear, while it speaks to the multiplied population of the earth, appears to us to imply posterity from Abel, who would of course be most likely to visit the blood of their parent upon the head of his murderer. We will only stop to remark, that supposing this to have taken place about the 130th year of the world (and *that* longevity of which we are about to speak demands this concession, since Adam begat Seth, the son next to Abel, at that time); and granting that Adam and Eve had no other children than Cain and Abel, excepting two daughters as their wives, a considerable population will have arisen in that space from these connections. It has been calculated, that "supposing them to have been married in the 19th year of the world, they might easily have had eight children, both male and female, in the 25th year. In the 50th year, there might proceed from them, in a right line, 64 persons. In the 74th year, there could be 572; in the 98th year, 4096; and in the 122d year, 32,768." If the "other children born (during that time) of Cain and Abel be added, their children, and the children of their children," the calculator supposes that "in the 122d year,

the produce would amount to, a tleast, 421,164 persons."³ It is unnecessary to contend for the whole of this calculation: remitting much of it as conjectural, enough remains to justify the fear of Cain, especially in respect of the descendants of Abel, and to prove that the world could not be at that time very thinly peopled.

Driven from his home, he went out, and his first settlement was said to be in the land of Nod—on the east of Eden. Now as the word *Nod* signifies *a wanderer*, we are inclined to render the passage, "he went out from the presence of the Lord," (that is, from the spot where he had been judged and sentenced,) "and dwelt," or sojourned, "*a vagabond*, on the east of Eden." Without naming the place, the historian will then be understood only to state, that he first pitched his tent in the direction specified. After some years' wandering from place to place, a state not unfavourable to population, as he would have, probably, issue in various stations where he had fixed for a season, he became so multiplied, that he "built a city," and called it "after the name of his son Enoch." His immediate posterity are slightly sketched by the historian: and the manner and time of his death unrecorded. Josephus affirms, that his punishment wrought no repentance; but that he became more hardened in sin as he advanced in years. This, Moses has *not* said; and we will not load the wicked with guilt, not imputed to them by Infinite Truth. It is certain, that he was the first who built a city—a fortified place: that his descendant, Lamech, whose inexplicable history we cannot undertake to unravel, was the first who set the example of polygamy: and to these indications of a depraved state of society—man obliged to fence himself against man, and giving scope to unbridled passions, which, in every instance, led to domestic contention and calamity—the useful and enchanting arts; "the artificer in brass and in iron;" and the inventor "of the harp and the organ," do not form a counter-balance.

On the illustrious list of antediluvian patriarchs, the name of Enoch stands pre-eminent, on account of his translation. Although Moses expresses himself with a brevity according with the conciseness of his history, we can have no difficulty in understanding the expression—"he was not, for God took him;" since the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews assures us, "he was translated, that he should not see death." As easy of interpretation is the beautiful figure employed to describe a holy life—"he walked with God;" explained by the same inspired commentator, with the like force and propriety, for before his translation, he had "this testimony, that he pleased God." We may easily conceive of what importance such a triumph over mortality would be, in that early age, when death had but just commenced his ravages. It afforded, at one and the same time, an evidence of the immortality of the soul, and of

³ Dissert. Chronol. &c. I. in the Journal de Paris, Jan. 1712, Tom. LI. p. 6. Petavius, Doct. Temp. Tom. II. Cap. 14. Stillingfleet, Orig. Sac. Lib. I. Cap. 4. Saurin Diss. V.

the resurrection of the body. Almost the same reasons obtained for the translation of Elijah, in an age of darkness and apostacy. A singular chain of circumstances is afforded, by regarding each of the heads of the several dispensations of God's will, as affording similar evidence. Enoch, as standing at the head of the patriarchal dispensation,—Moses, of the law,—Elijah, of the prophets,—Jesus, of the gospel. In each of these cases is furnished a distinguished pledge of victory over death. Enoch is translated,—Moses is removed by a death, considered in all its circumstances, not inferior to translation,—Elijah is taken into heaven without dying,—Jesus dies, and rises the third day, “the first-fruits of those that sleep.”

Death of
Adam and
Eve.

The father of mankind died at the advanced age of nine hundred and thirty years. *When* the partner of his bliss and fall reaped the bitter fruit of her transgression, or *where* they were buried, is not recorded.

Antediluvian
longevity.

One thing only requires, at this stage of the history, to be noted: and that is, the extraordinary age of the antediluvian patriarchs. Admitting the fact, physiologists have endeavoured to account for it in various ways. By some, it has been supposed to arise from temperance and simplicity of diet: by others, from the salubrity of the vegetable food of those days: others, again, have imputed it to the constitutional stamina and organization of these men, Yet Shem, who was born before the flood, and had these advantages, fell short of the life of his ancestors 300 years. To original strength of constitution, we may add, a temperature which was probably destroyed at the deluge—and we must refer all to His sovereignty, who willed that human life should be shortened. Feeling these difficulties, some writers have conjectured, that the years ascribed to these first men, were lunar and not solar. It is a sufficient answer to this theory, to observe, that on this calculation, their lives are reduced to a shorter period than our own; and some of them must have been fathers under, or about six years of age. The fact affirmed in the Mosaic history is, however, not without powerful traditional support. Josephus enumerates the testimonies of Manetho, Berossus, Mochus, Hestæus, Jerome the Egyptian, the writers of the Phœnician antiquities, Hesiod, Hecatæus, Hellanicus, Acusilaus, Ephorus, and Nicholas, who generally agreed that “the ancients lived *a thousand years*.”⁴

Giants.

We now come to an union between the wicked descendants of Cain, who retained the evil qualities of their evil progenitor, and the children of Seth, who began early “to call upon the name of the Lord,” and who preserved the worship of the true God in their families. These are called “the sons of God,” the former, “the daughters of men,” by the strong figures usual in eastern composi-

⁴ Joseph. Antiq. Jud. Lib. I. Cap. 3.

tion. The holy seed were seduced by the beauty of the degenerate stock. From this fatal commerce, sprang "mighty men," and "men of renown"—"there were" also "giants in those days"—and the whole "earth was" quickly "filled with violence."

We understand by the term "giants," not merely men of violence, but of extraordinary bulk and stature. It is not necessary to suppose that *all* were such: but that there *were* giants in those days, and probably *many* of them. Tradition again corresponds with the Mosaic record. Pausanias, Philostratus, and Pliny, speak decidedly on this subject.⁵

As the result of the inauspicious union between the descendants of Seth and of Cain, fraud, and rapine, and all possible evils predominated. And with the narrative of Moses, all antiquity agrees. Catullus and Ovid give a frightful picture of this early depravity; and in terms which seem borrowed from the Scriptures.⁶

This universal depravation opens the way for the tremendous scenery of the deluge: an epoch in history of the first importance; as all the authenticated records of profane history fall within the period at which it is said to have taken place:—an event traditionally preserved among all nations, and corroborated by geological facts: a judgment the most awful and sublime in its character, and corresponding with the purity of that Infinite Being whose dignity and holiness had been outraged and insulted. Patience and pity were manifested amidst rising indignation; and the writers of revelation, in conformity with the testimony of Jesus himself, have corroborated the fearful page of history now to pass before us; and have appealed to it as a striking example of the justice and long-suffering of God. The Flood.

When God determined to extirpate from the earth, the wicked and abominable generation who had polluted it, and whose crimes cried to heaven for vengeance, he resolved to save Noah and his family, as the progenitors of a new race of men, and that the righteous should not perish with the wicked. For this purpose he announced his intention, and instructed him to prepare an ark for the saving of himself and of his family. In the sentence pronounced, an universal deluge is affirmed; and no partial inundation, of whatever extent, could justify, we think, the terms employed by the historian, and ascribed to the Deity. "Behold, I bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and *every thing that is in the earth shall die!*" To Noah and his family, led by an instinctive impulse, and disarmed for a season of their natural ferocity, all animals were to Universal.

⁵ Grotius, de Ver. Christ. Relig. Sect. XVI.

⁶ Catullus, Epithal. Pel. et Thet.—Ovid, Metam. Lib. I.—Grotius, ut

supra.—Hom. Il. Lib. I. v. 255—270, Nestor complains that he shall never see such heroes, for strength and courage, as he had been accustomed in his youth to associate with.

resort; that the ark might contain within itself the means of replenishing the earth, when it should be restored.

Warning to
the world.

In the meanwhile, the patriarch foretold this event, and preached righteousness and repentance: but the world believed him not, and continued their crimes and indulgences until a common and inevitable ruin overtook them. It has been commonly supposed, that this interval was 120 years: but this conclusion does not receive any countenance from Scripture, which only says, that "the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing;"⁷ without specifying the time which it occupied. The general misapprehension seems to have arisen from the declaration, "yet his days shall be 120 years;"⁸ which alludes, not to the space between the sentence and its execution, but to the contraction of human life. To suppose such a length of time to be consumed in the building, without the intervention of a miraculous preservation, one part of the structure must have perished before the other had been completed. Besides, the calculation of the order of facts recorded by Moses, destroys this opinion. "Noah was 500 years old when he begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth."⁹ It is evident, that when he received the command to build the ark, those sons were married; since it is said, "thou shalt come into the ark; thou, *and thy sons*, and thy wife, and *thy sons' wives* with thee."¹⁰ And, "in the six hundredth year of Noah,"¹¹ the flood came. While, therefore, it is not stated precisely when the command was given; nor, of course, what time the building of the ark occupied; it manifestly could not be so long as 120 years.

The ark.

The singular structure which was to contain the remnant of the creation, must have been of vast dimensions. Accordingly, the patriarch was instructed to "make it of gopher-wood:" a term used in no other place in the Bible, which has been supposed to signify cypress. It was to consist of three stories, and to be divided into various apartments. The length of it was prescribed as 300 cubits, the breadth 50, and the height 30. The common cubit, originally imagined to be 18 inches, is now allowed to have contained 22. According to this measurement, it was $547\frac{2}{10}$ English feet long, $91\frac{2}{10}$ broad, $54\frac{7}{100}$ high; and its solid contents amount to 2,730,782 cubic feet. It was in shape an oblong square, with a flat bottom, and a sloped roof, raised a cubit in the middle; each of the three stories must have been about 18 feet high. It had windows, and one door; and seems to have had a covering, which might be removed, probably made of skins drawn over the roof, and adapted to defend the apertures called windows. Upon this estimate, the ark appears to be sufficiently large and commodious for the purposes for which it was constructed.

Every thing being thus prepared, "in the 600th year of Noah's

⁷ 1 Pet. iii. 20.

⁸ Gen. vi. 3.

⁹ Gen. v. 32.

¹⁰ Gen. vi. 18.

¹¹ Gen. vii. 11.

life, on the 17th day of the 2d month, were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; and it rained 40 days and 40 nights;" Noah, with his family, and the pairs of all living creatures, having entered into the ark. And such was the increase of the waters, that not only the ark floated, but the face of the whole earth was covered, the waters rising 15 cubits above the highest mountains—every thing died: "and the waters prevailed upon the earth 150 days."¹² They gradually abated after that period; but the earth was not dry until a year had expired from the commencement of this destruction. In the meanwhile, as the waters assuaged, Noah put out a raven, which finding supply of food from the carcases, returned not again. Afterwards he sent forth a dove, which, neither living on carrion, nor finding a suitable resting place, came back to the ark. A second time he sent her out, and she returned with an olive-leaf in her mouth; a signal of the abatement of the waters, so far as that the trees were visible. A third time he dismissed this messenger, and she returned no more. These circumstances are noted, because they are not forgotten in the traditions which relate to this event.

Various hypotheses have been proposed, to account for the accomplishment of this great work, which we need not enumerate. Instead of so doing, we shall present a solution of the difficulty suggested by Sir Henry Englefield, and published by Dr. Geddes, in his *Critical Remarks upon the Deluge*. "The diameter of the earth being taken at 8000 miles, and the highest mountain being supposed four miles high above the level of the sea, (which is a height greater than that of the Andes,) the quantity of water requisite to cover them will be an hollow sphere of 8008 miles diameter, and four miles thick; the contents of which, in round numbers, are 800,000,000 cubic miles. Let us now suppose the globe of the earth to consist of a crust of solid matter 1000 miles thick, enclosing a sea, or body of water, 2000 miles deep; within which is a central nucleus of 2000 miles in diameter: the contents of that body of water will be 109,200,000,000 cubic miles; or about 137 times the quantity of water required to cover the surface of the earth as above stated. Now water, by experiment, expands to about one 25th of its whole magnitude, from freezing to boiling; or 100th of its magnitude for 45 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. Suppose, then, that the heat of the globe previously to the deluge, was about 50 degrees of Fahrenheit's, a temperature very near that of this climate; and that a sudden change took place in the interior of the globe, which raised its height to 83 degrees; a heat no greater than the marine animals live in, in the shallow seas between the tropics: those 23 degrees of augmented heat, would so expand the internal sea, as to cause it to more than cover the surface of the globe,

Means of
accomplish-
ment.

¹² Gen. vii. 11—24.

according to the conditions above mentioned. And if the cause of heat ceased, the waters would of course, in cooling, retire into their proper places. If the central nucleus be supposed 3000 miles, and the internal sea only 1500 miles deep, its contents will then be 99,200,000,000 cubic miles; or, 125 times the water required; and in that case, an additional heat of 36 degrees to the previous temperature of the earth, will be sufficient to produce the above described effect. It is scarce necessary to say, that the perfect regularity here supposed to exist in the form of the interior parts of the globe, is of no consequence to the proposed hypothesis; which will be equally just, if the above-given quantity of waters be any how disposed within the earth. Neither is it here proposed to discuss the reality of a central fire, which many philosophers maintain, and many deny. It may not be unworthy to remark, that the above hypothesis, which does not in any way contradict any law of nature, singularly accords with the Mosaic narrative of the deluge. For the sudden expansion of the internal waters would, of course, force them up through the chasms of the exterior crust, in dreadful jets and torrents; while their heat would cause such vapours to ascend into the atmosphere as, when condensed, would produce torrents of rain beyond our conception." Dr. Geddes adds, "It is not at all necessary to suppose, with Sir Henry, that the antediluvian mountains were as high as those of the present earth. They may have been of a very different form and size, and composed of other materials."

Statement
of Moses.

Moses derives the deluge from two sources: "the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up." We can enter into no calculation, as to the inexhaustible stores of these great reservoirs. The historian is perfectly consistent with himself. He represented the earth as originally covered with waters, which were called off by the divine fiat; some of them gathered into seas, others probably impelled into secret receptacles within the earth: the deluge only supposes the reduction of the earth to its original state, in this respect.

Tradition.

It might be expected, that an event of such an order should be corroborated by correspondent collateral evidences. Accordingly, the deluge is confirmed, not merely as a whole, but in important features of detail, by tradition. Whoever has carefully consulted Bryant's *Ancient Mythology*, can have no doubt, if learning and argument in unusual combination are conclusive, that Prometheus, Deucalion, Atlas, Theuth, Zuth, Xuthus, Inachus, Osiris, Dagon, and others, were all different names by which Noah was intended. Eusebius has preserved a fragment from Abydenus' history of Assyria, bearing upon this fact; and even including some circumstances to which we have alluded, as characteristic of the Mosaic account, only under different names. "Seisithrus," (another name for Noah,) "after the waters were abated, sent out birds, that he might ascertain

whether the earth had yet appeared through the flood. But these, finding only a boundless sea, and having no resting-place, returned to Seisithrus.”¹³ Berosus, according to Josephus, both relates this fact, and observes that fragments of the ark remained in his days in Armenia.¹⁴ Abydenus, before-mentioned, directly refers to the dove, and to the signal which she brought in her mouth, that the flood had subsided. Lucian adverts to an universal deluge, in no doubtful terms; and specifies the suspension of animal ferocity.¹⁵ The change of appellation will excite no surprise, when we recollect that the ancients were in the habit of *translating* names into their own language; to give their signification, rather than their original form.¹⁶ Diodorus Siculus says, that it is a tradition of the Egyptians, that Deucalion’s was the universal deluge: and Plato corroborates this testimony by affirming, that this flood, recorded in the sacred books of that people, long preceded the partial inundations known to the Grecians. There is another remarkable coincidence with the Mosaic account. The very day fixed by Moses as the beginning of the deluge, agrees exactly with the day in which Plutarch tells us, Osiris went into the ark—the seventeenth of Athyr: which is the second month after the autumnal equinox, the sun then passing through Scorpio. Add to these traditional evidences, the geological proof of the deluge; the existence of vast quantities of marine productions upon the tops of the mountains, and under the surface of the ground, to considerable depths, over the whole earth, and at all distances from the sea; not to be accounted for upon all the hypotheses by which it has been attempted to impugn the Mosaic history; and the singular fact, that there is no nation, ancient or modern, savage or civilized, without a tradition of the universal deluge; the chain of argument is complete.

[The considerations here adduced have long been generally prevalent and believed to be decisive as to the universality of the deluge. But within the last few years the majority of professed geologists, together with many who may be justly regarded as sound divines, have changed their opinions; compelled, as they believe themselves to be, by the force of evidence, to the conclusion that the deluge was not universal but partial. Proofs are adducible of the occurrence of a succession of partial deluges on the surface of the globe, such as to have changed the aspect and character of many portions of its surface, in such a manner, and to such a degree, as necessarily to have obliterated all satisfactory traces of one great deluge absolutely universal. The deposits and diluvial remains found in far distant places and climates, are accounted for upon the supposition of such partial inundations; and it is believed on philosophical

Opinion of
geologists
that the
Deluge was
partial.

¹³ Euseb. Præp. Lib. IX. Cap. 12.

¹⁵ Lucian, Lib. de Dea Syria, &c.

¹⁴ Jos. Ant. Apion, I. et Antiq. Lib. I. Cap. 4.

¹⁶ Bryant’s Ant. Mythol. Gale’s Court of the Gentiles. Grotius de verit. Relig. XI. Joseph. Antiq. et contra Apion, &c.

grounds that there could not have been a transient, tranquil, and universal deluge, producing the effects in question. In reply to the statements and in mitigation of the alarms that have been excited in the minds of the pious by the announcement of this new theory of geological science, it is argued that the terms used in Scripture, in the book of Genesis, do by no means necessarily imply the absolute universality of the great flood, and that in that case as in the entire word of God, which is not to be understood as employing a philosophical language, or communicating a scientific system, either of the earth or heavens, there is a merciful accommodation to the ordinary conceptions and current modes of expression among mankind; and that consequently true science and true theology are not at variance, but in perfect harmony with each other.

It would be quite impossible in this place, and within reasonable bounds, even to give an outline of the important discussions upon this subject; and while disposed ourselves to wait for still further elucidations from the fertile fields of geological discovery, we refer the reader in the meantime to the clear and candid statements of Dr. Pye Smith, in a volume published by him under the title of "The Relation between the Holy Scriptures and some parts of Geological Science."—ED.]

RELIGION, POLITY, LONGEVITY, AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD.

Having given from the Mosaic narrative the only authentic chain of events belonging to this period, a few particulars illustrative of the religion, polity, longevity, and chronology of the Antediluvian world, may not be unacceptable to the reader, and will enable us to notice some of the more recent contributions to this obscure part of human history.

Religion.

The *religion* of the Antediluvians can, at no period, be regard as purely natural, or that of unassisted reason. Although it soon presented the same important distinction between that which was revealed, or preserved in its revealed state, and that which was corrupted by tradition, which has been seen in the history of all succeeding ages, it supplies no proof of the existence of any true religion amongst men, which was not of divine origin, and sustained by the observance of God's own appointed means. If the ritual of the true religion was at this time simple, so is that of the far more perfect dispensation of Christianity. On the other hand, though "violence" and evil passions abounded amongst the degraded Cainites, and finally produced universal corruption, we have no authenticated instances of idolatry before the flood.

Sacrifices.

Upon the principle that all is vain worship which God has not enjoined, (Mark vii. 7,) many learned men have contended that the

account of the *sacrifices* of Cain and Abel, furnishes strong proof of the divine institution of that rite. It is certain, that it contains the only formal instance of antediluvian worship; and the conduct of Abel is brought forward as having evinced his faith in God, &c., Heb. xi. 4, in which place he is said to have offered "a more excellent," or, according to Wickliffe's Testament, which correctly expresses the original phrase, "a much more sacrifice" (or much more of a sacrifice) than Cain. Warburton, with characteristic warmth for his own hypothesis, has remarked, that the two principal observances of the Jewish ritual, being those of the *sabbath* and the *sacrifices*, as the sacred historian is careful to impress us with the divine origin of the former, so he would unquestionably have recorded that of the latter, had it been equally a fact. To this it has been well replied, that the one *is*, perhaps, as explicitly recorded as the other. That God rested from the work of creation Sabbath. on the seventh day, and blessed or hallowed it, is the reason for its observance, assigned Exod. xx. 11; and that God in some peculiar, but well known way, (probably by fire from the shekinah which hovered over Eden,) blessed, and "had respect" unto the offering of Abel, is as distinctly said. But nowhere have we any express command, for the posterity of Adam to observe the seventh day as holy until the Mosaic law was given; nor have we, on the other hand, any thing like those traces of its *continued* observance which we have of the practice and acceptability of sacrificial rites. Kennicott and others, after Fagius, contend that in the opening of the history of Cain and Abel's sacrifices, מִקֵּץ יָמִים ought not to be rendered generally "in process of time," but "at the appointed time or season."¹⁷

That the sabbath was observed by the pious antediluvians, may be argued from the familiarity with which it is introduced into the Jewish law, and the incontrovertible circumstance of a septennial division of time having obtained over various ancient nations, totally unconnected with the Jews, and coeval with them in their origin as nations. Thus there appear to have been appointed means and appointed times of divine worship.

Perhaps also we have a pretty clear indication of the "presence of the Lord," being more distinctly manifested in some particular place or places than others, in the lamentation of Cain, and the remark of the sacred historian, Gen. iv. 16; while the fact noticed at the end of the same chapter, "Then began men to call themselves by the name of Jehovah," would argue both a social and public profession of their religion. But Maimonides, and some Social religion. other critics, consider this to have been a profane calling on the Lord.

The *civil polity*, or government of the antediluvian world, appears Civil polity. to have been, in the first instance, purely patriarchal, or under the dominion of the respective fathers of its different tribes; so far, at

¹⁷ See this subject very fully pursued by Dr. Magee, in his second volume of discourses on the Scripture Doctrines of "Atonement and Sacrifice."

least, as any public government can be supposed to have been exercised before any notions of separate property could have been entertained, or any other social distinctions were in existence, than those which arose out of the greater manual strength or skill. And these distinctions, in the aggregate of numerous families, would be pretty well equalized. The longevity of this period, too, would strengthen the ties of kindred, and the claims of this kind of authority. To be an outcast or vagabond from such society, we see was a formidable part of Cain's punishment. But the "mighty ones," or tyrants, that are stated to have arisen in the latter part of the antediluvian history, hastened on the work of sin and slavery, until the Judge of all the earth interfered in the awful visitation of the flood. There seems to be no correct idea of these "men of renown" afforded us in the common translation of the Bible, (Gen. vi. 4, 5,) although Moses appears to be anxious to give us a correct impression of their character, by the several epithets under which he names them. 1. נפלים Nephelim—naphal—*fallen* ones; apostates from the true religion: גיבורים, according to the LXX, literally earth-born. 2. גיבורים Gibborim—gabar—victorious, heroes or conquerors. 3. אנשי ידועים—men of name; deriving surnames from from their unworthy deeds; men not content with the simple family distinctions of their ancestors. These are represented as "filling the earth with violence," and greatly instrumental in the final ruin of their race.

Arts.

The attainments of the antediluvians in the *arts*, appear to have been considerable. The smelting of metals is mentioned, and a sort of community, (as we understand the sacred historian,) who, in the time of Tubal-Cain, the seventh in descent from Adam, were artificers in brass and iron. (Gen. iv. 22.) At the same period, and in the same family, we read of a remarkable proficiency in the science

Music.

of music, and the terms used are probably generic; the one which we render "harp," meaning all stringed instruments, and the other rendered "organ," all wind instruments. Cain himself is said to have built a city, which he named after his son; and, as he had been peculiarly "cursed" in his former occupation, on account of the murder of Abel, though we can form no notion of the dimensions of this place, it is not improbable, that an aversion to agricultural pursuits would partly impel him to cultivate the other arts and attainments for which his family so soon became noted. Josephus has

Astronomy.

Astrology.

some learned fabling on the skill of Seth in the science of astronomy; hieroglyphic pillars of his erection being, as that historian states, extant in his own time. Certain it is, that of all the sciences, astronomy appears to have been early known in great perfection. The astrology of the Chaldeans was the daughter of the true science, we cannot doubt, if its other parent was superstition; and the Hindoo observations which have been recently made known to us, argue a considerable and very early acquaintance with the heavens. The

most unequivocal proof, however, of the state of antediluvian science, is found in the celebrated work of Noah, the building of the ark. Building of
the Ark. This vessel, reckoning 18 inches only to the cubit, by which it is described, (it has been conjectured by some authors, as we have seen, page 30, to have been equal to 22 inches,) would be of the enormous burden of 42,413 tons, equal to about the burden of 18 of our first-rate men-of-war. Now, though the command to construct such a vessel in the heart of a continent might well be, as it was, divine, and some directions were appended to the command respecting its size and structure, we apprehend that no person who has not been professionally accustomed to shipbuilding, in our own times, would very successfully engage in the task of the patriarch, upon his instructions; and we have no reason to suppose there was any thing supernatural in his skill. In this vessel, as well as the "vast and minute" of the mechanism, several other sciences would naturally be called for, to ventilate, enlighten, and render it manageable. Whether the term *צַהַר* translated "window," do not refer to some luminous or transparent substance, the learned are by no means agreed. The ark, it must be remembered, rode the most awful storm the world ever knew, and though divinely guarded, it is perfectly analogous to the ways of God to suppose that the builder was left to develop all his own judgment and resources by way of foresight and prudent care.

Of the *manners* of the antediluvians we have various pictures in Manners. Scripture, and in the traditions of the east; concurring only in the original and universal happiness of the early period of their history, and in the general licentiousness that ultimately prevailed. We have seen, however, the awful instance of human depravity exhibited at a very early period of antediluvian history, in the murder of Abel by his brother Cain; after which, a sense of *what was right* amongst men, seems to have been feared by him equally, perhaps more, than his malediction from God. "Every one that findeth me," says he bitterly, "shall slay me." The same mixed scene continues to be exhibited to us in Scripture. Lamech, the fifth in descent from him, introduces polygamy; and his whole character is, at least, as questionable as that extensive ancient and modern custom has been pernicious to human happiness. But his grandson dwelling in tents, and surrounded by a class of successful shepherds or agriculturists, devoted to those pursuits that Cain at first abandoned, and cheered by the musical inventions of their family, is at least a relieving picture; the progress of the useful arts would extract many a thorn from their lot, and in their direct application to the implements of husbandry, peculiarly relieve *their* circumstances as connected both with the curse of Cain's and Adam's sin. We find the posterity of Seth remembering the latter at a much later period, Gen. v. 29, and anticipating the talents of Noah, with a view perhaps to similar objects.

Final
corruption.

The greatest moral fact in the history of antediluvian manners, has excited much controversy among biblical critics. It is that recorded, Gen. vi. 1, 2. After tracing the posterity of Cain to Lamech, (Gen. iv.) the historian abandons that line of the family of Adam, and details in the next chapter the children of his third son Seth to Noah. Thus completing as much of the literal history of this period, as God thought proper to perpetuate, he enters at once upon the moral history of the later ages, in the circumstance alluded to. "The sons of God," mentioned in this text, were thought by the fathers, almost unanimously, to intend either angels or the demons of the heathen world, who were represented by Socrates as the fathers of the *heroes* (apud Platon. Cratyl.) and as "all of them born from love either of a god with a mortal woman, or of mortal men with goddesses." What the priests had thus introduced into the grossest parts of the pagan system, and the philosophers were prepared to support and justify, the Jews, in later ages, it is well known, endeavoured to prove consistent with the Mosaic account; and the fathers rather exceeded than came behind them in this disposition. Later writers, among whom is the learned Dr. Wall, have imagined, that when men began to multiply on the earth, the chief men took wives of all the handsome poor women that they chose," and "powerful men," having "unlawful intercourse with inferior women," the children of this illicit commerce were the heroes and gods of antiquity! Most modern critics concur in understanding the passage in question to describe a gradual degeneracy of the pious race of Seth arising from their matrimonial connections with the family of Cain, or with the profane part of mankind, and thus derive a useful but neglected lesson to the church and the world. From this period, the decline of religion and virtue was awfully accelerated—the corruption was universal as it was individual and almost without exception: it appears to us to have been peculiarly of a *sensual* character, "they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, to the day that Noah entered into the ark." And the principal cause of this degeneracy was the wrong exercise of their own choice. "They took them wives, of all which *they chose*." Idolatry and more refined rebellion against God seem to have been the offspring of the greater maturity of the world. Euty chius perpetuates several traditions of the grossness of antediluvian licentiousness.

Longevity.

The longevity of the antediluvians has excited some attention of late years, in connection with the question of the population and chronology of the world at this period. We have before noticed an absurd attempt to consider the scriptural years to have been lunar and not solar—whatever they were, and we see no reason to doubt their being of the ordinary length,¹⁸ they were prolonged to our feeble

¹⁸ This is well ascertained by Dr. Hales, and others, to have been reckoned at 360 days in all parts of the ancient world.

This is one of the most moderate calculations that has ever been made on the subject of the population of the world at the period of the deluge, and yet is far above the highest calculation of the present number of mankind, which has never, we believe, been supposed to exceed from 800 to 1,000 millions. But what could the learned author mean by the first pair having "left" only ten pair of marriageable persons at the end of the first century; and by omitting all their other children? Adam lived, as we have seen, nearly a thousand years; and other of the antediluvian patriarchs had children, at regular intervals, after the age of 500; we can hardly, therefore, suppose the first parents of mankind to have had children only during so short a period of their lives. This consideration alone alters the whole basis of his reckoning. Wharton and Cockburn have entered into similar calculations, widely differing in their result: but with so many essential data wholly wanting, as 1. A settled epoch at which the deluge took place. 2. A knowledge of the periods of puberty, gestation, and nursing among the antediluvians. 4. The proportion of habitable land to water on the globe, and the general condition of the earth's surface before the deluge, we apprehend that all such estimates must be too vague for any scientific or useful purpose. We particularly observe, that all the calculators in question are continually adjusting their results by a comparison with the present condition and resources of the globe; and abandon the most characteristic parts of their theory to arrive at some probable number.

Chronology. It may be worth remarking, that the accuracy of the common epoch of the deluge, upon which every calculation of the final number of the antediluvian world must first be formed, has been thrown of late into at least still greater doubt than ever, by the laborious work of Dr. HALES, on Chronology. Having produced 120 different opinions respecting the epoch of the Mosaic cosmogony, and reviewed the most celebrated systems of chronology, ancient and modern, this author finally suggests the year B.C. 5411, as the period of the formation of the world; and that of B.C. 3155, as the epoch of the deluge. The authors of the Universal History had previously rejected the Usherian period, and preferred that of the *Samaritan* Hebrew text, which adds 650 years to the common date; but the principal opinions brought together by Dr. Hales, in the following table, will be seen to differ in their extremes almost to the amount of the entire æra of the antediluvian world according to that date.

<i>Epochs of the Deluge.</i>		B. C.
Septuagint Version,	. . . . .	3246
Jackson,	. . . . .	3170
HALES,	. . . . .	3155
Josephus,	. . . . .	3146
Persian,	. . . . .	3103
Hindoo,	. . . . .	3102
Samaritan,	. . . . .	2998
Howard,	. . . . .	2698
Playfair,	. . . . .	2352
USHER and English Bible,	. . . . .	2348
Marsham,	. . . . .	2344
Petavius,	. . . . .	2329
Strauchius,	. . . . .	2293
Hebrew,	. . . . .	2288
Vulgar Jewish,	. . . . .	2104

Dr. Hales, it will be seen, approaches much nearer to the Septuagint than the Hebrew calculation, which latter, is the foundation of the Usherian chronology. But he founds the basis of his chronological system on the harmonized chronology of Josephus and Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, A. D. 168; finding his *punctum stans* in the birth of Cyrus, B. C. 599, which led to his accession to the Persian throne, B. C. 559; of Media, B. C. 551; and of Babylonia, B. C. 536; "For from these several dates," he adds, "carefully and critically ascertained and verified, the several and respective chronologies of these kingdoms branched off; and from the last especially, the destruction of Solomon's temple by Nebuchadnezzar, B. C. 586, its correcter date, which led to its foundation, B. C. 1627; thence to the Exode, B. C. 1648; thence to Abraham's birth, B. C. 2153; thence to the reign of Nimrod, B. C. 2554; thence to the DELUGE, B. C. 3155; thence to the Creation, B. C. 5411."

The line of the Antediluvian patriarchs,

I. According to the *Hebrew text*, is

	Began his life in the year of the world	Had his son in the year of his life	Lived after his son's birth, years	Lived in all, years	Died in the year of the world
Adam,.....	1	130	800	930	930
Seth,.....	130	105	807	912	1042
Enos,.....	235	90	815	905	1140
Cainan,.....	325	70	840	910	1235
Mahalaleel,.....	395	65	830	895	1290
Jared,.....	460	162	800	962	1422
Enoch,.....	622	65	300	365	987
Methuselah,.....	687	186	782	979	1656
Lamech,.....	874	182	595	777	1651
Noah,.....	1056	500	...	...	...

II. According to the *Samaritan text*.

	Began his life in the year of the world	Had his son in the year of his life	Lived after his son's birth, years	Lived in all, years	Died in the year of the world
Adam,	1	130	800	930	930
Seth,	130	105	807	912	1042
Enos,	235	90	815	905	1140
Cainan,	325	70	840	910	1235
Mahalaleel,	395	65	830	895	1290
Jared,	460	62	785	847	1307
Enoch,	522	65	300	365	887
Methuselah,	587	67	653	720	1307
Lamech,	654	53	600	653	1307
Noah,	707	500	...	...	...

III. According to the *Septuagint version*.

	Began his life in the year of the world	Had his son in the year of his life	Lived after his son's birth, years	Lived in all, years	Died in the year of the world
Adam,	1	230	700	930	930
Seth,	230	205	707	912	1042
Enos,	435	190	715	905	1340
Cainan,	625	170	740	910	1535
Mahalaleel,	795	165	730	895	1690
Jared,	960	162	800	962	1922
Enoch,	1122	165	200	365	1487
Methuselah,	1287	187	782	969	2256
Lamech,	1474	188	565	753	2227
Noah,	1662	500	...	...	...

Dr. Hales has shown, with considerable force of argument, that there could be originally no difference between the Hebrew and Greek chronologies; that the computation of Josephus was, in his time, conformable to both; and, consequently, that the chronology either of the original Hebrew, of the Greek version of the Scriptures, or of the writings of Josephus, must have been since adulterated. On the authority of Ephraim Syrus, who died in the fourth century of the Christian æra, he confidently alleges, that a great and designed alteration has taken place in the Hebrew text. A traditional prediction being current, that the Messiah should certainly appear in the *sixth* millenary of the world, Ephraim affirms, that "the Jews subtracted 600 years from the generations of Adam, Seth, &c. in order that their own books might not convict them upon the point."

According to Dr. Hales, therefore, the patriarchal lives of this period stand thus :

	Began his life in the year of the world	Lived after the birth of his son, years	Had his son in the year of his life	Lived in all, years	Died in the year of the world
Adam,	1	230	700	930	930
Seth,	280	205	707	912	1442
Enos,	435	190	715	905	1340
Cainan,	625	170	740	910	1534
Mahalaleel,	795	165	730	895	1690
Jared,	960	162	800	962	1922
Enoch,	1122	165	200	365	1487
Methuselah,	1287	187	782	969	2256
Lamech,	1747	182	{ *595	{ *777	{ *2251
			{ †565	{ †753	{ †2227
Noah,	1656	500	* Heb.	* Heb.	* Heb.
Deluge,	2256	600	† LXX.	† LXX.	† LXX.

The confirmation which the sacred narrative receives from the traditions and profane writers of antiquity, is principally confined to the testimony of Berosus, a Chaldean historian, who first conveyed the astrology of his country into Greece, and fragments of whose writings are preserved in Josephus, Tatian, and Eusebius; and Sanchoniathon, who is said to have composed a history of the Phœnicians, the first book of which only is extant, in Eusebius. Berosus pretends to give us an account of ten kings who reigned in Chaldea before the deluge, and who evidently correspond with the ten patriarchs of the Mosaic account. The first of them he calls Alorus, and the last Xisuthrus, whom he states to have received a revelation, in a dream, that mankind would be destroyed by a flood. That he was commanded, after this, to build a ship for his own preservation, that of his friends, and of certain fowls and four-footed beasts: which he was to furnish with suitable provisions. That the flood came, and being survived by Xisuthrus and his companions, they sent out some birds on its abating, who at first returned quickly to the vessel; shortly after they were sent out a second time, and came back with mud on their feet; but being let go a third time, they returned no more. Understanding from this, that the earth was appearing above the waters, Xisuthrus is said to have taken up some of the planks of his vessel, and to have found that it had grounded on a mountain. Sanchoniathon, extolled as he is by Porphyry, and commented upon at great length by Bishop Cumberland, has nothing equal to the distinctness of this short account. After a rambling cosmogony of the creation, he tells us that all mankind were the descendants of Protogenus and Æon, the latter

of whom discovered the food that may be gathered from trees. Their children were Genus and Genea, who introduced the worship of the sun, calling him Beelsamen, the lord of heaven, on account of a memorable drought. Their offspring were Phos, Phor, and Phlox, or Light, Fire, and Flame, who first discovered the use of fire by rubbing two pieces of wood together, and had sons of vast stature, who gave their names, to Mount Cassius, Libanus, Antilibanus, and Brathys. The children of these giants were, Memrumus, Hypsuranius, and Usous; Hypsuranius, being the inventor of huts made of reeds and rushes, and Usous the first worshipper of fire and wind. In the days of these latter chiefs, women first became licentious in their manners. The inventions of hunting, fishing, forging and working iron, are traced to various of their descendants, until we come to Chrysor, who introduced all descriptions of fishing tackle, and first ventured out in a boat to sea, for which exploit he was deified. He goes on to trace the history of this family until he comes to Misor, the father of Thoth or Taautus, the Mercury of the Egyptians, whom he notices to be eleven generations in descent from Protogenus; Moses makes twelve from Adam to Misraim, whom he places at the head of that nation. Sanchoniathon makes no other mention of the flood than the exploit of Chrysor may be supposed to contain by way of an allusion. We have elsewhere noticed the classical distinction of the Ages of the World, the first of which, the golden age, clearly describes the paradisiacal state of mankind; the peaceful early state of the antediluvians may well be called, in various respects, a silver age; while their gradual declension, and increased depravity, as well, perhaps, as the inventions of different periods, were set forth by the brazen and the iron age. The opening of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* also is in most striking coincidence with the sacred history.

CHAPTER II.

THE PATRIARCHAL AGE.

B.C. 2347—B.C. 1635.

NOAH descended from the ark in the 601st year of his age, on A.M. 1657.
the 27th day of the second month; and in the year of the world, B.C. 2347.
1657. He raised an altar upon the face of the desolate scene, and The descent
offered sacrifice—the way of expiation revealed from the beginning. from the ark.
A covenant was made with him, as the parent of the new world;
and the rainbow was its seal. Whether it before existed, or not, is
of no moment: if there were rain before, it must have been—the
same causes in nature, uniformly producing the same effects: if the
earth were watered, as Eden was, by a mist, the phenomenon in
question might be new after the flood, as rain would then appear for
the first time: either way, “I do set my bow in the clouds, and it
shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth,” gives
it a new import. The pledge implied in it was, that the waters
should no more go over the earth to destroy it. Three laws were
now solemnly dispensed, and seem particularly suited to the occasion.
—1. The permission to eat flesh: man’s diet being originally
restricted to vegetables. 2. The punishment of murder with death:
perhaps the only crime that ought to be so visited. 3. The original
law, which is indeed that of nature, “be ye fruitful, and multiply,”
and replenish “the earth.”

Soon after this descent, Noah planted a vineyard, and being The
ignorant of the effects that would be produced by the fermentation vineyard
of its fruit, drank of the pressed grape, and became intoxicated. No and the
longer sensible, he lay denuded in his tent. One of his sons, Ham, prediction.
the father of Canaan, finding him in this situation, cruelly mocked
and exposed him; his other children decently and piously covered
him. The patriarch, although overcome unexpectedly with wine,
was not insensible of that which had passed. He blessed Shem and
Japheth, and cursed Ham. That this was the result of a divine
influence, and not of any burst of passion, appears in this—that he
cursed Ham, not in himself, but in Canaan, upon whose descendants,
called after his name, the penalty more directly and immediately
fell; and that no ebullition of human wrath could possibly be
imagined to foretell events, much less to effect their accomplishment
to the very letter: whereas this prediction of Noah, not only produced

A. M. 1657. early results, according with the sentence, but has acted in all ages,
 B. C. 2347. and continues to do so to the present hour; the whole continent of Africa being peopled by the descendants of Ham. This prediction was remarkably fulfilled in former events; of the historical truth of which, no doubt can be entertained. The Canaanites were reduced by the Israelites, the posterity of Shem. The Egyptians, the descendants of Ham, were subjugated by the Persians, who were of Shem, and the Grecians, who were of Japheth. Tyre, built by the children of Ham, fell successively under the posterity of his brethren. The great struggle between Carthage and Rome, which terminated in the ruin of the former, confirmed this prediction: Carthage being peopled by the posterity of Ham, and the Romans descending from Japheth. In the meanwhile, other points were no less accomplished. Shem was to be distinguished for spiritual privileges, and Japheth for increase. Accordingly, the light of revelation shone upon the descendants of Shem, for many centuries exclusively; and afterwards emanated thence to distant nations: while Japheth's posterity inherit all Europe, the Lesser Asia, Media, a part of Armenia, Iberia, Albania, the territories once belonging to the Scythians, now to the Tatars—India, China, and probably the continent of America. And it is remarkable, that the four grand empires of the world, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, descended, the two former from Shem, the two latter from Japheth.

Descendants
of Shem,
Ham, and
Japheth.

Nimrod. Amidst a barren list of genealogical names, Nimrod appears. His name signifies *a rebel*; his description is “a mighty hunter before the Lord.” In this (if his name be excepted) nothing criminal appears: he might be a great benefactor to mankind, in following the labours of the chase, and extirpating wild beasts. It is generally understood, that he grasped at empire, and obtained it. The lead which he took in his amusement, accompanied as he probably was, would give him the habit of command, which he turned to more important purposes. Some have ascribed to him the project of building Babel: and although this cannot be decided, such a conclusion appears to agree with the character of his short and stormy history.

Babel. At this time a singular project was undertaken. It was determined to build a city ample enough to contain the immense population contiguous to each other, (which had not hitherto been so compact as might conduce to mutual convenience) and an exceedingly lofty tower, for so we understand the hebraism, “whose top may reach unto heaven.” The land of Shinar was the place fixed upon, which we believe to be Chaldea: and not improbably the site upon which
 A. M. 1757. Babylon was afterwards built. Various motives have been assigned for this project. Some have imagined that the fears of another deluge suggested it. In this case, the higher grounds would have been preferred to a plain; when it was known that the loftiest mountains had been covered. Others imagine it was intended as an

B. C. 2247.

object to be seen at a distance—that when they wandered wide with their flocks, it might be to the dispersed population a common point of union. Others understand by it an indication of undue ambition, an appetite for celebrity, which, if unchecked, might lead to the most criminal excesses. However this might be, the work was displeasing to God: and it appears to have been so, principally, on the supposition that they intended it as a rallying point; thus defeating the end of their multiplication, in confining the population of the earth too much to one spot. Accordingly, it pleased God to confound their language, so that they could not understand each other. An inquiry after the original tongue would not be profitable, nor could it lead to any certain conclusion: if we trace all known languages to their sources, perhaps we should approach the Hebrew more nearly than any other. Nor is it a question, whether language might not have gradually changed—it was, the historian affirms, altered at once. Not by the introduction of a variety of accents and inflexions merely, but by a total confusion and diversity of speech. However we may flatter ourselves that we have found a common original in any language as the basis of the rest, there are some which have no visible connection with any tongue whatever, and the Chinese appears to be of this description; so that for the absolute contrariety, we can scarcely account on any other principle than that of a total change of speech.

Confusion of
language.

The work was in consequence abandoned; and the people separated. We prefer this term to *dispersed*; because there does not appear to have been any violent disorganization of the mass of mankind; but that the different tribes arranged themselves according to their respective tongues, and having thus embodied themselves, proceeded to take quiet possession of the earth, amicably adjusting their several boundaries, and dividing it among them.

Dispersion.

To attempt to trace the origin of nations, from this dispersion, at this distance of time, and with the slight sketch afforded by Moses, would be as impossible as unprofitable. In general, we may observe, that *Shem* appears to have settled near the plains of Shinar. Among his descendants are the inhabitants of Persia, from Elam; of Nineveh, from Ashur; of China, from Arphaxad; of Mesopotamia and Phrygia, comprehending the countries westward of Assyria, as far as the Mediterranean, from Aram. *Ham* probably dwelt in Egypt. His descendants occupied Shinar, from Nimrod; Arabia, from Cush; Ethiopia, from Mizraim; Africa, from Phul; Phœnicia, and the land of Canaan, from Canaan.—When *Japheth* left Babel, it is uncertain where he settled. His descendants dwelt in Phrygia, from Gomer; the eastern part of Asia Minor, from Ashkenaz; Cappadocia and Galatia, from Togarmah. Most of these divisions must, after all, be considered as conjectural, although a mass of reasons might be assigned to support the general arrangements advanced here.

Origin of
nations.

A.M. 1757. To this striking point of history, several traditions have reference.
 B.C. 2247. Josephus quotes one of the sybils as averring, "that mankind once spoke a common language; but building a tower immensely high, as though they would scale heaven, the Gods sent a wind and overthrew it, assigning to each a different tongue; and thence Babylon derived its name." Abydenus makes a similar statement: and to fix the æra of this event, says, "then commenced the war between Saturn and Titan." Babylon was not built by Semiramis, as the Greeks affirm: this error is refuted by Berosus and Josephus. And can there be any question, upon divesting the history of its poetical decorations, that the fables of the giants' war with heaven originated in this fact? In some cases, the poets seem to have borrowed the very language of this historian—"let us go down and see whether these things are so."¹

Abraham. The names which we select in Biography, in pursuance of our plan, are, for the most part, centres, around which considerable portions of important history revolve; but the name of ABRAHAM, as it is presented by Moses, and as it originates the Israelitish nation, is a fountain whence the grand stream of History flows in relation to that distinguished people, and from which those ramifications branch, which furnish the *records* of other nations. This great progenitor of the Hebrews is introduced rather suddenly. Terah, the father of Abraham, was the tenth in descent from Shem, the first-born of Noah. Idolatry had commenced; and it is not unlikely that the family of Abraham participated its guilt and danger: for the prophet reminds the Jews, that their ancestor was "a Syrian ready to perish." Whether the call to Abraham, to leave his country, influenced the whole family (for after the decease of his father, it is spoken of in the past tense, as having occurred some time before;) or whether Terah had himself received an intimation of the divine pleasure, that they should expatriate themselves, does not distinctly appear. They left, however, their country, and the probable cause was idolatry: of the evil of which they had been, it should seem, admonished. The city in which they dwelt was Ur of the Chaldeans; the centre of superstition, which took its name perhaps from the worship of fire, as did Heliopolis from that of the sun; the word *Ur* signifying *fire* or *light*. The illustrious exiles were, Terah; his son, Abraham; Lot, his grandson; and Sarah, his daughter, the wife of Abraham. Terah lingered unaccountably in Haran, and died there, at the age of 250 years: some difficulties of a chronological nature arise here, which however are not of sufficient importance as to their result, to induce us to interrupt the narrative, to attempt to settle them.

Departure from Ur. It appears that God had expressly indicated his will, that Abraham should proceed to Canaan, without specifying the spot upon

Death of Terah.

¹ Anc. Univ. His. Vol. I. B. 1. C. 2. Homer, Odys. 30. Ovid, Met. L. 1. Virg. Geog. I. &c.

which he should rest: and as soon as he had performed the last offices of filial affection in the sepulture of his father, at the age of seventy-five, "he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went," accompanied by Lot, his nephew, taking with them all their servants and cattle. Thus the illustrious pilgrimage commenced: and he proceeded first to Sichem, on the plain of Moreh, the Canaanites then inhabiting the land. He was favoured there with a divine revelation, assuring him that his posterity should possess that country; and he erected an altar to God, as a permanent memorial of this promise. Thence he soon removed to a mountain on the east of Bethel (so called proleptically, as it had not then received that name,) whether apprehending any inundation which might prove fatal to his cattle in the low country, or not, is not stated.

Removes to
Bethel.

Journeying still towards the south, a famine arose, which compelled the patriarch to seek refuge in Egypt, whither its influence had not extended. In his way thither, it occurred to him, that the beauty of Sarah, although she had then attained her sixty-fifth year, might expose him to danger; and he accordingly entreated her to pass as his sister, instead of his wife. This prevarication, so unworthy his character, was not a direct falsehood in point of fact; as she was his half-sister, "the daughter of his father, but not the daughter of his mother:" but the sin justly produced its own punishment. Pharaoh (which was the common title of the Egyptian Kings, as Cæsar was, long afterwards, of the Roman emperors,) was captivated with her charms; bestowed princely favours for her sake, upon Abraham: and took her into his family. Upon this step, some severe visitations fell upon the royal house, of a character sufficiently marked to denote on what ground they were sent. The monarch, justly exasperated at the deception practised upon him, and fearing to incur further penalties of divine displeasure, restored the patriarch his wife, but banished him his dominions.

Descends
into Egypt.

By this time the famine had subsided, and they returned to Bethel, whence they had set out for their southern journey before they went into Egypt. The increase of their wealth involved the servants of Abraham and Lot in contention, and it became necessary that they should part. The patriarch gave his nephew the choice of country; recommending that they should separate on terms of the most undoubted affection: and Lot chose the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah, watered by the river Jordan, and distinguished for fertility. In the meanwhile, Abraham, who abode in Canaan, received another intimation, that the country in which he dwelt should be inherited by his descendants. The patriarch pitched his tent on the plain of Mamre, in Hebron, and built there, as wherever he sojourned, an altar to the Lord.

Abraham
and Lot
separate.

About this time war broke out between the neighbouring rulers;

A.M. 2086. five kings contending against four: the origin of which was, that
 B.C. 1918. the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, and others, refused any longer to
 be tributary to Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam. The resisting powers
 were vanquished by their oppressor and his allies: the fruitful
 plains which charmed the eye of Lot ravaged, and himself taken
 prisoner, with the spoliation of his property. Abraham being
 apprized of this disaster, applied to his friends and confederates,
 Mamre, (who gave name to the country,) and his brothers
 A.M. 2091. Eshcol and Aner, all of them evidently chiefs; and adding to their
 B.C. 1913. assistance three hundred and eighteen trained and tried servants of
 his own household, pursued the conquerors, overtook them when
 they were on the left of Damascus, surprised and defeated them;
 and rescued his relative Lot, with the other captives. Although
 this little band of warriors seems unequal to such an exploit, it
 should be remembered, the kings spoken of were no more than rulers
 of four little cities; that they were wearied with the previous
 conflict; that they were taken by surprise; and that it is not
 absolutely determined whether the three confederates of Abraham
 confined their assistance to their personally accompanying him;
 although it is evident that his own domestic forces were principals
 in the victory; which, indeed, appears to be exclusively ascribed
 to them.

Lot
rescued.

Melchisedec. On his return from this conquest, he was met by an extraordinary
 personage, Melchisedec, who united in himself the kingly and
 priestly dignity. His descent being unascertained, and his priest-
 hood undefined as to its character, whether it were derived and
 transmissive, or whether it centred in this individual, the apostle
 considers him as a fit type of Him, whose generation could not be
 declared, and whose priesthood, centred in himself, was not derived
 like that of the Levites; nor could be transmitted, since he is
 himself eternal. The psalmist adverts to this obscure page of
 history in the same way, and as a type of the eternity of the priest-
 hood of the Messiah. This is all that is known; and every thing
 more must be considered as conjectural. He received tithes, and
 blessed Abraham in his priestly character; and is allowed by the
 apostle to have been the superior of the patriarch. He was probably
 the pious monarch and priest of some neighbouring territory. We
 cannot pretend to settle this question, and must leave it in the
 obscurity in which we find it, only observing, that his appellations
 denote, Melchisedec, *King of Righteousness*, and Melchisalem, or
King of Salem, King of Peace. The king of Sodom, perhaps the
 son of him who appears to have perished in the slime-pits, where
 the battle was fought, came out to congratulate Abraham upon his
 victory, and to offer him all the spoil which he had taken, with the
 exception of the men and women. The patriarch accepted his
 courtesy, but disinterestedly refused to receive the smallest portion
 of the booty.

The toils of battle were succeeded by renewed intercourse with Deity, and a repetition of assurances of divine favour. For the first time, Abraham ventured to inquire how these predictions were to be effectuated, as he was childless, and advanced in years. His steward, Eliezer of Damascus, appeared likely to be his heir. A son was then promised him; and it was added, that his seed should be innumerable as the stars of heaven. As a ratification of this solemn covenant, he was commanded to prepare a sacrifice. An heifer, a goat, a ram, a pigeon, and a turtle-dove, were prescribed as the victims on this memorable occasion. These were divided, with the exception of the birds, and the halves laid over against each other. He waited until the sun went down, driving away the fowls which would have descended on the offerings. At that time, he was overtaken with a deep sleep, accompanied by impressions peculiarly awful; and in a vision he beheld a burning lamp passing between the divided pieces. A prediction of the slavery of his descendants in Egypt was then pronounced, and that the period of it should be 400 years; the most natural import of which is, that his seed should be strangers in the land on which he was lying, four centuries from the birth of Isaac, a part of which they should suffer the wrongs of slavery; and at the close of the time be delivered, and take possession of the promised inheritance.

A.M. 2093
B.C. 1911.
Promises
renewed.

Prediction
of bondage.

Impatient for the accomplishment of the promise, and concluding that it could not be fulfilled in her own person, Sarah was desirous, according to the custom of that age and country, to have children by means of another; and to that end advised her husband to take her handmaid, Hagar. From this step, sprang the domestic uneasiness, which seems to have been inseparable from polygamy, or the adoption of practices allied to it. Hagar no sooner found herself likely to become a mother, than she treated her mistress with insolence; and in the bitterness of her spirit, and excess of her indignation, Sarah reproached her husband, at the same time that she complained of her servant. Abraham desired her to follow her own inclinations in respect of her maid: and Sarah treated her with so much severity, that she left her lord's roof. She fled towards Egypt: while she rested by a fountain, an angel was commissioned to predict the birth, describe the character, and fix the name of her child. The declaration—"he will be a wild man, his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren"—was accomplished, partly in the personal character and circumstances of Ishmael, but principally in his descendants, the Arabs; who are cruel, warlike, wanderers; given to rapine, and independent. Hagar, who had provoked the unkindness of her mistress, was commanded to return and to humble herself: she obeyed the injunction, and was again received under her master's roof, beneath the shadow of which her child was born.

Hagar.

Flies.

Prediction
relating to
Ishmael and
the Arabs.

A.M. 2107. About thirteen years from this period, it pleased God to renew
 B.C. 1897. his covenant with Abraham, and to promise him a child by Sarah,
 whose name should be Isaac, signifying *laughter*, in allusion to
 the way in which both the parents received the communication:
 they laughed; either through joy, or unbelief; or a mixture of
 both. The seal of circumcision was then given; possibly it was
 not then unknown. It is still practised in eastern countries, and
 seems necessary, from peculiar circumstances, conjointly with the
 heat of the climate; but it was here instituted as the seal of a cove-
 nant, and bears consequently a very different import from any
 physical reasons which might be assigned. The names of the
 patriarch and his wife were then changed (although for the sake of
 convenience and uniformity we have called them throughout by their
 last appellation,) from Abram, signifying *high* or *exalted father*, to
 Abraham, implying, according to the extent of the promise, *father
 of nations*: and from Sarai, importing *my princess*, which is a term
 of endearment, to Sarah, *A princess*; which is a general title of
 honour and dominion. Abraham accordingly circumcised himself,
 being then nearly a hundred years of age; his son Ishmael, who
 was at that time thirteen; and his household, in one day.

Circumci-
 sion.

Change of
 names.

Three
 visitors.

In the same year, he was favoured with another celestial visit.
 Three personages approached him, as he sat at the door of his tent,
 wearing the appearance of men, two of whom proved to be angels;
 the third is a mysterious character, who remained after the others
 departed, who is addressed by the name Jehovah, who speaks as
 Deity, and who is supposed to be the Lord Jesus, under one of
 those manifestations, which are most reasonably ascribed to him in
 the earlier ages, and which comport well with his pre-existence and
 divinity. The promise of Isaac was renewed, and Sarah chided for
 unbelief and falsehood. On this occasion, the purposes of divine
 indignation against the infamous inhabitants of Sodom, and the
 cities of the plain, companions in iniquity, were declared; and
 Abraham, induced at once by general compassion, and by the
 remembrance that Lot was an inhabitant of that odious city,
 pleaded, not merely that the righteous should not be destroyed with
 the wicked, but that the offenders might be spared for the sake of the
 holy persons who might be found therein. His language, at once
 submissive and forcible, is a pattern for devotional fervour, pathos,
 and humility; and he pleaded so successfully, that he obtained a
 promise, if but ten righteous persons should be found within the
 city, it should be spared for their sake.

Abraham's
 plea for
 Sodom.

Lot in
 Sodom.

The two angels, who had left Abraham previous to this inter-
 course between him and Deity, went on towards Sodom. They
 found Lot at the gate of the city, waiting, according to the usages
 of ancient hospitality, to invite any strangers who might arrive to
 his house; the common duty gathering force in his mind from the
 horrible character of the people among whom he dwelt. The angels

arrived, still appearing as travellers; and after the most pressing importunity, consented to lodge with him. The brutal propensities of the inhabitants of the city soon began to disclose themselves; and the patriarch, alarmed at their violence, had recourse to a method of dissuading them from their purpose, which can be accounted for on no other ground than the terror he was in; and excused on no other principle than that, in the confusion of the moment, he seemed to himself to be proposing, where a certain evil was inevitable, the least of two:—he offered his daughters to prostitution, on condition that his guests should be left unmolested. The offer was rejected; they pressed upon him to use violence; when the angels smote his assailants with blindness, either producing a thick darkness, or depriving them of sight, or confusing the organ of vision; but at all events it was a miraculous interposition, sufficiently effectual to defeat their abominable purpose. The angels then declared their commission to destroy the city: and commanded him to bring forth his family from the sentenced spot. His sons-in-law refused to accompany him. But early in the morning the angels urged his lingering steps; hastened his departure; in a manner forced him from his dangerous situation; and led him beyond the precincts of destruction. He was suffered to retire to a little city named Zoar, in the neighbourhood; which was spared at his entreaty. In the meanwhile the sun had risen upon the earth: but when Lot entered into Zoar, a storm of fire and sulphur descended upon Sodom, and its vicinity; the bituminous nature of the soil easily enkindling by the lightning; and the whole of that once fruitful and beautiful country was turned into the fetid and melancholy lake called the Dead Sea. Lot's wife, lingering upon the road, was overtaken by the terrible shower, encrusted with it, and turned into a nitro-sulphureous pillar. Abraham rising in the morning early, and looking towards the threatened country, beheld its aspect of desolation, as one great furnace smoking towards heaven. He soon understood, that the entire corruption of the city had rendered his prayers unavailing: but it is not to be imagined, that he was left long in suspense relative to the fate of Lot.

A.M. 2107.
B.C. 1897.

Destruction
of Sodom.

Lot's wife.

The traditional testimonies to this awful event are numerous; though mixed with many fabulous circumstances. Such as, that the effluvia of the lake kills any birds which attempt to fly over it: that on its shores trees are found, whose fruit is fair to the eye, but, if tasted, are found to contain only ashes and bitterness: that the ruins of cities are discernible below its dark waves; and that the surface cannot be stirred by the winds. Let it be recollected, that the mingling of fable with fact, is no argument against the facts themselves: that this was to be expected in an age, when the imagination was accustomed to supply the deficiencies of information; and that it is the first duty of a historian to separate truth from fancy. Moses relates none of the fabulous circumstances. The

Traditions
relating to
the Dead
Sea.

A.M. 2107. traditions themselves, however encumbered with fables not mixed
 B.C. 1897. with the original narrative, are conclusive as to its truth in the main; and there is no tradition, that did not originate in some decided fact, however it might afterwards become altered and disguised. But when so many striking occurrences were real, we may easily account for the addition of other and unfounded circumstances.

Something must also be conceded to the influence of time, and of natural causes. The Arabs are continually gathering bitumen from the lake, of which they make a considerable trade. The fresh waters of the river Jordan are continually pouring into it: these must gradually diminish its original saltiness. That thickness which rendered it once scarcely moveable by the winds, must now have become diminished. Still barrenness spreads around its desolate site; and still the travellers who have ventured to bathe in its unnatural waters, have suffered in their health for their temerity. It appears to have worn the same frowning features from age to age; and it still carries the marks of unconquerable sterility and horror. In the meanwhile, the page of ancient history is full of references to this event; and teems with accounts, some true, others mingled with fable, corroborative of the Mosaic history. Tacitus, Philo, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Solinus, and others, support the leading features of this narrative; supplying some circumstances from their imagination: while Bisselius, Maundrell, Volney, Pococke, Shaw, and other modern writers, describe the face of the country as it appeared more recently.² Alexander Trallianus mentions a form of exorcism, which took its rise from a principal circumstance in this history—"In the name of God, who turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt."³

From the vicinity of Zoar to this scene of destruction, Lot considered himself as not in a state of safety, and fled to the mountains. While he was there, his daughters, deeming probably the destruction more general than it really was, and anxious to escape the reproach of barrenness, in those days deemed very great; in short, swayed by motives which, at this distance of time, and under other circumstances, we cannot precisely appreciate, but which, be they what they might, could never justify their conduct, resolved to intoxicate their father, so that he should not be able to distinguish their persons from that of any other female, and to obtain issue from him. This nefarious design was carried into execution; they became both pregnant by him: and the two children, the offspring of this incestuous commerce, named Moab and Ammon, became the progenitors of two great people. As a just punishment of this crime, and

Lot's incest.

Moab and Ammon.

² Tacit. Hist. Lib. V. Philo, de Vitâ Mosis. Plin. Hist. Lib. V. Cap. 15. Diod. Sic. Lib. II. et Lib. XIX. Strabo, Lib. XVI. Solinus, Cap. XXXVI. edit. Salmasianæ.

³ See Doddr. Lect. Pt. VI. Prop. CXIX. Demons. 7. and Grot. de Verit. Sect. 16. in not.

according with the principles laid down in our introductory remarks, A.M. 2107.
 Lot from this time disappears; and here we must close his history. B.C. 1897.

Soon after these occurrences, Abraham journeyed further south, probably wishing to avoid the vicinity of Sodom, and the melancholy reflections inseparable from a destruction which took place almost before his face. He went to Gerar, and dwelt in the country of the Philistines. On this occasion, he resorted to the unworthy equivocation which caused him so much embarrassment in Egypt; for Sarah, in her ninetieth year, had triumphed over the ravages of time, and was still beautiful. We have nothing to say to the sarcasms of infidelity, but that these things were so: and that it was just as easy to preserve the personal attractions of a female of ninety, as to make her a mother at that age: besides which, it ought not to be forgotten, that human life then extended beyond its present boundaries, and that Sarah lived 37 years after this period. Abimelech, in similar circumstances with those of Pharaoh, received similar intimations of divine displeasure. The conduct of Abraham is here inexcusable; it wants its original apology; he should have learned something by past experience, even independently of principle: and it appears to us, that the reproof of Abimelech, is the most delicate that can be imagined; by changing a single letter⁴ to another of a similar form (an easy mistake in transcription) it will import, "behold I have given *thy brother*" (the name which she gave to Abraham) "a thousand pieces of silver to purchase veils" (the modest covering of a married woman, which Sarah seems to have dispensed with, to favour the deceit practised) "for thee, and for all thy attendants; for every one that is married." The mild monarch added permission to his illustrious, although blameable, friend, to dwell wherever it pleased him, in his dominions.

Abraham's
 duplicity
 with
 Abimelech.

The time was now come for Sarah's delivery; and Isaac was born. He was circumcised the 8th day, and his mother suckled him herself. At the usual time, he was weaned. When young, he was exposed to some marks of contempt, if not of violence, on the part of Ishmael; which, whatever it was, is called by St. Paul, persecution; and was so resented by Sarah, that she insisted upon Ishmael's leaving the house, with his mother. Abraham dismissed them with "bread and a bottle of water," says the narrative: a hebraism frequently used to signify all *necessary* things, although nothing superfluous; and thus it became a promise, "thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." Hagar was, we may infer, furnished with all things needful for her departure. These supplies were, however, exhausted; and in the wilderness of Beersheba she was overtaken with lack of water, the most terrible of all wants. Exhausted herself, Ishmael seems to have suffered still more; and supposing him actually dying, she retired from the spot where she had laid him,

Birth of
 Isaac.

A.M. 2106.
 B.C. 1898.

Hagar and
 Ishmael
 dismissed.

A.M. 2110.
 B.C. 1894.

⁴ Changing the *vau* into a *he*, which in the *ancient* character closely resembled it. See Geddes's translation and crit. rem. in loc.

A.M. 2110. that she might not witness his last agonies. At this moment of
 B.C. 1894. extremity, an angel was sent to succour the mother and her expiring
 child: he conducted her to a fountain of water: the boy recovered,
 and grew, inhabiting, with his mother, the wilderness of Paran;
 and gradually acquiring from his habits of life, that fierce and inde-
 pendent character, which it was predicted he should possess, and
 which still distinguishes his posterity. He married an Egyptian.

Covenant
 with
 Abimelech.

The harmony between Abraham and Abimelech continued unin-
 terrupted; and to cement the bonds of amity between them, they
 entered into a mutual and solemn covenant: a dispute which had
 arisen respecting a well of water was adjusted, and the parties with-
 drew from each other with sentiments of perfect esteem and friend-
 ship. The patriarch seems to have intended to rest here: "for he
 planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there upon the name of the
 Lord, the everlasting God."

Offering of
 Isaac.

Upon this calm, an unexpected storm arose. To make trial of
 his faith and obedience, Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his
 A.M. 2132. only child, Isaac, as a burnt-offering, upon a mountain which should
 B.C. 1872. be pointed out to him. Without delay, he conquered the emotions
 of nature, and set forward upon this melancholy journey; assuredly
 deeming that his son must be slain, and by his own hand; but not
 doubting that God's promise should be fulfilled, either by his resur-
 rection, or by the grant of another child to fill his place. To
 harrow up all his parental feelings, as they ascended the mountain
 fixed upon, (and the patriarch had left his servants at its foot, that
 they might not witness or interrupt the sacrifice,) Isaac, upon whom
 the wood had been laid, inquired where was the victim? His father
 merely observed, that "God would provide himself a lamb for a
 burnt-offering." When they reached the summit, it was necessary
 that the fatal secret should be imparted to the victim, (for Isaac was
 now a young man;) and he appears to have mildly acquiesced in
 the divine decision. He was bound, laid upon the wood of the
 altar, and on the point of yielding his life; when a voice from
 heaven commanded the patriarch to forbear, and to release his
 child; approving his faith, confirming former promises, and renew-
 ing the covenant with himself and his posterity. Abraham observed
 a ram, caught in a neighbouring thicket, and taking him, offered
 him in place of his child; thus accomplishing the prediction of his
 own faith, but little understood when he pronounced it—God provided
 himself a victim. He returned to Beersheba, with far other feelings
 than he left it, and received soon after the pleasing tidings of the
 increase and prosperity of his brother Nahor's family.

Death of
 Sarah.

The tranquillity which succeeded, was at length interrupted by
 the death of Sarah, the faithful and endeared companion of Abra-
 A.M. 2145. ham's long pilgrimage. She expired in the 127th year of her age.
 B.C. 1859. The patriarch wept over her with unfeigned sorrow; and his first
 possession in the promised land was a burying-place, which he

bought of Ephron the Hittite, after having refused the offer of the choice of all their sepulchres, in the first instance, and afterwards the request of Ephron, that he would accept the field which he wished to purchase. The land was bought, and secured to him by all the legal forms of the day; and he deposited the remains of his beloved Sarah, in the cave of Machpelah, the distinguished spot which afterwards contained the dust of so many illustrious patriarchs. To this sepulchre the last earthly wishes of Jacob and of Joseph turned; and their last solemn injunctions related.

Advancing far in life, Abraham now became anxious for the settlement of his son Isaac, who had attained the fortieth year of his age. Selecting one of his most faithful servants, he engaged him by a singular, but most solemn oath, in its form peculiar to the country, if not to the age, and in its purport most binding, to choose a wife for his son from among his own kindred; and dismissed him with suitable presents, authority, and instructions. Hastening to Haran, the spot where his master's relatives resided, and anxious to be favoured with divine direction in so important an affair, he secretly prayed that a certain token should be given him of the choice which he ought to make; and that the sign might be, that when the females (to whom the charge of flocks at that time seemed principally to appertain) should come to the well by the side of which he rested, and he should ask for drink, that the wife-elect might offer to supply his cattle also. Scarcely had he finished his prayer, before Rebekah, a near relative of his lord, came to the spot, and hearing his request, answered in the express terms which he had desired. He made her some rich presents, and accompanied her home, where he was well received; and having explained his errand, his proposals were accepted by Rebekah and her family. The presents seem to have made some impression upon the mind of Laban, her brother: and no fewer than ten camels were laden with her dowry. Having succeeded, this trusty servant refused to be detained; and returned with his beautiful charge to his master. Isaac was walking in the fields on the evening of their arrival; and when introduced to his lovely bride, conducted her with much satisfaction to his mother's tent; and received that consolation for the loss of a beloved parent, which an affectionate wife alone could administer. It was not until 19 years after his marriage, that Isaac had offspring.

In his 141st year, Abraham married again; his wife's name was Keturah, by whom he had six sons: these he portioned off during his life, that they might not interfere with the inheritance of Isaac, the child of promise. Thirty-four years after this event, Abraham died at the age of 175 years; and was buried by his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, who seem to have forgotten at this time their animosities, in the grave which he had purchased for Sarah, his only actual possession in the promised land. Thus lived and died this

A.M. 2145.
B.C. 1859.

Marriage of
Isaac.

A.M. 2148.
B.C. 1856.

Abraham's
second
marriage.
A.M. 2154.
B.C. 1850.
His death.

A.M. 2154. distinguished patriarch, whose life has been more prominently and
 B.C. 1850. largely detailed by us, as he is the great ancestor of the Jews, and
 the fountain of their history.

Birth of
 Esau and
 Jacob.

Although Moses continues the narrative of Abraham's life unbroken to its close, it is necessary to remark, that his grandsons, Esau and Jacob, must have been born about 15 years before his decease.

A.M. 2168. Singular circumstances attended the birth of these children, who
 B.C. 1836. were twins, after 19 years barrenness, as has been observed, on the part of their mother. Some unusual throes of nature, even before the time of her delivery, induced her to inquire of God, what her severe pangs indicated; and she was answered, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."⁵ It is necessary to observe this oracle, because it gives a clue to the subsequent history. The prediction relative to the superiority of the younger over the elder, affords no apology for the means subsequently adopted by Jacob and his mother to obtain this pre-eminence; and nothing could be more distinct than the future character of the Israelites and the Edomites; they were even found in many instances engaged in the most bitter hostility. According to the prediction, Rebekah was soon delivered of twins; the first-born, Esau, was hairy from his birth; the second, grasped the heel of his brother, and was called Jacob, a *supplanter*, a name which he afterwards fully justified. Isaac was at their birth 60 years of age.

Esau sells
 his
 birthright.

The failing of Isaac appears to have been too great fondness for the pleasures of the table. Esau, who was a hunter, and contributed to the indulgence of his appetite, became a favourite. Jacob, on the contrary, who was altogether domestic, was as entirely beloved of his mother. Returning one day from the chase, wearied and hungry, when the lads were about twenty years of age, Esau found his brother preparing some savoury provision; and desiring refreshment, requested it of Jacob, who refused it, unless he relinquished his birthright. This Esau did solemnly, and by oath; and the transaction is specially noticed by the historian, who seldom comments upon facts: "Thus Esau despised his birthright:"—whilst St. Paul hesitates not to call him in consequence, "a profane person." This birthright included the priesthood, the paternal blessing, the government of the family; all of which were slightly estimated by Esau: and let it be remembered, that however criminal Jacob was, as to the means which he employed to secure it, Esau had no just reason to complain of the result; since he had voluntarily and solemnly assigned all his own claims upon it to his brother.

A famine compelled the patriarch to remove; and he was directed

⁵ Gen. xxv. 23.

to go to Abimilech, king of the Philistines, rather than to Egypt, A.M. 2199.
 as he seemed to have intended. He here resorted to the falsehood B.C. 1805.
 of his father, on the same suspicion, that the beauty of his wife
 would expose him to danger; for which, when the fraud was dis-
 covered, he was justly and most severely rebuked. His labours of
 husbandry, and of every description, were crowned with unusual
 success; and excited the envy of the people among whom he lived.
 The jealousy of the king was roused, and he was required to remove.
 He departed from Gerar, and was exposed to much vexation and
 contention respecting various wells of water (most important posses- Various
 sions in connection with much cattle, in which the wealth of the vexations.
 times consisted) which were forcibly taken from him. Abimelech,
 who seems to have both feared and hated him, was yet anxious to
 have a covenant of amity between them, and came to Isaac for that
 purpose; after some warm expostulations and just rebukes, they
 contracted a mutual friendship. About this time, Esau displeased
 his father, and grieved his mother, by marrying two wives, both of
 them Hittites. He was still, however, regarded by his father, from
 whom Rebekah appears to have concealed the original oracle, and
 to whom probably the subsequent events were unknown, as his heir,
 with all the rights of the first-born.

Old age was now fast stealing upon Isaac, and with it, all its A.M. 2225.
 infirmities. He was enfeebled, his eyes were dim, and he appre- B.C. 1779.
 hended the quick approach of death. Under these circumstances,
 he commanded Esau to prepare him some venison; and apprized
 him that he intended, on account of the uncertainty of human life,
 immediately to confer upon him his paternal blessing; which was
 then unquestionably prophetic; as will appear in a variety of
 subsequent cases. Rebekah overheard this arrangement; and
 preparing food of the description required by Isaac, dressed her Jacob's
 son Jacob in the raiment of Esau, perfumed with the odour of the fraud.
 field. She covered his smooth flesh with hairy skins, and trusting
 to the imperfect vision of his father, sent him in with a lie on his
 tongue, to defraud his brother of that, which was his own by right,
 and would have come to him lawfully, had he been satisfied to leave
 to heaven the execution of its own purposes. The aged patriarch
 had strong suspicions excited, by the voice, and other circumstances;
 and Jacob was reduced to the necessity of supporting his first
 falsehood by repeated prevarications: at length he succeeded in
 obtaining the blessing; and had scarcely departed, when Esau
 entered. The fraud was soon discovered, and the most piercing grief
 was expressed by Esau; but Isaac, who, however he disapproved of
 the stratagem, saw in the issue divine direction, firmly refused to
 revoke the blessing; it was indeed out of his power, and Esau imbibed
 so deep a hatred, from this circumstance, against his brother, that
 he resolved to kill him, so soon as his father expired; whose death he
 seems even to have anticipated with unnatural eagerness.

A.M. 2225. Rebekah, who had devised this iniquitous plan, was now seriously
 B.C. 1779. alarmed for her son's safety, and advised Jacob to flee into Mesopotamia, and to "tarry for a few days with his uncle Laban," until his brother's fury should "turn away." Alas! more than twenty years elapsed, while he was a sojourner in Padan-aram; and when he had opportunity to return home, his mother was dead; he never saw her after this separation: a righteous punishment of their mutual crime. From this period, the life of Jacob is one continued scene of anxiety and suffering; a noble instance of the equity of God, and of the moral character of Scripture history; when the crimes of his most favoured servants are so closely connected with their punishment.

Departs
 into Meso-
 potamia.

His vision. In his way to his mother's relations, night overtook Jacob at Luz; and taking a stone for his pillow, he slept under the open canopy of heaven, and was favoured with a vision, which greatly reassured and comforted him. He saw a ladder, whose foot rested upon the earth, and its top appeared to reach to heaven; upon it angels ascended and descended; while above it, God himself appeared, and declared his protection of the houseless wanderer. Awaking from this sleep, deeply affected and much impressed, he called the place Bethel, *the house of God*, and pouring oil upon the stone, on which he had rested his head, he consecrated it as a solemn and lasting memorial of this communication. He sealed it by a solemn vow and departed; travelling cheerfully, until he safely reached the end of his journey.

Marriage
 with Leah
 and Rachel.

He found his uncle Laban the same as his grandfather's servant had left him, avaricious and unprincipled. Jacob formed here an attachment of the strongest and tenderest kind, to Rachel, Laban's second daughter. The father agreed that they should marry, if Jacob rendered him seven years service free of wages. This condition was joyfully accepted; and at the close of the time specified, a marriage feast was prepared, and Jacob supposed that his hopes were about to be fulfilled. He who had practised fraud upon a parent, was now to suffer fraud in his turn. Laban, sensible of the value of his services, resolved to secure them. He introduced his son-in-law to his elder daughter instead of the younger; and when his imposition was detected, he pleaded the custom of the country, not to marry the younger before the elder; and stipulated that he should still have Rachel, and at the end of the week, on condition he would serve him, gratuitously, another seven years. To this unprincipled compact, the love which Jacob bore to Rachel, induced him to agree.

A.M. 2232.
 B.C. 1772.

Esau's new
 marriage. In this interval, Esau perceiving how displeasing to his parents, his connection with the daughters of the land was, married the daughter of Ishmael, and had a numerous family by his three wives; who attained princely rank, before the descendants of his brother Jacob became distinguished.

Jacob's disappointed affection could not settle upon Leah; Rachel occupied his heart; but God gave honour to the wife least esteemed, and Leah became the mother of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, while Rachel was barren; who, mortified at this circumstance, expressed herself with an impatience which excited the indignation of Jacob. Supposing she should not have any children of her own, she followed the pernicious example of Sarah; and, conformably to the customs of the times, "gave him Bilhah, her handmaid, to wife:" who conceived, and bare Dan, and Naphtali. Leah, not satisfied with her own fruitfulness, adopted the same expedient, without the same excuse; and giving her servant to her husband also, Zilpah produced Gad and Asher. At this time, Reuben gathered at the wheat harvest, mandrakes, which Rachel coveted, as supposing they conduced to conception; and she obtained them by connubial concessions to Leah. What the mandrake was, it is impossible now to determine: certainly some plant, very different from that which at present bears the same name. Nor is it necessary to enter into these matrimonial contentions, further than to observe, that the minuteness of the historian in these cases is in itself a pledge to the truth of his history: and that the result of the whole was, Leah bare Issachar, Zebulon, and Dinah: and that at length, Rachel became the mother of Joseph.

A.M. 2232.
B.C. 1772.
Jacob's family.

Mandrakes.

Rachel becomes the mother of Joseph.

Jacob, in the meanwhile, suffered much from Laban, who was constantly changing the terms of his servitude, while he was exposed to the most arduous and consuming toils. Whatever recompense Laban proposed in cattle, Jacob prospered beyond him; at the same time that he acknowledged his substance had greatly increased under the management of this son, whom he treated as a slave. At length the patience of the Patriarch yielded; and he resolved to leave his hard father-in-law. He imparted his intentions to his wives, who perfectly accorded with him as to the justice and propriety of the measure. Jacob departed secretly, and Laban pursued and overtook him: a warm contention passed between them; during which Jacob expostulated with Laban on the cruelty of his conduct, and justified himself with the honest indignation of an innocent and injured man. Laban accused him of having stolen his Gods: *teraphim*, the word is; to which we can affix no correct meaning, after the most unbounded speculation and inquiry. They were portable idols of some description, which Rachel had taken away, probably from a superstitious motive, unknown to her husband. At length they parted in peace.

A.M. 2265.

B.C. 1739.

Jacob leaves Laban.

Advancing towards his native country, he remembered the hatred of his brother Esau, and thought it right to send messengers before his face, to endeavour to appease him; or at least to ascertain his disposition towards him. He dismissed them with an humble and conciliatory message, and in the meanwhile journeyed slowly on, preceded by a princely present which he intended for his brother.

Meets Esau.

A.M. 2265. A singular occurrence is noted by the historian. The Patriarch
 B.C. 1739. having dismissed his family and attendants, was left alone. An unknown personage encountered him, and wrestled with him until break of day: but not prevailing, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the sinew shrank, so that the Patriarch became lame. This mysterious being changed the name of the Patriarch from Jacob to Israel, in reference to this event: and “ Jacob called the name of the place, *Peniel*; for,” said he, “ I have *seen God face to face*, and my life is preserved.” Soon after, he met his brother Esau, and a complete reconciliation took place between them.

Dinah
 ravished.

The Patriarch purchased a field of the father of Shechem, king of the country, and settled upon this property. His daughter Dinah, visiting the daughters of the land, was ravished by the young Prince. Willing to make the most ample restitution, the monarch made overtures to the Patriarch relative to the marriage of his daughter with Shechem. His sons dissembled their indignation, and affected to consent to the union, provided their people would submit to circumcision. This was at length agreed to, and accomplished. But Simeon and Levi, availing themselves of the state of helplessness temporarily produced by this rite, deliberately and cruelly murdered both Prince and people, to the no small displeasure of Jacob, who could not but be sensible of the iniquity of the transaction, and the danger to which it exposed him.

Death of
 Rachel.

Soon afterwards he was commanded in a dream to go up to Bethel, which he had not yet visited, and to discharge there the vow which he had spontaneously taken upon him in his way from his father's house. On his arrival there, Deborah, his mother's nurse, died, which was but preparatory to a more severe and heart-rending visitation. After continuing a short time at Bethel, he was anxious to visit his father, who was now very far advanced in life, and whom he had not seen upwards of twenty years. In his way to Ephrath, Rachel, the beloved Rachel, was again taken in labour, and expired. She had said, “ Give me children, or I die.” She died, not in the refusal, but in the grant, of her desires! What the feelings of such a man as Jacob must have been on such an occasion, and in connection with an object so dear, may be imagined, but cannot be expressed. The historian relates it, with an inimitable pathos, and with a touching simplicity, which, while it makes its way to the heart, demonstrates, beyond all argument, that a narrative must be genuine, which presents such unquestionable features of truth and nature!

A.M. 2266. The mother died, but the son lived; and changing his name from
 B.C. 1738. Benoni, *the son of my sorrow*, which was given him by his dying parent, Jacob called him Benjamin, *the son of my right hand*. To aggravate the grief of the Patriarch, his son Reuben was guilty of incest with his father's concubine—a circumstance which pressed upon his heart, even when he was expiring. Having at length

reached his father Isaac, he continued with him thirteen years ; at the expiration of which period Isaac died, aged 180, and was Isaac dies. buried by his two sons, Esau and Jacob.

Joseph was now seventeen years old: endeared to his parent Joseph's history. alike by this interesting age, and the superior qualities of his mind and disposition. These prepossessions would be greatly enhanced A.M. 2276. by the death of his mother. But Jacob evinced his partiality too B.C. 1728. plainly and imprudently. His affection for this beloved youth excited the envy of his brethren. Reports of the bad conduct of some of the family, which he brought to his father, had also roused their indignation. But the most irritating circumstance was, that he related to them two separate, yet similar dreams, which appeared to foretell his future greatness and superiority over them. The brethren tended their father's flock at a distance from his residence ; and Jacob, who could not but have remarked the ill effects of his unwise partiality, wishing to remove their prejudices, and to assure them of his affection, sent Joseph to inquire after their welfare. No sooner did they see him approaching, than they conspired to kill him ; and agreed to deceive their father, by dipping his many-coloured robe in blood, and affirming that he had been destroyed by some wild beast. Accordingly, upon his arrival, they stripped him, and cast him into a pit. While they refreshed themselves with food, a company of Ishmaelites passed by ; and deeming it more advisable, as well as profitable, to sell than to slay him, they put him into the hands of these merchants as a slave, for twenty pieces of silver. Reuben, who intended to have delivered him out of their hands, and to have restored him to his father, missed him from the pit, (not having been present at this transaction,) and was greatly distressed. Concealing the fact from him, they dipped the coat in blood, and took it home to their father, who entertained not the smallest suspicion of the deception practised upon him ; but, concluding that his child was devoured, refused to be comforted. Joseph, in the meanwhile, was carried into Egypt.

Before this time, Judah had married a Canaanitish woman ; by Judah's history. whom he had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah : but the history of this branch of the family is related at once by Moses, that it may not subsequently interrupt the story of Joseph ; the principal occurrences taking place at this period. Er was guilty of some crime not recorded, and cut off in his prime, and before he had any children. His widow, according to the customs of that time and country, became the wife of Onan ; who took such measures to defeat the end of his marriage, that he was punished with death also. Judah, terrified at the untimely decease of two of his children, under pretence of the tender age of Shelah, prevented his union with Tamar, and sent her to her father's house. Tamar, finding that she was deceived, and that Judah never intended to give her in marriage to his son, who was now of age ; dressed

A.M. 2277. herself as a harlot, and waited in a place where she was likely to
 B.C. 1727. meet her father-in-law: her face being veiled, so that he could not know her. A criminal intercourse took place between them; the consequences of which were soon apparent. When it was discovered that Tamar was with child, Judah cited her to the tribunal of her country, by the laws of which she would have been condemned to be burnt alive; but, at this crisis, she produced the pledges which Judah had left with her, when he supposed her to have been a harlot; and demonstrated, beyond all question, that the child was his own. He acknowledged the fact, brought her home, but had no further connection with her. This intercourse produced twins; one of whom putting forth his hand first, the midwife put a scarlet thread round it, supposing he would be the first born; but he drew back his hand, and his brother was born first; on which account he was called *Pharez*, and the other *Zarah*. Pharez is found in the genealogy of St. Matthew, among our Lord's ancestors.

Joseph's story resumed.

He is cast into prison.

On the arrival of Joseph in Egypt, he was sold by the Ishmaelites to a chief officer of the guards of the King of Egypt, named Potiphar. He conducted himself so well, and his master's affairs prospered so much under his management, that the entire conduct of his concerns was left to him. His mistress conceived a criminal passion for him; and when she found it impossible to seduce him from his reverence of God, and his loyalty to his master, she accused him to her husband falsely; in consequence of which he was cast into prison.

He soon found the same favour with the keeper of the prison, which he had before found with Potiphar; and was treated with the same measure of confidence. It so occurred, that the King of Egypt was displeased with two of his principal servants, and imprisoned them. They were committed to the charge of Joseph. Observing them one morning unusually depressed, he inquired what troubled them? They related to him their dreams the preceding night; upon hearing which he interpreted to them, that the one implied a speedy restoration to favour; and the other, approaching death. As he said, so it took place. The chief butler was restored, within three days, to his office; and the chief baker was hanged.

Pharaoh's Dreams,

interpreted by Joseph.

Not long afterwards, Pharaoh himself had two dreams, which exceedingly perplexed and distressed him. And as the sages of Egypt could not solve them, it occurred to the chief butler, that there was a Hebrew captive whom he had forgotten, but who had truly interpreted his dream; and he mentioned Joseph to the king. The Hebrew was immediately sent for to court: and when the monarch told his dreams, he interpreted them as signifying seven years of plenty, to be succeeded by seven years of famine, both of them excessive. Pharaoh no sooner heard this, than he appointed Joseph next to himself in power, that he might take such steps as should

be necessary to preserve the State under these approaching vicissitudes. At thirty years of age, the Hebrew captive found himself at the head of the government of Egypt. He was proclaimed prime minister; and contracted a marriage of great distinction.

A.M. 2289.
B.C. 1715.

Joseph appointed minister to Pharaoh.

As he predicted, so it occurred: there were seven years of the most exuberant plenty, succeeded by seven years of the most excessive want. But Joseph had so husbanded the produce of the fruitful years, that ample provision was made against the years of famine. His zeal for the king appears indeed to have carried him beyond the limits of strict justice; since he bought not merely the possessions of the Egyptians, but their persons for Pharaoh.

In the meanwhile the famine extended from Egypt over all Canaan; and Jacob, oppressed with want, hearing there was corn in Egypt, sent his sons thither to purchase a supply for themselves and their families. He retained Benjamin, the only surviving son (as he imagined) of his beloved Rachel. When they came into Egypt, Joseph knew them, but they had no recollection of him. He treated them as spies, speaking sharply to them; and caused Simeon to be bound as a hostage for their return, requiring of them to bring Benjamin the next time; for they had acknowledged that they had a younger brother at home. He also gave secret directions, that the money which they brought should be returned, and lodged in their sacks' mouth. In the course of their journey, they perceived this to their utter dismay.

Jacob sends to Egypt for corn.

Upon their return to their father, the relation of these circumstances greatly increased his distress; and he peremptorily refused to let Benjamin accompany them when they next should visit Egypt. But the famine continued; and their wants became so urgent, that he was compelled to yield; and Judah bound himself, by the most solemn ties, to restore the son, so reluctantly yielded by his father.

They came to Egypt: were more kindly received than at first: Simeon was released: and they returned homewards with their number complete. But in order to detain them, Joseph had commanded his steward secretly to convey his cup into the sack of the youngest: and when they had left the city, he issued orders that they should be pursued, charged with the theft, and brought back to his presence. Secure in their innocence, they offered death or bondage as the punishment of the individual with whom it might be found. What was their grief and horror when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack! They were brought back to Joseph, and they offered to become his slaves. This he rejected, requiring only the individual in whose possession the cup was found. It was then that Judah pleaded for his brother Benjamin and his aged father, with all the eloquence of distress. The feelings of nature soon overcame all the affected reserve of Joseph; and bursting into tears, he ordered all his servants to quit his presence, and made himself known to his brethren.

Joseph acknowledges his brethren.

A.M. 2297. He sent for his father: required all his family to come to him into
 B.C. 1707. Egypt: introduced them to Pharaoh: and obtained for them the
 grant of the land of Goshen.

Jacob dies. Seventeen years of quiet were afforded the venerable Patriarch,
 after his restoration to his long-lost and deeply-lamented child. At

A.M. 2315. length the period arrived when he must die. He blessed his sons

B.C. 1689. respectively, in terms that proved prophetic in regard to their
 posterity, and expired. According to his desire, he was carried up
 to Canaan, and deposited with Abraham and his family, in the cave
 of the field of Machpelah. The lamentation at his death was deep
 and universal.

Joseph returned to Egypt: and serving his monarch with fidelity;
 instructing his family in the fear of God; soothing his brethren, and
 nourishing their little ones, he filled up the circle of fifty-four more
 Joseph dies. years; and then, at the age of 110, followed his father to the grave;

A.M. 2369. leaving his bones to the charge of his brethren and their descendants,

B.C. 1635. to be deposited with the dust of his ancestors, when the time should
 arrive that his people should be restored to their country.

It is only necessary to add, that the principal features in the history
 of Joseph, are recorded by Trogus Pompeius, and preserved by Justin,
 in his abridgment of that work. We have now arrived at another
 important pause in history: and if the authenticity of the book of
 Genesis be denied, we are in a world full of eventful histories which
 have neither beginning nor connection; design nor consummation.

The Tables which follow will serve to connect the preceding History;

		From the Creation to the Flood.	A. M.
Chronology.	Adam created.....		1.
	Seth born.....		130.
	Enos born.....		235.
	Canaan born.....		325.
	Mahalaleel born.....		395.
	Jared born.....		460.
	Enoch born.....		622.
	Methuselah born.....		687.
	Lamech born.....		874.
	Adam dies, aged 930.....		930.
	Enoch translated, aged 365.....		987.
	Seth dies, aged 912.....		1042.
	Noah born.....		1056.
	Enos dies, aged 905.....		1140.
	Canaan dies, aged 910.....		1235.
	Mahalaleel dies, aged 895.....		1290.
	Jared dies, aged 962.....		1422.
	Japheth born.....		1556.
	Shem born.....		1558.
	Lamech dies, aged 777.....		1651.
	Methuselah dies, aged 969.....		1656. ⁶

⁶ This also was the year of the flood, at which time Noah was 600 years old.

From Noah to Abraham.	Years after the Flood.	Chronology.
Noah, 600 years of age.....		
Arphaxad born.....	2.	
Salah born.....	37.	
Eber born.....	67.	
Peleg born.....	101.	
Reu born.....	131.	
Serug born.....	163.	
Nahor born.....	193.	
Terah born.....	222.	
Haran born.....	292.	
Peleg dies, aged 239.....	340.	
Nahor dies, aged 148.....	341.	
Noah dies, aged 950.....	350.	
Abraham born.....	352.	
Reu dies, aged 239.....	370.	
Serug dies, aged 230.....	393.	
Terah dies, aged 205.....	427.	
Abraham, having been called to relinquish his country, carries it into effect the same year.....	} 427.	

Within the periods comprised in these chapters, we find the following names, of which some few details have come down to us, but not sufficient to form a separate Biography. Enoch, son of Cain, after whom his first city was called. LAMECH. JABAL, a tent-maker, who first practised husbandry on a large scale. JUBAL, inventor of musical instruments. TUBAL-CAIN, first artificer in brass and iron, whence probably VULCAN; dropping TU, and substituting v for B; no unusual change. SETH, the first great link from Adam in the sacred genealogy. HAM, the father of Canaan. ASHUR, founder of Nineveh. MIZRAIM, the supposed founder of Egypt. EBER, whence some imagine the Hebrews derived their name. PELEG, so called, because in his days the earth was *divided*. TERAH, Abraham's father. CHEDOR-LAOMER, with his tributary and allied kings. MELCHISEDEC. ISHMAEL, who died aged 137, father of twelve princes. ESAU, progenitor of the Edomites, ancestor of an illustrious train of Dukes and Kings; among the last of whom we find JOBAB, supposed by some to be JOB.

Eminent
men of the
Antedilu-
vian and
Patriarchal
Ages.

CHAPTER III.

JOB.

FLOURISHED ABOUT A.M. 2484, B.C. 1520.

A.M. 2484. JOB, in Hebrew, יֹב, or "THE PERSECUTED," is, in various
B.C. 1520. respects, one of the most extraordinary books of the Bible; and has, hence, more than any other, engaged the attention of the learned in all ages. The difficulty of assigning to this book an accurate date, has induced us to follow the stream of sacred history with regard to all the other portions of the canon thus far, without interfering with the interesting questions connected with the chronology of the book of Job. We are now approaching the *latest* date which has any respectable advocates; and upon our plan of recording every considerable opinion upon controverted questions in literature, we shall present a brief sketch of the various hypotheses of learned men respecting this interesting poem.

Book of Job
in all the
canons.

Its high
claims.

Opinion of
Pope.

Disputed
chronology
of the book.

Of the sacred character of the book of Job there never has been any doubt, and hence, it stands, with universal consent, in the Jewish and Christian canons; and is equally appealed to by the eastern and western churches. Yet there are various circumstances that distinguish it from all the other books of holy writ. Its author is unknown, otherwise, at least, than by conjecture: in the midst of different narratives and poems, confined exclusively, with this exception, to Jewish customs and annals, it contains the history of foreigners, and, in the opinion of many critics, of pagans, widely differing in habits, in ritual, and in religious tenets: and it is written in a language equally distinct from the rest of the sacred text, having, indeed, pure Hebrew for its basis, but with perpetual tessellations of pure Arabic. Its style, arrangement, and general composition, are of the highest pretensions, and stand altogether unrivalled; disclosing a poem with which antiquity has nothing to compare, in copiousness, sublimity, magnificence, decoration, or pathos. "The whole book of Job," says Mr. Pope, "with regard both to sublimity of thought and morality, exceeds beyond all comparison, the most noble parts of Homer." The hero of the poem is incidentally alluded to on a few occasions by other writers, in both the Old and New Testaments; but it has been made another point of controversy whether Job were a real or imaginary character; and if the former, in what epoch he flourished; whether before

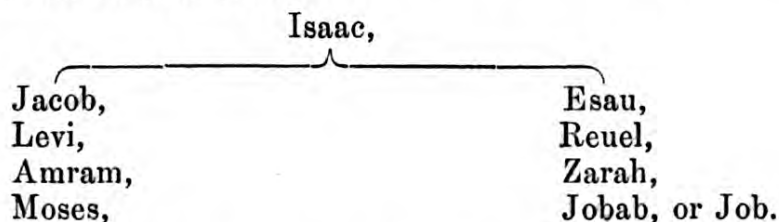
the exody, or migration, of the Israelites from Egypt, during the splendid reigns of David and Solomon, or subsequently to the Babylonian captivity? A.M. 2484.
B.C. 1520.

Of the reality of the personage of Job, no one can entertain a doubt who gives credit to the Prophecy of Ezekiel, the epistle of St. James, or the apocryphal book of Tobit; for in all these he is alluded to as a real character; and as such he has been contemplated immemorially in Arabia as well as in Palestine. The most ancient monument we have concerning the genealogy of Job, and which has been received and allowed by Aristeas, Philo, Polyhistor, and several of the early fathers of the church, is contained in a supplement to the canonical book, to be met with in the Greek, Arabic, and Vulgate versions, and is conjectured to have been copied from the old Syriac translation. It is hence, unquestionably, of very high antiquity, and runs as follows: "Job dwelt in the Ausitis, (land of Uz or Utz,) on the confines of Idumæa and Arabia. His name was at first Jobab. He married an Arabian woman, by whom he had a son called Ennon. He himself was the son of Zerah, of the posterity of Esau, and a native of Bozrah; so that he was the fifth from Abraham. He reigned in Edom, (Idumæa,) and the kings before and after him reigned in the following order: Balak, the son of Beor, in the city of Dinhabah, (often spelt Denaba;) and next in succession Job, otherwise called Jobab. To Job succeeded Husham, prince of Teman. After him reigned Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated the Midianites in the field of Moab. The name of his city was Arith. The friends of Job, who came to visit him, were Eliphaz, of the line of Esau, and king of Teman; Bildad, king of the Shuhites; and Zophar, the king of the Naamathites."

Supplement to the Greek and other versions.

If this genealogy, which has the sanction of both the Greek and Latin fathers, be admitted, and the Job of the sublime poem which bears his name, be, as above asserted, the same with the Jobab of the Books of Genesis and Chronicles, it will follow, as will be obvious from the annexed table, that he must have been contemporary, or nearly contemporary, with Moses, each being but four generations removed from Isaac.

Genealogy of Job.



It will likewise be plain, upon this view of the subject, that he reigned in the city of Denaba, or Dinhabah; for so the author of the first book of Chronicles expressly affirms. And it is an opinion embraced by the majority of biblical writers, and especially by M. Huet, that Moses, whom we know to have resided for a period of

General opinion of critics.

A.M. 2484. forty years with his father-in-law, Jethro, in the land of Midian, and
 B.C. 1520. consequently in a neighbouring region of Arabia, composed this elevated narrative shortly after the death of Job, with whom it is conceived that he was acquainted.

Difficulties. There are, nevertheless, various difficulties that accompany both these opinions. For, first, we are expressly told, in the opening of the book of Job, that the patriarch of this name resided in the land of Utz or Uz, which cannot easily be reconciled with his reigning in the city of Denaba; since Eusebius and St. Jerom concur in placing this city in the land of Moab, between Areopolis and Heshbon, while they affirm that the Ausitis, or land of Uz, according to the popular tradition of the East, embraced the city of Astaroth Kernaim, on the farther side of the Jordan, upon the brook Jaabok, between Mahanaim and Edrai. Next, the Arabian writers, with one accord, trace the descent of Job from Ishmael, instead of from Esau, and make him the first of their three grand prophets; Jethro and Mahomet being the other two. This objection, however, may not be entitled to much attention. But it is more important to remark, thirdly, that the poem referred to closes with a passage which never could have been written by Moses, who lived but forty years in the land of Midian, and forty years more after his departure from it; for this passage informs us, that Job lived a hundred and forty years after his sufferings were completed, and that he saw his children's children to the fourth generation. And hence, it has been necessary for those who have contended that Moses was the writer of the narrative, to suppose, that the last three or four verses of the book are a supplement, added by some inspired, but later writer; in the same manner as Joshua, or some other person, must have added the account of the death and burial of Moses, at the end of his work, the Pentateuch.

Variouly settled.

This last supposition, however, has by no means proved satisfactory to many learned men; who, laying hold of the objection to which it relates, as well as of various others, have conceived the poem to have been written at a period subsequent to the facts narrated; by Elihu, who, though one of his associates, is represented as being far younger than the rest, or than Job himself; by Solomon, or by Ezra, during, or shortly after, the Babylonish captivity; while others have conceived the whole to be fabulous, and that there never was such a person as Job, or such a history as that on which the poem is founded. To all which opinions we shall find it necessary to advert presently.

What is the object of the book?

But the most important question is, What is the object of the poem? and how comes it that a work composed partly in a foreign tongue, distinguished by an exotic theology, and wholly relating to a stranger, should be allowed an introduction into the Hebrew canon? And here it is chiefly that the critics and commentators upon the sacred writings have found themselves at a loss. The fo

lowing is the opinion of that excellent man and consummate scholar A.M. 2484.
 Dr. Lowth, and we give it as that which, till very lately, has been B.C. 1520.
 the common conjecture of men of learning upon the subject. “The Lowth's
 principal object,” says he, “held forth to our contemplation in this opinion.
 production, is the example of a good man, eminent for his piety,
 and of approved integrity, suddenly precipitated from the very sum-
 mit of prosperity into the lowest depths of misery and ruin; who,
 having first been bereaved of his wealth, his possessions, and his
 children, is afterwards afflicted with the most excruciating anguish
 of a loathsome disease, which entirely covers his body. He sus-
 tains all, however, with the mildest submission, and the most com-
 plete resignation to the will of Providence. ‘In all this,’ says the
 historian, ‘Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.’ And, after
 the second trial, ‘In all this did not Job sin with his lips.’ The
 author of the history remarks upon this circumstance, a second
 time, in order to excite the observation of the reader, and to render
 him more attentive to what follows, which properly constitutes the
 true subject of the poem: namely, the conduct of Job with respect
 to his reverence for the Almighty, and the changes which accumu-
 lating misery might produce in his temper and behaviour. Accord-
 ingly, we find that another still more exquisite trial of his patience
 yet awaits him, and which, indeed, as the writer seems to intimate,
 he scarcely appears to have sustained with equal firmness, namely,
 the unjust suspicions, the bitter reproaches, and the violent alterca-
 tions of his friends, who had visited him on the pretence of affording
 consolation. Here commences the plot or action of the poem; for
 when, after a long silence of all parties, the grief of Job breaks
 forth into passionate exclamations, and a vehement execration on
 the day of his birth, the minds of his friends are suddenly exas-
 perated, their intentions are changed, and their consolation, if,
 indeed, they originally intended any, is converted into contumely
 and reproaches. The argument seems chiefly to relate to the piety
 and integrity of Job, and turns upon this point, whether he who,
 by the divine providence and visitation, is so severely punished and
 afflicted, ought to be accounted pious and innocent. The antago-
 nists of Job in this dispute, observing him exposed to such severe
 visitations, conceiving that this affliction has not fallen upon him
 unmeritedly, accuse him of hypocrisy, and falsely ascribe to him the
 guilt of some atrocious but concealed offence. Job, on the contrary,
 conscious of no crime, and wounded by their unjust suspicions,
 defends his own innocence before God with rather more confidence
 and ardour than is commendable; and so strenuously contends for
 his own integrity, that he seems virtually to charge God himself
 with some degree of injustice.

“On a due consideration of all these circumstances, the principal
 object of the poem seems to be this third and last trial of Job, from
 the injustice and unkindness of his accusing friends. The conse-

A.M. 2484. quence of which is, in the first place, the anger, indignation, and
 B.C. 1520. contumacy of Job, and afterwards his composure, submission, and
 penitence. The design of the poem is, therefore, to teach men that
 having a due respect to the corruption, infirmity, and ignorance of
 human nature, as well as to the infinite wisdom and majesty of God,
 they are to reject all confidence in their own strength, in their own
 righteousness, and to preserve, on all occasions, an unwavering and
 unsullied faith, and to submit, with becoming reverence, to his
 decrees."

It does not
 answer the
 chief
 difficulty

To this view of the subject there can be no objection: but the
 great question before us is not touched by it; for it gives no answer
 to the inquiry, whence comes it that a poem so completely isolated
 and exotic should have found its way into the sacred volume of the
 Jewish nation? That this people, who, in every other point, have
 shown the utmost degree of jealousy concerning whatever is strictly
 their own; who in all ages, and under all trials, adhered inflexibly
 to their own customs, their own manners, their own ritual, their
 own creed; who were in every respect a *peculiar people*, separate
 from the world around them, which they looked down upon with a
 feeling of superiority, should have consented to wander from the
 boundary of their own history, and the pale of their own church,
 for the instructive lesson which the book of Job is designed to teach?
 and to draw an example of the instability of all human happiness,
 and of the importance of placing an implicit trust in the great Arbiter
 of the Universe, and of submitting with a becoming reverence to his
 decrees, from the life of a stranger, rather than from one of their
 own tribes, who might easily have been selected for the purpose?

He supposes
 Job himself
 the author.

To this view of Dr. Lowth, respecting the subject of the poem,
 we will here stop to add, that he inclines to favour the opinion of
 those who suppose Job himself, or some contemporary, to be its
 author; that this distinguished character was a real personage,
 who flourished *before* Moses, and, from the length of his days, was
 probably contemporary with the patriarchs; that the poem itself,
 though not a regular drama, as being without regular plot or
 dialogue, is nevertheless of a dramatic cast, and approaches very
 near the form of the more perfect dramas of the Greek school; and
 that the exordium and the conclusion are distinct from the poem
 itself, and of a prosaic and lower style.

Michaelis.

He supposes
 it allegorical.

Professor Michaelis, in the notes he has added to Dr. Lowth's
 work, published at Gottingen, deduces a somewhat different moral,
 and forms a totally different opinion of the hero of the piece. "I
 feel very little doubt," he says, "that the subject of the poem is
 altogether fabulous, and designed to teach us that the rewards of
 virtue being in another state, it is very possible for the good to
 suffer afflictions in this life; but that, when it so happens, it is per-
 mitted by Providence for the wisest reasons, though they may not
 be obvious to human eyes.—For my own part, I cannot conceive

that the sanctity, the dignity, or the utility of this book will be in the least affected, though we should suppose no such person as Job had ever existed. If moral precepts, conveyed in the garb of fabulous narrations, allure the hearers by the pleasure they afford; if they strike the mind more forcibly, are more easily understood, and better retained, than abstract sentiments, I see no reason why this mode of writing should be deemed unworthy of inspiration. On the contrary, indeed, we find it made use of by Christ himself; nor does it at all derogate from his force as a moral teacher, that the good Samaritan, the rich man and Lazarus, &c., were not real persons. It is surely more becoming to consider the exordium, in which Satan appears as the accuser of Job, rather in the light of a fable than of a true narrative. It is surely incredible that such a conversation ever took place between the Almighty and Satan, who is supposed to return with *news* from the terrestrial regions. Indeed, the commentators who have undertaken to vindicate this part of the book, have done it with so much asperity, that they seem conscious of the difficulty under which it labours. Nor will it suffice to answer as some temperate and rational commentator, like Dr. Lowth, probably will, and, indeed, as he himself hints, that the great outline of the fact only is true; and that the exordium is set off with some poetical ornaments, among which is to be accounted the conversation between God and Satan. For on this very conversation, the whole plot is founded, and the whole story and catastrophe depend."

Michaelis, however, is not the only critic who has regarded the entire subject of this poem as more or less fabulous. Spinoza thought so formerly; and bishop Warburton, a biblical interpreter of very different pretensions, in more recent times: the last of whom contemplated the *entire* work, and hence the exordium and termination, as well as the body of the piece, as an allegorical drama, founded, however, on genuine history, and written by Ezra, or Esdras, for the consolation of the Jews, after their return from the Babylonian captivity into their own country; when they were about to experience various reverses of fortune from the hands of Providence.

Generally speaking, however, the learned have regarded the illustrious hero of this extraordinary poem in the light of a real character; though, as we have already hinted at, they have differed greatly concerning the writer to whom we are indebted for it. Schultens asserts it to be not incredible, that all the characters introduced into the poem are real, and that the controversy consists of the very words they made use of at the time; and, in support of this remark, refers to the wonderful facility the Arabians possess of composing extempore verses. Spanheim contends, that the whole book is genuine history, and that the words of which it consists were originally Arabic, and written down in Arabic characters, before the time of Moses, on private tablets, by Job himself, and his friends, after the joyful termination of his afflictions; each

Spinoza.

Warburton.

Job
generally
regarded as
a real
person.

A.M. 2484. assisting the other in recalling to mind the words they had made
 B.C. 1520. use of, and thus furnishing an instructive lesson to future ages. This Arabic archetype he conceives to have been afterwards copied most faithfully into Hebrew by some later writer, who flourished a little before or about the time of Solomon, and who wrote his translation, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, giving it the form of the tragic drama in which it has descended to our own days. In consequence of which, Grotius had ventured to ascribe the production to Solomon himself.

Dr. Stock's
 Job.

Ascribes
 this book
 to Ezra.

Proofs.

In the year 1805, Dr. Stock, bishop of Killala, the learned translator of Isaiah, published an English version of this poem, with a preface, in which he inclines to a much later æra than that of Solomon, and is more disposed to coincide with Bishop Warburton, in ascribing it to Ezra. To arrive at this opinion, however, he has found it necessary to abandon, as spurious, the two concluding verses of the common text, which seem to carry it to a much higher origin. His argument is as follows:—"The sacred critics in general," says he, "have been apt to ascribe to the book of Job an origin that loses itself in the shades of the remotest antiquity. The opinion, I believe, rested at first on the very sandy foundation of what is stated in the two concluding verses of the work, which ascribe to its hero a longevity that belonged only to the generations not far distant from the flood. Of the authenticity of those verses, I think I have shown in my note on them, that we have every reason to be suspicious. But if it were ever so difficult to ascertain the portion of time when the patriarch lived, it may not be impossible, from internal marks in the poem itself, to conjecture with tolerable certainty the æra of its author. This is what I have attempted to execute.—Allusions to events recorded in the five books of Moses are to be found in this poem, chap. xx. 20, compared with Num. xi. 33, 34; chap. xxvi. 5, compared with Gen. vi. 4, 7, 11; chap. xxxiv. 20, compared with Exod. xii. 19; chap. xxxi. 33, compared with Gen. iii. 8, 12; and I shall hardly be expected to prove that the author of the poem derived his knowledge of those events from a history of so much notoriety as that of Moses, rather than from oral, or any other tradition. Facts are not usually referred to before the history recording them has had time to obtain currency. The inference is clear; the writer of Job was junior to the Hebrew legislator, and junior, it is likely, by some time. A similar mode of reasoning, upon a comparison of chap. xxxiii. 23, with 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; 1 Chron. xxi. 15; will, if I mistake not greatly, bring down the date of our poem below the time of King David. Lastly, chap. xii. 17, to the end, seems to point to the circumstances preceding and attending the Babylonish captivity; and chap. xxxvi. 8, 12, has an appearance of alluding to the various fortunes of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, 2 Kings xxiv. 12; xxv. 27. Notes of time these, which, though not so manifest as the fore-mentioned, may deserve attention; since

they add strength to the sentiment of those learned men, who have been inclined to give the honour of this celebrated composition to Ezra." A.M. 2484.
B.C. 1520.

Contrary to the opinion of Schultens, Lowth, and the greater number of critics and translators, Dr. Stock considers the exordium and conclusion to be as much parts of the poem, and as clearly possessed of a metrical arrangement in the Hebrew, as any of the rest: and he concurs with Scott, who has favoured the world with an elegant rhyme version, but who rejects the exordium and conclusion from the poetical part of the original, although he has very singularly put them into rhyme in his own translation, in thinking that the moral may be best collected from the speech of the Almighty towards the close of the composition. "The design," says the learned prelate who adopts Mr. Scott's words, "of this appearance of the Almighty, is not to vindicate the injured character of his servant Job. Neither is the design of this speech to decide the controversy, in the dialogue, about the ways of providence; for the decision of that dispute was not intended by the poem, but was reserved for the subsequent *history*. The scope of the speech is to humble Job; and to teach others, by his example, to acquiesce implicitly in the disposals of God, from an unbounded confidence in his wisdom, equity, and goodness. This surely is an end worthy of the interposition of the Deity—*dignus vindice nodus*."

Considers the exordium a part of the poem.

Scott's opinion.

There can be no doubt that it is so; but we have still to ask, as in the preceding moral proposed by Dr. Lowth, how comes it that such a lesson, introduced into the Jewish canon, should be taken from foreign, rather than from Jewish history? and be exemplified by exotic scenery, characters, customs, and even religion? On what ground has the book of Job a claim to be admitted into the sacred books of the Old Testament?

For the only answer with which we have been hitherto furnished to this important question we must turn to Mr. Mason Good's Introductory Dissertation, prefixed to his distinguished and popular version of this sublime effusion; which has thrown so new and clear a light, not only upon this point, but upon almost every other connected with it, as to have removed, as we conceive, all the most formidable difficulties that have been supposed to attend the poem; the "*multa loca valde obscura*," of Dr. Lowth, "*multa quæ vereor ut quisquam mortalium satis intelligat*;"—and to concentrate the opinion of most men of learning in the present day, as well on the continent as at home, in the truth and accuracy of his interpretation. On which account we feel ourselves called upon to give as full an analysis of Mr. Good's critical examination of the work as our limits will allow.

Mr. Good's dissertation and important work on Job.

This celebrated poem, he observes, is, "in various respects, the most extraordinary composition of any age or country; and has an equal claim to the attention of the theologian, the scholar, the Analysis of his argument.

A.M. 2484. antiquary, and the zoologist; to the man of taste, of genius, and
 B.C. 1520. of religion. Amidst the books of the Bible it stands alone; and though its sacred character is sufficiently attested, both by the Jewish and the Christian scriptures, it is isolated in its language, in its manner, and in its matter. Nothing can be purer than its morality, nothing sublimer than its philosophy, nothing simpler than its ritual, nothing more majestic than its creed. Its style is the most figurative imaginable; there is no classical poem of the east that can equal it; yet its plan is as regular, its argument as consecutive, as the most finished compositions of Greece or Rome; and its opening and its close are altogether unrivalled in magnificence. It is full of elevation and grandeur; daring in its conceptions; splendid and forcible in its images; abrupt in its transitions; and, at the same time, occasionally interwoven with touches of the most exquisite and overwhelming tenderness. And, to sum up the whole, if the train of reasoning pursued throughout this dissertation be correct, it is the most ancient of all human records; the only book in existence from which we can derive any thing like A SYSTEMATIC KNOWLEDGE OF PURE PATRIARCHAL RELIGION; and hence that very book which gives completion to the Bible, by adding the dispensation of the earliest ages to those of the law and the gospel by which it was successively superseded."

The dissertation then proceeds to inquire, in five distinct sections, into the scene of the poem; its scope, object, and arrangement; its language, and the difficulties attending a translation of it; its author and æra; and the doctrines which it incidentally develops.

Scene,
 Arabia.

The SCENE is placed in Arabia; of the original peopling of which we are favoured with the following account.

Upon the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael from the family of Abraham, who had long resided on the plains of Mamre, or Hebron, Hagar took the road towards her native country, which was Egypt: but her stock of water failing soon after she had entered the wilderness of Beersheba, it seemed impossible to avoid perishing. She resigned herself to despair, and placing her son under a bush, as she could not endure to be a witness of his death, took an affecting leave of him, and retired to a distance. At this moment "the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven," and she beheld a well of water close at hand. Being thus miraculously preserved, she continued her journey to the wilderness of Padan, on the borders of the Red sea, and there took up her residence. Her son, in due time, acquired manhood, and greatly distinguished himself as an archer; and his mother chose for him a wife from among her own country-women, the Egyptians. Here the account of Ishmael, or Ismael, as the Arabians call him, breaks off abruptly in the sacred writings, which are chiefly intended as a history of the descendants of Abraham through the line of Isaac; and we are compelled, in order to fill up the chasm, to have recourse to the Arabian his-

torians, in whose country Ismael was now residing, and of whose tribes he may be regarded as the head, and common father. Arabian writers make no mention of his marriage with an Egyptian, but distinctly relate the miracle of the well, which they affirm, for obvious reasons, but with a palpable deviation from the truth, was performed on the very spot where Mecca, the birth-place of Mahomet, now stands. They assert that, at this time, the inhabitants of Arabia consisted of two classes: an elder, comprising those who had first taken possession of the country, immediately upon the confusion of tongues, and of whose origin they have no certain information, but who are supposed to have been descendants of Ham, comparatively few in number, and of but little consequence; and a class of later date, and much more powerful and numerous, descended from Kohtan, or Joktan, as he is called in the Hebrew scriptures, the son of Heber, and, consequently, fourth in a direct line from Shem or Sem. Kohtan, who had obtained the general sovereignty of Arabia, had two sons, Yaarab and Joram: to the former he allotted the province of Yaman, or Happy Arabia; and to the latter that of Hajaz, or Stony Arabia. The Joramites were by far the more powerful people of the two; and on the arrival of Ismael, on the coast of the Red sea, were governed by Modad, supposed to be the eighth in direct succession from Joram, and, of course, the thirteenth in direct succession from Sem. Ismael continued in this spot, where, as it has already been observed, the Arabian writers place Hagar's well, till the death of his mother; after which he proceeded, with a numerous retinue, to the northern parts of Arabia, probably to assist his brother Isaac in the interment of his father, as stated Gen. xxv. 9; and on his return to the south, found that the tribe of the Joramites had overrun the country he had so lately quitted, and had actually possessed themselves of the well to which his mother's name had been given. Ismael immediately put in his claim to it; and the dispute was settled by an alliance between the tribes; Ismael marrying Valla, the daughter of Modad, chief of the Joramites, and receiving with her, as a part of her dowry, the well and the territories adjoining; by which marriage, according to the Arabian writers, and not by the Egyptian alliance, Ismael had the twelve sons which are ascribed to him in a succeeding part of the book of Genesis; and who are there called princes, and are placed each at the head of a distinct town and people, and possessed of a distinct castle. From the abruptness and brevity with which the Hebrew narrative returns to the history of Ismael, we have no information as to the immediate marriage from which the twelve sons proceeded. As polygamy was so common in his æra, it is probable that he had more wives than one; and the very extensive authority which the Bible statement admits him to have possessed in Arabia, the concurrent testimony of the Arabian historians, and the minuteness with which the pedigrees

How
peopled

A.M. 2484.
B.C. 1520.

A.M. 2484. of all Arabian families are preserved from generation to generation,
 B.C. 1520. and appealed to in their courts of law, leave little or no room to doubt as to the accuracy of the Arabian narrative upon this point. In reality, the success which had accompanied Hagar's journey with Ismael into the Arabian peninsula, seems to have induced all the sons of Abraham, excepting Isaac, to press forward in the same, or a somewhat similar direction; and hence, of his six sons by Keturah, we find, in the names given to different places in the south-eastern parts of this country, constituting Sandy Arabia, or the province of Najd, as it is now called, (that which, in the period before us, was least inhabited,) the radicals of their own names; as Midian, Shuah, Sheba, Seba, or Saba, and Dedan. Hither also advanced the two sons of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, Moab and Ammon, and established themselves still further to the eastward of the same province; while Esau, his grandson, who was also called Edom, pursued a similar track; and, marrying a daughter of Ismael, at this time the head of the entire country, fixed himself on the south of the Dead sea, or lake Asphaltitis; driving away, or extirpating, the Horim, who had previously possessed this track; and giving to it his own name, or the land of Edom, which under the plastic hands of the Greek writers, was afterwards changed to Idumæa.

Such, observes Mr. Good, is the country which forms the scene of the present poem, and such is a very brief sketch of its history; a country whose religion, at the time we are now speaking of, must have been that of Abraham, to a very considerable extent; and whose language, from the first, not widely differing from that of Abraham, must have made a considerable approximation towards it, from the successive tides of the Abrahamic race, which, either directly or collaterally, were perpetually pouring into its different parts.

Face of the
country :

learning and
customs.

Well worthy of attention as to its origin and first establishment, the country of Arabia is equally worthy of attention in its present state. It offers a most extraordinary intermixture of barren sands and fruitful and flowery landscapes, whose sweet exhilarating odours not unfrequently spread their fragrance along the whole line of the Arabian gulf, from Babelmandel to Suez. It was perhaps earliest in possession of the most important arts and sciences, and especially those which relate to manufactures and commerce. It first cultivated poetry and eloquence with critical attention, and taught these refinements to Persia, as Persia afterwards taught them to other parts of Asia. The general habits, language, and even political forms of government which it possessed in the time of Ismael, it possesses, with little variation, in the present day. Many of its tribes are capable of tracing their pedigree as high as the beginning of the Christian æra; and those of the Koreish, the most honourable and sacred of the whole, with unimpeachable accuracy, to Adnan, generally supposed to be the ninth in a direct line from Ismael, and, with some diversity of reckoning, to Ismael himself; from whom

there seems little doubt, in consequence of the scrupulosity with which these pedigrees have been compared and handed down, both by tradition and written records, that Mahomet himself was descended, in the same direct line, from male to male, and from eldest son to eldest son. The natives, even to the present hour, are peculiarly sagacious, intelligent, and courageous. Without ever having been subdued by foreign invasion, they have themselves given religion and laws to half Asia and Africa, and to a great part of Europe: and when all the rest of the world was buried in a long night of barbarism, the Arabian caliphs protected and fostered the arts and sciences with almost unrivalled magnificence in the different courts of Bagdat, Spain, Africa, and Egypt.

The immediate district of Arabia, to which the poem, entitled Job, directs our attention, is the land of Uz, which Bochart, Spanheim, and the writers of the Universal History, have placed in Sandy Arabia, a position which our author shows very distinctly, can by no means be reconciled with the geography of the Old Testament, which is uniform in placing the land of Uz, or the Ausitis (Αυσιτις) of the Septuagint, in Stony Arabia, on the south-western coast of the Lake Asphaltitis, or the Dead sea, in a line between Egypt and Philistia, surrounded by Kedar, Teman, and Midian, all of them districts of Stony Arabia; and, as though to set every remaining doubt completely at rest, situated in Idumæa, or the land of Edom or Esau, (of whose position there can be no question,) and comprising so large a part of it, that Idumæa, and Ausitis, or the land of Uz, and the land of Edom, were convertible terms, and equally employed to import the same region. In effect, nothing is clearer than that all the persons introduced into the poem in question, were Idumæans, dwelling in Idumæa; or in other words, Edomite Arabs. These characters are Job himself, of the land of Uz; Eliphaz, of Teman, a district of as much repute as Uz; and, upon the joint testimony of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Obadiah, a part, and principal part of Idumæa. Bildad, of Shuah, always mentioned in conjunction with Sheba and Dedan, the first of which was probably named after one of the brothers of Joktan or Kohtan, and the two last from two of his sons, all of them being uniformly placed in the vicinity of Idumæa; Zophar, of Naama, a city importing pleasantness, which is also stated by Joshua to have been situated in Idumæa, and to have lain in a southern direction towards its coast, on the shores of the Red sea; and Elihu, of Buz, which, as the name of a place, occurs only once in sacred writ, but is there mentioned in conjunction with Teman and Dedan, and hence, necessarily, like themselves, a border city upon Ausitis, Uz, or Idumæa.

We cannot enter into the detail of the argument made use of by Mr. Good, in fixing the precise SCENE OF THE POEM before us; but having successfully established his point, he next proceeds to give a very interesting account of its SCOPE AND ARRANGEMENT.

District of Uz.

Scope and arrangement of the poem.

A.M. 2484. The subject proposed by the writer of the poem, he observes, is
 B.C. 1520. the trial and triumph of the integrity of Job; a character of whose origin no certain documents have descended to us, but who, at the period in question, was chief magistrate, or emir, as we should style him in the present day, of the city of Uz, powerful and prosperous beyond all the sons of the east, and whose virtue and piety were as eminently distinguished as his rank. There are some critics, however, he continues, and of great distinction for learning and religion, who, in opposition, to all the biographical works which impersonate and individualize the venerable patriarch and his companions, contend that the poem, as well in its characters as its structure, is fabulous. Such especially is the opinion of Professor Michaelis, whose chief arguments are derived from the nature of the exordium, in which Satan appears as the accuser of Job; from the temptations and sufferings permitted by the Great Governor of the World to befall an upright character; from the roundness of the numbers by which the patriarch's possessions are described, as seven thousand, three thousand, one thousand, and five hundred; and from the years he is said to have lived after his recovery from disease.

Proofs that it is founded on real history, in opposition to the opinion of Michaelis.

It may perhaps be thought, says our author, to demand a more subjugating force than is lodged in these arguments, to transmute into fable what has uniformly been regarded as fact, both in Europe and Asia, for perhaps upwards of four thousand years; which appears to have descended as fact, in a regular stream of belief, in the very country which forms the scene of the history, from the supposed time of its occurrence to the present day; the chief character in which, is represented as having had an actual existence, and is often associated with real characters, as Noah, Abraham, Ismael, Isaac, Jacob, and Solomon, in various parts of the book which is there held most sacred, and which, so far as it is derived from national history, or tradition, is entitled to minute attention; and (which should seem long since to have settled the question definitively) a character which, precisely in the same manner, is associated with real characters in the authoritative pages of the Old and New Testaments.

In reply to Michaelis's remark, that "it is altogether incredible that such a conversation ever took place between the Almighty and Satan, who is supposed to return with *news* from the terrestrial regions," our author forcibly inquires, "but why should such a conversation be supposed incredible?" The attempt at wit in this passage is somewhat out of place; for the interrogation of the Almighty, "Hast thou fixed thy view upon my servant Job, a perfect and upright MAN?" instead of aiming at the acquisition of news, is intended as a severe and most appropriate sarcasm upon the fallen spirit. "Hast THOU, who, with superior faculties, and a more comprehensive knowledge of my will, hast not continued perfect and upright, fixed thy view upon a subordinate being, far

weaker, and less informed, than thyself, who has continued so?" A.M. 2484. The attendance of the apostate at the tribunal of the Almighty, is B.C. 1520. plainly designed to show us that good and evil angels are equally amenable to him, and equally subject to his authority; a doctrine common to every part of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, and, except in the mythology of the Parsees, recognised by, perhaps, every ancient system of religion whatever. The part assigned to Satan in the present poem, is that expressly assigned to him in the case of Adam and Eve, in the garden of Eden, and of our Saviour in the wilderness; and which is assigned to him generally, in regard to mankind at large, by all the evangelists and apostles whose writings have reached us, both in their strictest historical narratives, and closest argumentative inductions. And hence the argument which should induce us to regard the present passage as fabulous, should induce us to regard all others in the same light which are imbued with the same doctrine; a view of the subject which would sweep into nothingness a much larger portion of the Bible, than Michaelis would choose to part with.

The other arguments, continues our author, are comparatively of small moment. We want not fable to tell us that good and upright men may occasionally become the victims of accumulated calamities; for it is a living fact which, in the mystery of Providence, is perpetually occurring in every country; while as to the roundness of the numbers by which the patriarch's possessions are described, nothing could have been more ungraceful or superfluous than for the poet to have descended to units, had even the literal numeration demanded it: and although he is stated to have lived a hundred and forty years after his restoration to prosperity, and in an æra in which the duration of man did not perhaps, much exceed that of the present day, it should be recollected, that in his person, as well as in his property, he was specially gifted by the Almighty; that, from various passages, he seems to have been younger than all the interlocutors, except Elihu, and much younger than one or two of them; that his longevity is particularly remarked, as though of more than usual extent; and that, even in the present age of the world, we have well-authenticated instances of persons having lived, in different parts of the globe, to the age of a hundred and fifty, a hundred and sixty, and even a hundred and seventy years. It is not necessary for the historical truth of the book of Job, that its language should be a direct transcript of that actually employed by the different characters introduced into it: for in such case we should scarcely have a single book of real history in the world. The Iliad, the Shah Nameh, and the Lusiad, must at once drop all pretensions to such a description; and even the pages of Sallust and Cæsar, of Rollin and Hume, must stand upon very questionable authority. It is enough that the real sentiment be given, and the general style copied; and this, in truth, is all that is aimed at, not

A.M. 2484. only in our reports of parliamentary speeches, but, in many instances, B.C. 1520. (which indeed is much more to the purpose,) by the writers of the New Testament, in their quotations from the Old.

Story and
subject
matter.

The general scope and moral of this sublime production, namely, that the troubles and afflictions of the good man are, for the most part, designed as tests of his virtue and integrity, out of which he will at length emerge with additional splendour and happiness, are common to eastern poets, and not uncommon to those of Greece. The *Odyssey* is expressly constructed upon such a basis, and, like the poem before us, has every appearance of being founded upon real history, and calls to its aid the machinery of a sublime and supernatural agency. But, in various respects, the poem of Job stands alone and unrivalled. In addition to every corporeal suffering and privation which it is possible for man to endure, it carries forward the trial in a manner and to an extent which has never been attempted elsewhere, into the keenest faculties and sensations of the mind, and mixes the bitterest taunts and accusations of friendship with the agonies of family bereavement and despair. The body of other poems consists chiefly of incidents; that of the present poem, of colloquy, or argument, in which the general train of reasoning is so well sustained, its matter so important, its language so ornamented, the doctrines it develops so sublime, its transitions from passion to passion so varied and abrupt, that the want of incidents is not felt, and the attention is still rivetted as by enchantment. In other poems the supernatural agency is fictitious, and often incongruous; here the whole is solid reality, supported, in its grand outline, by the concurrent testimony of every other part of the scriptures; an agency not obtrusively introduced, but demanded by the magnitude of the occasion; and as much more exalted and magnificent than every other kind of similar interference, as it is more veritable and solemn. The suffering hero is sublimely called forth to the performance of his part, in the presence of men and angels; each becomes interested, and equally interested, in his conduct; the Almighty assents to the trial, and for a period withdraws his divine aid; the malice of Satan is in its full career of activity; hell hopes, earth trembles, and every good spirit is suspended with awful anxiety. The wreck of his substance is in vain; the wreck of his family is in vain; the scalding sores of a corroding leprosy is in vain; the artillery of insults, reproaches, and railing, poured forth from the mouth of bosom friends, is in vain. Though at times put, in some degree, off his guard, the holy sufferer is never completely overpowered. He sustains the shock without yielding; he still holds fast his integrity. Thus terminates the trial of faith; Satan is confounded; fidelity triumphs; and the Almighty, with a magnificence well worthy of the occasion, unveils his resplendent tribunal, and crowns the afflicted champion with his applause.

The poem, as we have already observed, has generally been supposed to possess a dramatic character; but, in order to give it such a pretension, it has been uniformly found necessary to strip it of its magnificent exordium and close, which are unquestionably narrative; and even then, the dramatic cast is so singularly interrupted by the appearance of the historian himself, at the commencement of every speech, to inform us of the name of the person who is about to take up the argument, that many critics, and, among the rest, Bishop Lowth, are doubtful of the propriety of referring it to this department of poetry, though they do not know where else to give it a place. In Mr. Good's view of the subject, it is a regular HEBREW EPIC; and, were it necessary, says he, to enter so minutely into the question, it might easily be proved to possess all the more prominent features of an epic, as collected and laid down by Aristotle himself; such as unity, completion, and grandeur in its action; loftiness in its sentiments and language; multitude and variety in the passions which it developes. Even the characters, though not numerous, are discriminated, and well supported; the milder and more modest temper of Eliphaz, is well contrasted with the forward and unrestrained violence of Bildad; the terseness and brevity of Zophar, with the pent-up and overflowing fulness of Elihu; while in Job himself, we perceive a dignity of mind that nothing can humiliate, a firmness that nothing can subdue, still habitually disclosing themselves amidst the mingled tumult of hope, fear, rage, tenderness, triumph, and despair, with which he is alternately distracted. "I throw out this hint, however," remarks Mr. Good, "not with a view of ascribing any additional merit to the poem itself, but merely to observe, so far as a single fact is possessed of authority, that mental taste, or the internal discernment of real beauty, is the same in all ages and nations; and that the rules of the Greek critic, are deduced from a principle of universal impulse and operation."

A.M. 2484.
B.C. 1520.
Not a drama
but a
Hebrew epic.

Nothing can have been more unfortunate for this most excellent composition, than its division into chapters, and especially such a division as that in common use; in which not only the unity of the general subject, but, in many instances, that of a single paragraph, or even of a single clause, is completely broken in upon and destroyed. The natural division, and that which was unquestionably intended by its author, observes Mr. Good, is into SIX PARTS or books; for in this order it still continues to run, notwithstanding all the confusion it has encountered by subarrangements. These six parts are, an opening or exordium, containing the introductory history and decree concerning Job; three distinct series of arguments, in each of which the speakers are regularly allotted their respective turns; the summing up of the controversy; and the close or catastrophe, consisting of the suffering hero's grand and glorious acquittal, and restoration to prosperity and happiness: the whole of which may be explained under the following analysis.

Injured by
the ordinary
division into
chapters.

Natural
division into
six parts or
books.

A.M. 2484. PART I. Constituting the opening or exordium, comprises the first
 B.C. 1520. two chapters in the ordinary division, and is full of incident and
 First part. transition. It commences with a brief narration of the principal
 personage of the piece, his place of residence, rank in life, and
 inflexible integrity. It then suddenly changes to a scene so tran-
 scendently lofty and magnificent, that the grandest descriptions of
 the most daring poets sink before it; and nothing can be put in
 comparison with it but a few passages in Paradise Lost, derived
 from the same source. The tribunal of the Almighty is unveiled;
 the host of good and evil spirits, in obedience to his summons,
 present themselves before him to give an account of their conduct.
 The views of Satan are particularly inquired into; and the unswerv-
 ing fidelity of Job, though a mortal, is pointedly held out to him,
 and extolled. The evil spirit insinuates that Job is only faithful
 because it is his interest to be faithful; that he serves his Creator
 because he has been peculiarly protected and prospered by him;
 and that he would abandon his integrity the moment such protection
 should be withdrawn. To confound him in so malicious an impu-
 tation, the Almighty delivers Job into his hands, only forbidding
 him to touch his person.

Satan departs from the celestial tribunal; and, collecting the
 fury of his vindictive power into one tremendous assault, strips the
 righteous patriarch, by the conjoint aid of hostile incursions,
 thunderstorms, and whirlwinds, in one and the same day, and that
 a day of domestic rejoicing, of the whole of his property and of his
 family; despatching messenger after messenger with a separate tale
 of woe, till the whole tragedy is completed. But the patriarch
 continues inflexible. He feels bitterly, but he sins not, even in his
 heart:—instead of murmuring against his Creator,

—JOB arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head,
 And fell on the ground, and WORSHIPPED; and said,
 “Naked came I forth from my mother’s womb,
 And naked shall I return thither!
 Jehovah giveth, and Jehovah taketh away;
 BLESSED be the name of Jehovah.”

The celestial session returns. The supreme Creator again
 assumes the judgment-seat; and the hosts of good and evil spirits
 are once more arranged before him for his commands. The unswerv-
 ing fidelity of Job is again pointed out to Satan, and the futility of
 his malice exposed. The evil spirit, though foiled, still continues
 unabashed, and insinuates that he had no liberty to touch his person.
 The Almighty surrenders his person into his hands, and only com-
 mands him to spare his life. Satan departs from the presence of
 Jehovah; and in the same moment Job is smote with a burning
 leprosy; and while agonized with this fresh affliction, is tauntingly
 upbraided by his wife with the inutility of all his religious services.
 The goad passes into his soul, but it does not poison it. He resists

this additional attack with a dignity as well as a firmness of faith that does honour to human nature :—

A.M. 2484.
B.C. 1520

As the talk of one of the foolish is thy talk.
Shall we then accept good from God,
And shall we not accept evil ?

The part closes with what is designed to introduce the main subject of the poem—a preconcerted visit to the suffering patriarch of three of his most intimate friends. And in the simple narrative of their first seeing him, there is a pathos that beggars all description, and which cannot fail to strike home to every bosom that is capable of feeling :—

For they had appointed together to come,
To mourn with him, and to comfort him.
And they lift up their eyes from afar, and knew him not :
And they raised their voices and wept ;
And rent every one his mantle ;
And cast dust upon their heads towards heaven.
And they sat down with him on the ground,
Seven days and seven nights :
And no one spake unto him a word,
For they saw that the affliction raged sorely.

This part is peculiarly distinguished by simplicity, sublimity, and fine feeling. In its diction it exhibits a perfect contrast to that of the great body of the poem ; and, in conjunction with the diction that follows, affords proof of a complete mastery of style and language ; a mastery unequalled perhaps in any other part of the Hebrew scriptures, and altogether unknown to every other kind of oriental composition. It is characteristic, however, of the writer of this transcendent poem—a fact well worthy of being remembered in determining who he was—that he uniformly suits his ornaments to the occasion ; that, as though influenced by the rules of the best Greek critics, he seldom employs a figurative style where the incident or the passion is capable of supporting itself, and reserves his boldest images and illustrations for cases that seem most to require them. And for want of attending to this distinction, Schultens, Lowth, Grey, and a few other translators of the book of Job, have regarded this first part of the poem as a mere prosaic preface to the rest, meant to be detached from it, and utterly destitute of metrical arrangement ; an error from which Dr. Stock is altogether free.

Character
of the first
part.

PART II. Extends from the beginning of the third to the end of the fourteenth chapter, and comprises the first colloquy, or series of argument. Job, completely overwhelmed, and believing himself abandoned by his Maker, gives a loose to all the wildness of despondency ; and, in an address of exquisite force and feeling, laments that he ever beheld the light, and calls earnestly for death, as the only refuge of the miserable. This burst of agony is filled with the boldest images and imprecations ; and might, perhaps, be thought, in some parts of it, too daring, but that it appears to have been

Second part.

Exclamation
of Job.

A.M. 2484. regarded as a master-piece by the best poets of Judæa, and is
B.C. 1520. imitated, in its boldest flights, by King David, Isaiah, Jeremiah,
and Ezekiel.

Reply of
Eliphaz.

To this cry of despondency Eliphaz ventures upon the first reply; and the little that was wanting to make the cup of agony brim-full, is now added to it. The patriarch's friends, stimulated, unquestionably, by the secret impulse of Satan, have agreed upon the false principle, that, in the uniform dealings of Providence, happiness and prosperity are the necessary marks and consequences of integrity, and pain and misery of wickedness; and hence the grand argument on their part consists, first, in charging the sufferer with the commission of sins, which he ought to confess and repent of; and, next, in accusing him of pride and hypocrisy, because he will not consent to such confession. Eliphaz, however, is, from natural habit, the mildest of the accusers; and his speech begins with delicacy, and is conducted with the most artful address. After duly apologizing for breaking in upon the sufferings of his friend, he proceeds to point out the inconsistency of a good man's repining under a state of discipline, and the absurdity of *his* not bearing up who had so often exhorted others to fortitude. He remarks, that the truly good are never utterly overthrown; but that the ways of Providence are wrapped in inextricable mystery; and that nothing can be more arrogant than for so weak, so ephemeral, so insect-like a being as man is, to impeach them: a position which is illustrated by the most powerful picture of an apparition that ever was drawn by the pen of any writer, in any age or country; disclosed to the speaker for the express purpose of inculcating this solemn maxim. He concludes with observing, that as neither man nor angel, without the consent of the Almighty, can render Job any assistance, wrath and violence are folly; and that nothing remains for him but to seek unto God, and to commit the cause into his hands; whose correction will then be assuredly succeeded by a new series of happiness and prosperity.

Job's
answer to
Eliphaz.

Job replies to Eliphaz, but is overborne by the bitterness of his remonstrance; and under his accumulated trials, once more wishes to die. He reproaches his friends for their severity; and, in a most beautiful and appropriate simile, compares the consolation he expected from their soothing intercourse, and the cruel disappointment he had met with, to the promise of a plentiful supply of water held out to a parched up caravan, by the fall of floods of rain, surveyed at a distance, but which, on arriving at the place of their descent, are found to have entirely evaporated, or to have branched out over the sands, and become lost.

What time they wax warm they evaporate;
And, when it grows hot, they are dried up in their place:
The outlets of their channel wind about,
They stretch into nothing and are lost.
The companies of Tema search earnestly,

The caravans of Sheba pant for them :
 They are consumed—such is their longing ;
 They arrive at the place and sink away.
 Behold ! ye also are a nothing ;
 Ye see *my* downcasting, and shrink back.

A.M. 2484.

B.C. 1520.

Suddenly he feels he has been too acrimonious, apologizes, and intreats their further attention ; but is instantly hurried away by a torrent of opposite passions ; now once more longing for death, as the termination of his sufferings, and now urged on by the natural desire of life. He expostulates warmly, and, at length, unbecomingly, with the Almighty ; and at once growing sensible of the irreverence, humbly confesses his offence, supplicates forgiveness, and implores that his affliction may cease.

It is now Bildad's turn to speak ; who commences with bitter and most provoking cruelty. He openly charges the whole family of Job with gross wickedness, on no other ground than their destruction by the whirlwind ; and throws suspicions against the patriarch himself, in consequence of his being a sufferer in the calamity. Like Eliphaz, he also exhorts him to repent, and to look to God for a restoration to prosperity, and never more to depend on himself ; observing, in the language of an apt and exquisite proverbial saying of the long-lived, perhaps the antediluvian ages, that the most succulent plants are soonest withered ; and that the reliance of the hypocrite is a cobweb.

Bildad's
speech.

In the beginning of his reply to this speech, the suffering patriarch shows that he has once more recovered himself, and is superior to the acrimony of its assault. He acknowledges that all power is with God, who alone has created whatever exists ; but maintains that, as to his moral government, we are grossly ignorant, and can account for nothing that takes place ; and that the good and the wicked suffer indiscriminately. At one moment, under the influence of acute agony, he longs earnestly to plead his cause with God, and to defend his habitual integrity ; but awed suddenly by new ideas of the divine power and purity, and aware that from both causes he must be overwhelmed, he shrinks from so daring a task ; and concludes with an affecting address to the Almighty, in which he ventures to expostulate with him, as his Creator and Preserver. He grows warmer as he proceeds ; is roused to desperation at the thought that God is become his enemy and persecutor ; and once more vehemently calls for a termination of his miseries by death.

Reply of Job
to Bildad.

Next in the progress of the argument, appears Zophar, who, like Bildad, commences with violent and rough invective. He condemns Job severely for continuing to assert his innocence before God. He contends that the ways of Providence are obvious, and that it is only his own iniquity that makes them appear dark and mysterious. Like the preceding speakers, he exhorts him, in fine and figurative language, to put away his iniquity, and lift up his hands to the

Zophar's
speech.

A.M. 2484. Almighty; and promises that he shall then soon lose all trace of his
A.C. 1520. present calamity,

As waters passed by shalt thou remember it,

and that his late prosperity and happiness shall be redoubled upon him. But if not, he denounces his utter and irremediable ruin.

Reply of Job
to Zophar.

Stimulated by this repetition of so unjust and opprobrious an accusation, Job, for the first time, vents a sarcasm on his part. In return for the proverbial sayings of his companions, he retorts upon them sayings of a similar kind, many of them possessed of far more force and appropriateness. He then commences a direct attack upon their own conduct; and charges them with declaiming, on the part of God, from the base and unworthy hope of propitiating him. He grows still warmer as he advances; and, under a consciousness of general innocence, demands to be put to the bar, and to stand his trial with the Almighty: he boldly summons his accusers, intreats the Supreme Judge not to overwhelm him with his power or awfulness; and, realizing the tribunal before him, at once commences his pleading, in an address, which, according to the feeling of the moment, is vehement, plaintive, argumentative, full of fear, of triumph, of expostulation, and, at last, of despondency; now representing the Creator in all his might and supremacy, as demolishing a driven leaf, and hunting down parched stubble; next exhibiting doubts of a future state; then exulting in the belief of it; and finally sinking into utter gloom and hopelessness.

Third part.

PART III. Comprises the second series of controversy, and extends from the fifteenth to the close of the twenty-first chapter. Eliphaz opens the discussion in his regular turn. He accuses Job of vehemence and vanity: asserts that no man is innocent; and pointedly observes to him that, in regard to himself, his own conduct is sufficient to condemn him; concluding with a train of highly forcible and figurative apophthegms, of great beauty and antiquity, calculated to prove the certain and irrecoverable misery of the wicked and unrepentant.

Speech of
Eliphaz.

Reply of Job
to Eliphaz.

Job replies to him, and once more complains bitterly of the reproaches and contumelies so unjustly heaped upon him, but consoles himself by again appealing to the Almighty upon the subject of his innocence. He accuses his companions of holding him up to public derision, and entreats them to leave him, and return home: he again pathetically bemoans his lot, and looks forward to the grave with scarcely a glimmering of hope, and an almost utter despair of a resurrection from its ruins.

Speech of
Bildad.

Bildad next enters into the debate with his characteristic virulence and violence, at the same time exhorting Job to be temperate. The whole speech is a string of generalities, and parabolic traditions of the first ages, concerning the fearful punishments in reserve for the

wicked; all exquisitely sublime and beautiful in themselves, but A.M. 2484.
 possessing no other relevancy to the present case than that which B.C. 1520.
 results from the false argument that Job must be a great sinner,
 because he is a great sufferer.

The reply of the patriarch to this contumelious tirade, contained Reply of Job
to Bildad.
 in the nineteenth chapter of the common division, is one of the most
 brilliant parts of the whole poem, and exhibits a wonderful inter-
 mixture of tenderness and triumph. It commences with a fresh
 complaint of the cruelty of his assailants: the meek sufferer still calls
 them his friends; and, in a most touching apostrophe, implores their
 pity in his deep affliction. He takes an affecting survey of his hope-
 less situation, as assaulted and broken down by the Almighty, for
 purposes altogether mysterious and unknown to him; and then
 suddenly, as though a ray of divine light and comfort had darted
 across his soul, rises into the full hope of a future resurrection,
 and vindication of his innocence; and, in the triumph of so glorious
 an expectation, appears to forget his present wretchedness and
 misery.

The lead is next assumed by Zophar, but merely to recapitulate Speech of
Zophar.
 the old argument under a new form. Job has not yet confessed the
 heinous sins for which he is suffering: and hence, in bold and terrific
 pictures, chiefly, as on many preceding occasions, derived from the
 lofty sayings of ancient times, he alarms him with the various
 punishments reserved for the impenitent.

In reply to Zophar, Job appears to collect his whole strength of Reply of Job
to Zophar.
 argument, as though resolved at one and the same time, to answer
 all that has been advanced upon the subject, by each of his opponents.
 He boldly controverts their principle, that present prosperity is the
 lot of the good, and present misery that of the wicked. He asserts,
 even while trembling at the thought of so mysterious a providence,
 that here the reprobate, instead of the righteous, are chiefly trium-
 phant,—that this is their world,—that they riot in it unrestrained,
 and take their full of enjoyment. They may, perhaps, continues he,
 be reserved against a day of future judgment and retribution; but
 where is the man that dares attack their conduct to their face? who
 is there that does not fall prostrate before their power and over-
 whelming influence? even in death itself, they are publicly bemoaned,
 and every individual attends upon their obsequies. Thus concludes
 the third part of this poem, and it could not possibly conclude better.

PART IV. Comprises the third and last series of controversy, and Fourth part.
 reaches from the twenty-second, to the close of the thirty-first chapter.
 Eliphaz, as usual, commences; and moved by the cogent and Speech of
Eliphaz.
 argumentative eloquence of the preceding speech, is himself incited
 to a stricter and closer discussion of the subject than he had hitherto
 aimed at; and pours forth his whole spirit into one grand effort of
 confutation. His argument is full of art, but it is, in a great degree,

A.M. 2484. the art of the sophist. He charges Job, in spite of his own guarded
 B.C. 1520. declarations to the contrary, with being an advocate for the wicked, by connecting wickedness and prosperity in the manner of cause and effect; and, of course, as being, in his heart and propensities, a party to all the iniquities of the antediluvians that brought the deluge upon the world. With the most accomplished subtilty, he dwells upon this signal judgment for the purpose of adverting to the single delivery of the family of righteous Noah, their great progenitor, as a proof that God neither does, nor will, suffer the wicked to escape punishment, nor the righteous to pass without reward. In addition to which, he proceeds to instance the striking rescue of Lot and his family from the conflagration that devoured the cities on the plain; thus sophistically opposing two special and miraculous interpositions to the general course of divine providence. He concludes, as on various former occasions, with exhorting Job to confess and abandon his iniquities; and beautifully depicts, in new and forcible imagery, the happiness that he will then find in reserve for him.

Reply of Job
 to Eliphaz.

The placid sufferer does not allow himself to be turned off his guard. In his rejoinder he again bemoans the mercilessness of those around him, and once more longs earnestly to find out and plead before the Almighty. But all around him, he observes, is gloom and obscurity; yet gloom and obscurity as it is, he still beholds Him in nature, and in every part of nature; and, in direct opposition to the opinion of his companions, doubts not that the present affliction is dealt to him as a trial; and rejoicing in the recollection of his past submission to the divine will, ventures to hope he shall yet issue from it as pure gold. He then returns to the argument, and perseveres to the silencing, if not to the conviction of his opponents. He shows, from a multiplicity of examples, drawn both from the privacy of retired life, and the publicity of crowded cities, that every thing is suffered to take place at present in a mysterious and unexplained manner; that, admitting a variety of exceptions, the wicked are still generally successful, and prosecute their course uncontrolled; that even the unsinning embryo in the womb expires, not unfrequently, as soon as created, as though neglected or despised by its Maker; and that the lonely widow is, in like manner, left to pine in want and misery. He allows, nevertheless, that nothing can be more precarious than the pleasures and prosperity of vice: that God has his eye at all times upon the wicked; and that often, though not generally, they are overthrown in a moment, and reduced from the utmost height of splendour, to the lowest abyss of beggary and ruin.

Brief and
 final speech
 of Bildad.

Bildad, to whom it belongs next to reply, is completely confounded. He is compelled to admit that the present state of things proves the Deity to work with absolute sway, and in an incomprehensible manner. But, though driven from his former position, he still maintains that Job must be wicked, since every man is wicked, and altogether worthless in the sight of God; all which, in order to

give the greater weight to his observations, he confirms by delivering them in the words of ancient and proverbial maxims. A.M. 2484.
B.C. 1520.

Job, in reply to Bildad, is indignant at his not openly retracting an opinion which, it was obvious, he could no longer maintain. He is particularly irritated at his pretending, once more, to quote the proverbial maxims of past times, as though to enlist the wisdom of the ancients against him; and sarcastically follows him up by a string of other traditions of a similar kind, possessing still more magnificence, and, at least, as much general connection. And having thus severely reproved him, he returns to the argument in chapter xxvii. and asserts that, distressed as he is, and forsaken of God, habitual innocence has ever belonged to him, and ever shall; and, on this very account, he secretly encourages a hope that he shall not be ultimately forsaken; and forcibly points out the very different situation of the wicked, when they also are overtaken by calamity; their ruin being, on the contrary, utter and irreversible, and even entailed on their posterity. Under the disappointment their visit had produced, and the proofs of feebleness and folly it had exhibited, where wisdom and consolation were to have been expected, he proceeds to a highly figurative and exquisite description of the value of genuine wisdom, and the difficulty of searching out its habitation, concluding, as the result of his inquiry, that it alone resides in, and issues from the Creator, and is only bestowed upon those who sincerely fear him, and depart from evil. He closes with a detailed and deeply interesting examination into every department of his life—an examination that ought to be studied and copied by every one. He investigates his conduct in the full sunshine of prosperity, as a magistrate, as a husband, as a father, as a master; and in all these characters he feels capable of conscientiously justifying himself. In the course of this historical scrutiny, he draws a very affecting contrast between his past and his present situation; the period in which all was happiness and splendour, and that in which all is trouble and humiliation. He challenges his companions, and the world at large, to accuse him publicly and expressly of a single act of injustice or oppression; declares that, so far from shrinking from such an accusation, he would wear it as a frontlet upon his shoulder and his turban; that, like a witness on the side of his accuser, he would furnish him with all the evidence in his power; and pants earnestly to be put to the bar, and abide the decision of his country. Reply of Job
to Bildad.

Zophar should now have replied in rotation; but he has already exhausted himself, and the argument closes.

PART V. Contains the summing up of the controversy, which is allotted to Elihu, a new character in the poem; but who, though unnoticed, appears to have entered before the commencement of the debate, and to have impartially studied its progress. The speech Fifth part.
Summing
up of the
argument
by Elihu.

A.M. 2484. of Elihu commences with the thirty-second chapter of the common
B.C. 1520. arrangement, which constitutes its peroration, and offers a fine specimen of the art of bespeaking and fixing attention. He first adverts to the general irrelevancy of the matter that has been advanced against Job, from every quarter by which he has been attacked, and then proceeds to comment upon the patriarch himself. Tacitly admitting the general force of the reasoning by which he had confounded his opponents, Elihu nowhere charges him with former wickedness, because of his present affliction, but confines himself to his actual conduct, and the tendency of his replies on the existing occasion; both of which he reprehends with considerable warmth. In various instances he repeats his words literally, and animadverts upon them as highly irreverent; and observes, that the dispensations of Providence, dark and mysterious as they commonly appear to us, are always full of wisdom and mercy; and that, in many cases, we are made sensible of this even at the moment, being frequently, by such means, warned and reclaimed, sometimes publicly, but still oftener in secret, through the medium of dreams, diseases, or other providential interferences.

He attacks the position of Job, that the present world is the portion of the wicked, and that here prosperity is more frequently their lot than that of the righteous; and, with some degree of sophistry and disingenuity, turns, like Eliphaz, this position of the patriarch into a declaration, that he approves of the ways of wickedness as a mean of prosperity, and has no desire to be righteous, unless when righteousness has a like chance of advancing his worldly views. Upon this point he attacks him with great severity, and in general terms; and in general, but beautiful and highly figurative descriptions; adverts to the frequent and visible interferences of the Almighty to relieve the poor and the oppressed, and to hurl down the tyrant and the reprobate. He next exhorts Job to relinquish his present sentiments, and to confess his transgressions, in full confidence of a return of the divine favour. Submission he asserts (chap. xxxv.) to be the only duty of man, and the wisest course he can pursue; that God can derive neither advantage from his obedience, nor disadvantage from his rebellion; that man alone can profit from the one, and suffer from the other; and that had Job suffered more, he would have disputed less. The remainder of this exquisite oration points out consecutively, in strong and glowing language, full of sublimity and the finest painting, that God is supreme; that he is all in all; and that every thing is subject to him, and regulated by him, and regulated in wisdom, goodness, and justice; that hence, instead of resisting, it becomes us to submit; that the worst of iniquities is to wish for death, in order to escape from a chastisement we are enduring and have deserved; and that, living or dying, it is in vain to fly from the Creator, since all nature was formed by him, and is the theatre of his power. The speaker

closes with a lofty and transcendent description of the might and wisdom of the great Maker, in the works and wonders of the creation; the formation of rain, thunder, lightning, snow, clouds, clear sky, the return of spring, and the general revolution of the seasons; concerning all which we know nothing; yet the whole of which is but a faint and reflected light from him who ordained and commands them; concluding as follows:—

Splendour itself is with God!
 Insufferable majesty!
 Almighty!—we cannot comprehend him—
 Surpassing in power and judgment!
 Yet doth not the might of his justice oppress.
 Let mankind, therefore, stand in awe of him:
 He looketh all the wise of heart to nothing.

Ch. xxxvii.
 22—24.

PART VI. The trial of faith, resignation, and integrity, is now drawing to an end. The opponents of Job, and, through them, the arch-demon by whom they were excited, have been baffled in their utmost exertions; yet, though silenced, they still sullenly refuse to retract. The Almighty now visibly appears to pronounce judgment, and “speaks to Job out of the whirlwind:” and the address ascribed to him is a most astonishing combination of dignity, sublimity, grandeur, and condescension; and is as worthy of the magnificent occasion as any thing can be, delivered in human language.

Sixth part
 Address of
 Jehovah
 from the
 whirlwind.

The line of argument pursued in the course of this inimitable address is, that the mighty speaker is Lord of all, the creator of the heavens and the earth, and that every thing must bow down before him; that he is the God of providence; and that every thing is formed by him in wisdom, and bespeaks a mean to an end, and *that* end the happiness and enjoyment of his creatures. In the development of this reasoning, the formation of the world is first brought before us, and described in language that has never been equalled; the revolution of the heavenly bodies; and the regular return of the seasons. The argument then descends from so overwhelming a magnificence, and confines itself to phænomena that are more immediately within the scope and feeling of the sons of earth. It is God who supplies the wants of every living creature: it is he who finds them food in rocks and wildernesses: it is his wisdom that has adapted every kind to its own habits and mode of being; that has given cunning where cunning is necessary; and, where unnecessary, has withheld it; that has endowed with rapidity of foot or of wing, where such qualities are found needful; and, where might is demanded, has afforded proofs of a might the most terrible and irresistible. The whole of which is exquisitely illustrated by a variety of distinct instances, drawn from natural history, and painted to the very life; the following impressive corollary forming the general close. God is supreme, and must be bowed to, and adored: his wisdom is incomprehensible, how vain then to

A.M. 2484. arraign it: his power omnipotent, how absurd then to resist it: his
B.C. 1520. goodness universal, how blind then to deny it.

This awful address is listened to with fearful conviction. The humiliated sufferer confesses the folly of his arrogance and presumption, and abhors himself for his conduct.

Acquittal
and
restoration
of Job.

The peripatía, or revolution, immediately succeeds. The self-abasement of Job is accepted: his three friends are severely reprimanded for having formed a dishonourable judgment concerning him, and for having taken a false and narrow view of the providence of the Almighty, in contending that he never does or can permit trouble but in cases of wickedness: a sacrifice is demanded of them, and Job is appointed to be their intercessor; upon the accomplishment of which the severely tried patriarch is restored to his former state of enjoyment, and his prosperity is in every instance doubled.

Difficulties
attending a
translation.

In his THIRD SECTION, Mr. Good inquires into and explains the difficulties attending a translation of the book of Job; into which we need not follow him: and in his FOURTH, examines the disputed point concerning the author and æra of the poem: upon which we have the following remarks.

Author and
æra of the
poem.

If the preceding observations be correctly founded, they may make some progress towards determining the real author of this sublime composition. In his style he appears to have been equally master of the simple and the sublime; to have been minutely and elaborately acquainted with the astronomy, natural history, and general science of his age; to have been a Hebrew by birth and native language, and an Arabian by long residence and local study. To these peculiar features, thus incidentally gleaned from a critical survey of the poem, may be added, there is intrinsic evidence that, as a Hebrew, he must have flourished and have written antecedently to the Egyptian exodus. The annals of the world do not present to us a single nation so completely wrapped up in their own history as the Hebrews. Throughout every book, both in the Old and the New Testament, in which it could possibly be adverted to, the eye of the writer turns to different parts of it, and dwells upon it with inextinguishable fondness. The call of Abraham, the bondage and miracles in Egypt, the journeyings through the wilderness, the delivery of the law, the establishment of the priesthood, the passage of the Red sea, and of the Jordan, the destruction of the Canaanites, Ammonites, and Moabites; Aaron, Joshua, Manasses, and Gideon; Sinai, Carmel, and Sion; Gilead and Gaza; Ashdod, Ekron, and Askelon, are perpetually brought before us, as ornaments, or illustrations of the subject discussed. To none of these, however, does the book of Job make the smallest reference: but the existence of Adam, and his concealment from the Almighty in the garden of Eden;¹ the voice of the blood of Abel crying from the ground;²

Intrinsic
features of
the writer.

¹ Chap. xxxi. 33.

² Chap. xvi. 18.

the destruction of the world by the deluge;³ the token of the rain-bow in the clouds;⁴ and the conflagration of Sodom and Gomorrah,⁵ are, in the same love of national history, incidentally glanced at, or directly brought forward. With this last fact, however, the poet stops: he descends no lower than to the overthrow of the cities on the plain, and consequently to the æra of Abraham and Lot; not a single incident appertaining either to the family of Isaac or of Ishmael, of Edom or of Jacob, being adverted to below this period. And hence we have the strongest circumstantial evidence for concluding that the poem, as written in Hebrew, must have been composed between the periods of Abraham's residence at Mamre, and the miracles wrought by Moses in Egypt.

The opinions of those writers who have contended that the poem contains a few allusions to historical facts posterior to the commencement of the Egyptian bondage, or even below the Mosaic age, are next minutely examined by our author, who seems to show very satisfactorily, that the passages in different parts of the sacred text, adverted to in support of such opinions, are too loose to draw the conclusion contended for, or have no application to the subject whatever. He then proceeds as follows:—

Pretensions
of various
characters
examined.

The remaining characters that have been pitched upon as authors of this poem, are Elihu; Job himself, or in conjunction with the other dialogists; and Moses.

Elihu has been advanced, chiefly by Lightfoot, from an erroneous rendering of ver. 16 and 17, in chap. xxxii. and the correction of which puts to flight all Elihu's pretensions in a moment. Concerning Job, as himself the author of the poem, or as the author of it in conjunction with his friends, we have already spoken. "All such opinion, however modified, equally suppose," observes Mr. Good, "the introduction of a foreign story, drawn up by a foreigner himself, into the sacred canon of the Jewish scripture; a supposition which is not countenanced by any other part of the Scriptures, and to which the national jealousy of the Jews appears to have formed an insuperable barrier."

It only remains then, continues this critic, to examine into the claim of Moses, as the author of the book of Job. To Moses, in truth, more than to any one, it has been generally ascribed in all nations, and perhaps in all ages; and if we apply to him the tests advanced above, and which are fatal to all the preceding characters, we shall find that there is not a single one to which his history will not adapt itself. It has been already asserted, that the writer of this poem must, in his style, have been equally master of the simple and of the sublime; that he must have been minutely and elaborately acquainted with the astronomy, natural history, and general science of his age; that he must have been a Hebrew by birth, and native

Strong
claim of
Moses.

³ Chap. xxii. 16.

⁴ Chap. xxvi. 10.

⁵ Chap. xxii. 20.

A.M. 2484. language, and an Arabian by long residence and local study; and
 B.C. 1520. finally, that he must have flourished, and composed the work before
 the Egyptian exody. Now it is obvious, that every one of these
 features is consummated in Moses, and in Moses alone; and that the
 whole of them gives us his complete lineaments and portraiture—
 whence there can be no longer any difficulty in determining as to the
 real author of the poem. Instructed in all the learning of Egypt,
 it appears little doubtful that he composed it during some part of his
 forty years' residence with the hospitable Jethro, in that district of
 Idumæa which was named Midian.

In addition to these external proofs of identity, continues our
 author, a little attention will, perhaps, disclose to us an internal proof
 of peculiar force, in the close and striking similarity of diction and
 idiom which exists between the book of Job, and those pieces of
 poetry which Moses is usually admitted to have composed. The
 examples and parallelisms offered by Mr. Good, are numerous and
 striking, but we have not space to copy them, and must refer to the
 work itself.

Design of
 the book,
 creed,
 doctrines,
 and ritual.

The most important part of the inquiry, concerning this extra-
 ordinary production, however, remains yet to be noticed, and is given
 by our author in his FIFTH SECTION, on the CREED, DOCTRINES, and
 RITUAL of the poem; in which he fully, and as we think, satisfactorily
 explains the express object of the work, and the expediency of its
 introduction into the Hebrew canon. The preceding inquiry concern-
 ing the origin and æra of the book of Job, will be found, observes
 Mr. Good, of no small moment or importance. For if it has succeeded
 in fixing the date of the book of Job, at a period antecedent to the
 Egyptian exody, and of course to the Mosaic institution, and in
 bringing home the composition to Moses himself—then does this
 book immediately become a DEPOSITORY OF PATRIARCHAL RELIGION,
 the best and fullest depository in the world, and drawn up by that
 very pen which was most competent to do justice to it. Then also
 do we obtain a clear and decisive answer to the question which has
 so often been proposed. What is the ultimate intention of the book
 of Job? and for what purpose is it introduced into the Hebrew and
 Christian canons? It will then appear that it is for the purpose of
 making those canons complete, by uniting as full an account as is
 necessary, of the dispensation of the patriarchs, with the two dis-
 pensations by which it was progressively succeeded. It will then
 appear that the chief doctrines of the patriarchal religion, as collected
 from different parts of the poem, were as follow:—

Depository
 of
 patriarchal
 faith.

Doctrines of
 patriarchal
 religion.

I. The creation of the world by one supreme and eternal intelli-
 gence.⁶

II. Its regulation by his perpetual and superintending providence.⁷

⁶ See especially the speech of Jehovah
 himself, from chap. xxxviii. to chap. xli.
 inclusively.

⁷ Chap. i. 9, 21; ii. 10; v. 8—27; ix. 4—
 13; and in almost every ensuing chapter
 throughout the book.

III. The intentions of his providence carried into effect by the ministrations of a heavenly hierarchy.⁸ A.M. 2484.
B.C. 1520.

IV. The heavenly hierarchy, composed of various ranks and orders, possessing different names, dignities, and offices.⁹

V. An apostasy or defection in some rank or order of these powers;¹⁰ of which Satan seems to have been one, and perhaps chief.¹¹

VI. The good and evil powers or principles, equally formed by the Creator, and hence equally denominated "sons of God;" both of them employed by him in the administration of his providence; and both amenable to him at stated courts, held for the purpose of receiving an account of their respective missions.¹²

VII. A day of future resurrection, judgment, and retribution, to all mankind.¹³

VIII. The propitiation of the Creator, in the case of human transgressions, by sacrifices,¹⁴ and the mediation and intercession of a righteous person.¹⁵

Several of these doctrines are more clearly developed than others: yet I think, says our author, there are sufficient grounds for deducing the whole of them. Some critics may, perhaps, conceive that the different names by which the heavenly host are characterised may be mere synonyms, and not designed to impart any variety of rank or order. Yet the names themselves, in most instances, imply distinctions, though we are not informed of their nature. ממיתים (*memitim*), destinies, or destroyers, ministers of death, cannot possibly apply to all of them, and appear to be nearly synonymous with the Μόραι Αἰσῶν, or *Parcæ*, of the Greek and Roman writers. The term itself, indeed, is obviously used in a limited and appropriate sense, in ch. xxxiii. 23, and is distinctly opposed to מלאכים (*malacim*), angels; מליצים (*melizim*), intercessors; and אלף (*alep*), chiliad, or thousand:

In what manner developed.

As his soul draweth near to the grave,
And his life to the DESTINIES,
Surely will there be over him an ANGEL,
AN INTERCESSOR,—one of THE THOUSAND.

The general term for the whole of these different ranks appears to be עֲשִׂימִים (*kedosim*), SANCTI, or HOLY ONES; עֲבָדִים (*obedim*), "ministers or servants," seems to convey in every instance in which it occurs, a subordinate idea, in office as well as in name, to מלאכים (*malacim*), "angels, thrones, or principedoms." אלף (*alep*), "the chiliad, or thousand," distinctly imports a particular corps or class; and is probably denominated by a rule common to most countries and

Heavenly hierarchy.

⁸ Chap. i. 6, 7; iii. 18, 19; v. 1; xxxiii. 22, 23.

⁹ As *obedim*, servants; *malacim*, angels; *melizim*, intercessors; *memitim*, destinies or destroyers; *alep*, the chiliad or thousand; *kedosim*, SANCTI, the heavenly saints or hosts generally. See chap. iv. 18; xxxiii. 22, 23; v. 2; xv. 15.

¹⁰ Chap. iv. 18; xv. 15.

¹¹ Chap. i. 6—12; ii. 2—7.

¹² Chap. i. 6, 7; ii. 1.

¹³ Chap. xiv. 13, 14, 15; xix. 25—29; xxi. 30; xxxi. 14.

¹⁴ Chap. i. 5; xlii. 8.

¹⁵ Chap. xlii. 8, 9.

A.M. 2484. languages, from the number of which it consisted,—as militia,
B.C. 1520. centurion, decemvir, heptarch, tithingman.

Mr. Good proceeds to inform us that the same general belief has descended in Arabia, to the present day; and forms a distinct and prominent doctrine of the Alcoran; which he exemplifies at considerable length; and then shows that a similar belief was common to all the nations of the East, from whom it descended to the Greeks, and is especially adverted to by Hesiod, who calculates the whole number of heavenly guards, or deputies, appointed to watch over the earth, at thirty thousand: *Op. et Dies*, I. 246. With this passage he compares the strikingly similar and well-known description of Milton, *Par. Lost*, IV. 477, but derived from a superior authority.

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep, &c.

The source, says our author, from which these lines of Milton are derived is the Bible; and it is of far more consequence to us that the doctrine they develop pervades the Bible, than that it pervades any other work; and especially that it runs through the whole of the Scriptures, both Jewish and Christian, from Genesis to the Revelations—there being scarcely a book which has not a reference to it—and without a single caution or hint that the language employed is merely figurative, or designed to convey any other than the obvious and popular idea which must necessarily have been attached to it, by those to whom it was delivered. Thus especially, *Coloss. i. 16*, in which we have, in few words, a description of *invisible*, as well as of *visible* beings, inhabiting the earth, and the different orders of which the hierarchy consists: “For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are IN EARTH, VISIBLE and INVISIBLE, whether THRONES, or DOMINIONS, or PRINCIPALITIES, or POWERS.” Whence Milton again, *Par. Lost*, V. 600:—

Hear all ye angels, progeny of light,
Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers.

Apostacy in
heaven.

The doctrine of an apostacy among the celestial orders, as ascribed to the patriarchal religion from the poem before us, is derived from two or three passages, to which a different explanation has been given, but none that seems to afford an obvious sense. In chap. i. and ii. Satan is abruptly, and without ceremony, introduced as an evil spirit, as though the writer of the poem felt it unnecessary to offer a syllable upon the subject, from the general notoriety of the fact. In chap. iv. 18, the passage runs as follows:—

Behold! he cannot confide in his servants,
And chargeth his angels with default.
What, then, are the dwellers in houses of clay?

In chap. xv. 15, the same fact is again alluded to, and in terms equally strong, and equally general, as though of universal publicity:—

Behold! he cannot confide in his ministers,
And the heavens are not clear in his sight,
How much less then abominable and corrupt man, &c.

Where, observes Tyndal, “under the name of the heavens, under-standeth he the aungels:” on which account the Alexandrine version gives ΑΣΤΡΑ δὲ οὐκ ἀμέμπτα—“the STARS are not clean,” — *i.e.* “the MORNING STARS.” It is, in truth, under this precise image that the same fact is a third time referred to in the speech of Bildad; though, for want of due attention, it has seldom been understood to have this reference:—

Behold! even the moon—and it abideth not,
And the STARS are not pure in his sight:
How much less man, a worm! &c.

The common close, or burden, drawn from the greater impurity of man, shows obviously that this is the sense in which it ought to be understood. And the different passages taken collectively lead to a clear proof that the defection among the heavenly hosts was generally known at the time the poem was composed, and is, in all of them, generally referred to.

Concerning the doctrine of an universal resurrection and retribution, the poem, *upon a cursory view*, may in many places appear to be at variance with itself; for there are several passages which at first sight seem to point to an opposite conclusion: and hence a cloud of learned and excellent men in all ages, from St. Chrysostom and St. Ambrose, among the fathers, to Le Clerc, Reiske, Vorgel, Michaelis, Warburton, Geddes, and Stock, among modern commentators, have denied that any such doctrine is fairly to be collected from the poem as a whole. The question is, therefore, entitled to be examined with minute attention.

Resurrec-
tion of the
body.

It must be admitted that the only person amidst all the interlocutors who distinctly alludes to the subject, either on the one side or the other, is Job himself: and it certainly appears not a little extraordinary that none of his companions when reminding him, in succession, of the advantages of real contrition, and a restoration to the favour of the Almighty, should, even in the remotest manner, direct his attention to a future as well as to a present reward: and it is hence, perhaps, but fair to conceive that the doctrine of an after-state was no more in universal reception in the *last* of what may be denominated the patriarchal ages than it was among the Jews at the advent of our Saviour, and that the friends of Job did not themselves accede to it. Yet, in opposition to such a conclusion, there are two or three passages in the different speeches of Job which distinctly refer to it as a doctrine in general acceptation, and admitted by his companions themselves. But let us trace the principal passages which have any relation to the subject, in the succession in which they occur: and, in order to our reconciling the wide difference they exhibit, it should be constantly borne in mind that they are only brought forward by a man who, in the midst of extreme bodily pain, and the most complicated mental affliction that ever fell to the lot of any one, is perpetually agitated by every change of contending

A.M. 2484. emotions; hope, fear, confidence, despondency, indignation, tender-
 B.C. 1520. ness, submission, and triumph; each abruptly breaking upon the
 other, and frequently hurrying him away from his habitual principles
 to an utterance of transitory thoughts, urged by transitory feelings.

The following are the chief passages against the existence of a
 future life:—

CHAP. XIV. 15—22.

And for ever as the crumbling mountain dissolveth,
 And the rock mouldereth away from his place,
 As the waters wear to pieces the stones,
 As their overflowings sweep the soil from the land—
 So consumest thou the hope of man;
 Thou harrassest him continually till he perish:
 Thou weariest out his frame and despatchest him,
 His sons may come to honour, but he shall know it not;
 Or they may be impoverished, but he shall perceive nothing of them:
 For his flesh shall drop away from him,
 And his soul shall become a waste from him.

CHAP. XVI. 22.—CHAP. XVII. 1.

But the years numbered to me are come,
 And I must go the way whence I shall not return;
 My spirit is seized hold of; my days are extinct;
 Mine are the sepulchres.

CHAP. XVII. 11.

My days, my projects are all over;
 The resolves of my heart are cut asunder.
 Night is assigned me for day,
 A night bordering on the regions of darkness.
 While I tarry, the grave is my home;
 I am making my bed in the darkness;
 I exclaim to CORRUPTION “Thou art my father!”
 To the WORM, “my mother!” and “my sister!”
 And where, in such a state, are my hopes?
 Yea—my hopes!—who shall point them out?
 To the grasp of the grave must they fall a prey,
 Altogether are they below in the dust.

CHAP. XXX. 24, 25.

But not into the sepulchre will he thrust his hand;
 Surely there, in its ruin, is freedom.
 Should I not then weep for the ruthless day?
 My soul lament for the rock?

Upon all these passages it may be observed, that they rather refer to an insensibility or dissipation of the soul upon death, than to the question of a re-existence or resurrection at some future period: and hence they cannot strictly be said to annihilate this latter doctrine. In the midst of his deepest despondency, as expressed in these extracts, the speaker still alludes to his *hopes*, though to hopes which, at the immediate moment, he felt incapable of cherishing; still proving, however, that, even on such occasions, the DOCTRINE itself was known to him, and existed before him, and had been agitated by him, although his fears or his sufferings impelled him at the time to relinquish it. It should also be observed, that, except the last of these passages, they are all uttered in the earliest part of his affliction, when the disease itself appears to have raged most violently, and the reproaches of his companions to have been most bitter. From chap. xix. he seems,

in a considerable degree, to have recovered possession of himself: A.M. 2484. he is conscious of his superiority over the speeches urged against B.C. 1520. him; and, for the most part, exchanges his exclamations and complaints for sound logical reasoning; and from this period, the only relapse into a state of despondency and disbelief, in any way discoverable, is contained in the last quotation.

The following are the chief passages in favour of a future existence:—

CHAP. XIV. 10—15.

But man dieth and mouldereth;
 But the mortal expireth—and where is he?
 As the billows pass away with the tides,
 So man lieth down, and riseth not:
 TILL THE HEAVENS BE DISSOLVED they shall not awake;
 No—they shall not rouse up from their sleep.
 O! that thou wouldst hide ME in the grave,
 That thou wouldst conceal me—TILL THY WRATH BE PAST;
 THAT THOU WOULDST APPOINT ME A FIXT TIME, AND REMEMBER ME.
 But if a man die—shall he, indeed, live again?
 All the days of my appointment will I wait
 Till my RENOVATION come.
 Thou shalt call—and I WILL ANSWER THEE;
 Thou shalt yearn towards the work of thy hands.

This is a very important passage in relation to the general question, and is, at the same time, full of poetic beauty of every kind. It proves the tumult of the speaker's mind, and the abruptness and transition of his feelings. It is demonstrative of the existence of the DOCTRINE of a future state, because it is here fully brought forward, and reasoned upon: but it shows also, that though the doctrine was at that æra in existence, it admitted of debate; and that the speaker himself, under the immediate pressure of suffering, at one moment doubted, and at another was thoroughly convinced.

CHAP. XIX. 23—29.

O! that thy words were even now written down;
 O! that they were engraven on a table;
 With a pen of iron upon lead!
 That they were sculptured in a rock for ever!
 For "I KNOW that my REDEEMER liveth,
 And will ascend at last upon the earth;
 And after the DISEASE hath destroyed my skin,
 That, in my flesh, I shall see God:
 Whom I shall see for myself,
 And my own eyes shall behold, and not another's,
 Though my reins be consumed within me."
 Then shall ye say, "How did we persecute him!"
 When the root of the matter is disclosed concerning me.
 O tremble for yourselves before the sword;
 For fierce is the vengeance of the sword;
 Therefore beware of its judgment.

For the different senses which have been given to this sublime passage, and our author's happy and simple extrication of it from the difficulties by which it has hitherto been involved, we must refer to his translation itself. Taken in connection with the preceding and succeeding passages it appears decisive, not only as to the existence of the doctrine at the æra in which the work was com-

A.M. 2484. posed, but as to the speaker's complete and triumphant persuasion
 B.C. 1520. of it at the moment of its being uttered. The word "STAND upon the earth," as given in our common version, is a very feeble and inadequate rendering: the Hebrew קָם signifies, indeed, "to stand," but more correctly, "to stand up," "mount," "rise up," "ascend." It is here, and in various other places, a forensic term, and, in such instances, should be always rendered "ascend," *i.e.* to the judgment-seat. It is used in the very same sense in chap. xxxi. 14, where our common lection, instead of *stand*, translates it *rise up*: "when God *riseth up*;" which is a better signification than the former, but still remote and inadequate. The bold and severe apostrophe of the speaker to his companions, in the lines that immediately follow, proves obviously that the whole refers to the solemn judgment of the Almighty.

CHAP. XXXI. 28, 30.

For, "where, SAY YE, is the house of this mighty one?
 Yea, where the fixed mansion of the wicked?
 Lo! against the day of destruction are the wicked reserved;
 In the day of vengeance shall they be brought forth."

CHAP. XXXI. 13, 14.

If I have slighted the cause of my man-servant, or my maid-servant,
 In their controversies with me,
 What shall I do when God ASCENDETH;
 And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

In the last passage, קָם , as already observed, is doubtless used forensically, *ascendeth*, *i.e.* "to the tribunal or judgment-seat;" and not "*riseth up*," as in our established lection. The speaker is immediately adverting to the manner in which he had conducted himself as emir or chief magistrate of Uz, and the strict justice he had uniformly endeavoured to administer at the tribunal of the gate. The passage cannot be misunderstood, and seems decisive not only of the existence of the doctrine of a future judgment at the æra before us, but of the speaker's habitual belief of it, considering that he was now debating coolly and argumentatively, and free from the influence of passion. The quotation immediately preceding it may, perhaps, admit of a different interpretation, if considered by itself; yet, as it ought not to be considered by itself, but in conjunction with collateral passages, the proper and intended sense is fixed at once. This quotation is of consequence, not only as leading to a proof of the existence of the doctrine, and the speaker's assent to it, when dispassionately arguing upon the subject, but as ascribing the same assent, as a known and admitted fact, to his companions; for he puts the words into their mouths in their own presence.

Heresy and
 idolatry
 adverted to
 in the poem.

The only existing heresy that occurs to us in the course of the poem is that of magic or incantation; and the only idolatry that of Sabeism, or the worship of the heavenly bodies. The first is glanced at in chap. iii. 8, and the second in chap. xxxi. 26; and both, were additional proofs wanting, would concur in corroborating its

high antiquity ; for they are among the oldest subjects to be met with in history or tradition ; the first being known to have been professed and practised by collegiate bodies in Egypt before the Mosaic æra ; and the second being commonly referred for its origin to a date antecedent to that of Abraham ; and by Maimonides to a period nearly as early as that of Seth ; his son, Sabius, according to the Sabeans themselves, having invented and propagated it. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that it is of much earlier birth than either image-worship, or the deification of heroes, which have usually, and perhaps correctly, been regarded as its abominable progeny.

The form of the poem before us, contemplated as a depository of patriarchal faith, is also entitled to attention, and is almost as much in favour of a very early origin, as any circumstance that has yet been noticed. All the institutes of the highest antiquity, of which we have any account, were delivered in poetry, and under the shape of history, real or fictitious. Such is probably the Zend-avesta, (though its actual rhythm, like that of Hebrew poetry, seems no longer to be known,) if we may judge from the *Sadder*, a book used by the Magi, containing an account of the laws and precepts of the Parsees, avowedly drawn up from the Zend-avesta, and written in Persian verse. Such unquestionably are the Veda, being composed in *ashloks*, or rather *slokas*, or stanzas of four lines each, the two first books of which affect an antiquity superior to that of the Mosaic æra ; though their high pretensions have been greatly disturbed and controverted by various writers of the present age. Such is also the Shu King, compiled by Confucius, and perhaps the three other Kings, constituting collectively the theology of the Chinese ; and such are the Orphic fragments of Greece, and the Edda of Iceland. It is, however, peculiarly worthy of remark, that Arabia has more pretensions, and especially more pretensions of very high antiquity, to such a mode of communication than any other country whatever. Its customs and manners, the agreeableness of its climate, the beauty and variety of its prospects, and, above all, the force, and richness, and elegance of its language, concurred, at a very early period, to render poetry an object of universal attraction ; so that the rise of a poet in an Arabian tribe was one of the principal sources of public rejoicing ; and hence, as far as almost any nation can look back through the medium of profane history, we find a sort of poetical academy instituted in this country, which, with a view of maintaining a due spirit of emulation, used annually to assemble at Ocadh, where every poet produced his best composition ; and where the different tribes to which the poets belonged, waited for the award of the judges, who were appointed to decide on their respective merits, with as much anxiety as the writers of the poems themselves. This assembly was suppressed by Mahomet, partly as interfering with his very opposite views of

Argument drawn from the arrangement of the work.

A.M. 2484. warfare, but chiefly because many of the poems recited on such
 B.C. 1520. occasions were filled with severe and appropriate sarcasms upon himself; among the principal of which were those recited by Caab Ben Zohain, whose destruction was consequently panted for by Mahomet with long and unmitigated eagerness.

There is no book in the Bible which has tempted so many critics to try their strength, and exercise their skill, as the poem before us; and hence there is none that can boast so numerous a catalogue of monographers.

Commentators and translators of Job.

One of the earliest translators into a modern tongue, was the justly celebrated Padre Maestro Fr. Luis de Leon, of the order of St. Augustine; who rendered it into very excellent Spanish: he flourished in the sixteenth century, and composed his version between the years 1578 and 1591; the last chapter was finished in March, and in the August of the same year the learned father died, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. It was published in the year ensuing, by the unanimous consent of the university of Salamanca, with a due sense of its very great merit, and a declaration that it was *written in heaven*, "*esté en el cielo escribiò.*" It is, however, a very excellent and valuable performance: the prose and literal version is followed by an elegant rhyme translation, and accompanied with a very full and extensive exposition. It is not often that Roman Catholic universities have made so valuable a present of any part of the Scriptures in their mother tongue. The learned father does not, however, appear to have been versed in the Arabic, and other cognate dialects of the East, and hence, though he has been successful in many points, he has still left the most perplexing difficulties untouched. For the first application of the Arabic key to an illustration of the book of Job, we are indebted to the critics of Germany and Holland, and especially to the two Schultenses, Reiske, and Michaelis. In the two first, there is too large an indulgence of the imagination; in the third, too bold and dangerous an inclination to alter the sacred text. Our own country has been peculiarly rich in translators and expositors. In the foremost train of these stands the elegant and venerable Bishop Lowth, whose Prælections are an inexhaustible treasure of classical beauties. The translation of Dr. Stock, bishop of Killala, is of far inferior value: but it was composed in a season of great mental distress, and with too hurried a pen. A posthumous translation of Miss Smith, has lately been given to the public; it is a wonderful production, considering her age, and the want of proper assistance under which it was produced; but as it never received the benefit of her finishing hand, it is marred by errors which otherwise would not probably have existed. Of the version and annotations of Mr. Good, we need not speak any farther, as we have already quoted from them so largely. The English language boasts also two very excellent rhyme translations of this poem, one by Sandys, son of the archbishop of

the same name, whom Dryden styles the best versifier of his age, A.M. 2484. and from whom Dr. Johnson has largely copied in his dictionary; B.C. 1520. and the other by Scott, who has also accompanied it with a very valuable running commentary.

Having thus copiously dwelt on the origin, subject-matter, and poetical beauties of this extraordinary composition, we feel that we ought not to close our account without offering to the reader a few examples of its high pretensions to excellence of every kind, when rendered with some portion of that taste and feeling which belong to itself; and for this purpose we must again recur to Mr. Good's execution. Brief specimens of excellence.

There has always been supposed a great difficulty in understanding the real meaning of the last verse in chap. xiii. and in connecting it with the verse which immediately precedes. In our common version, which is a pretty fair transcript of the Greek and Latin interpretations, the passage runs thus:—

“Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly into all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet. And he as a rotten thing consumeth, as a garment that is moth-eaten.”

Reiske, Shultens, Grey, and Stock, have tried in various ways to make sense of this passage, but none of them have succeeded to the satisfaction of the critical world, and few of them to the satisfaction of themselves. Mr. Good seems to show very clearly that the last verse in chap. xiii. should be the first verse in chap. xiv. and that the former chapter should close with ver. 27, instead of ver. 28; and we have then, according to his interpretation, the following fearful description of the vanity and nothingness of man.

CHAP. XIII.

- 28 Well may he dissolve as corruption,
The moth-worm feeding upon him as a garment—

Vanity of
man.

CHAP. XIV.

- 1 MAN—the produce of woman,
Few of days, and full of trouble.—
2 He springeth up as a flower, and is cut down,
Yea, he fleeth as a shadow, and endureth not.
3 And dost thou cast thine eyes upon such a one?
And wouldst thou bring me into judgment with thyself?
Who can become pure?—free from pollution?
No one.—Seeing that his days are determined,
And the number of his months with thee:
That thou hast fixt his bounds, and he cannot go beyond—
6 O! turn from him, and leave him alone,
That he may fill up his day like the hireling.
7 There is, indeed, hope for the plant,
When it is cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that its tender branches will not fail:
8 Though its root have grown old in the earth,
And its trunk become dead over the soil,
9 Through the fragrancy of water it may revive,
And put forth young shoots, as when planted:
But man dieth, and mouldereth:—
10 But the mortal expireth—and where is he?
11 As the billows pass away with the tides:
And the floods are exhausted and dried up,
12 So man lieth down, and riseth not;
Till the heavens be dissolved they will not awake.

A.M. 2484. The following picture of the wicked man, as to the fate that
 B.C. 1520. awaits him, is strongly and awfully painted, in chap. xviii. and in
 its personifications, as they occur in Mr. Good's spirited version, may
 vie with the boldest attempts of Grecian poetry.

Bold
 description
 of the
 wicked man.

- 5 — The light of the wicked shall be put out,
 And the stream of his fire shall not shine:
- 6 Day-light shall be darkness in his tent,
 And his lamp shall be extinguished over him.
- 7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened,
 And his own counsel shall cast him away.
- 8 Lo! he plungeth by his feet into a pit-fall,
 Or walketh about amidst toils.
- 9 The springe shall lay hold of him by the heel,
 And rigidly fasten upon him.
- 10 Its cordage lieth hid in the ground,
 And its snare in the path-way.
- 11 DEVASTATION shall terrify him all around,
 And shall snatch him from his feet.
- 12 Hunger-bitten shall be his STRENGTH,
 And DESTRUCTION be present at his side.
- 13 Gluttonously shall he feed on his skin—
 The FIRST-BORN OF DEATH shall feed on him gluttonously.
- 14 His HOPE shall be up-rooted from his tent,
 And DISSOLUTION shall invade him as a monarch:
- 15 On his tent shall he fix for its extinction.
 Brimstone shall be rained down upon his dwelling.
- 16 Below shall his roots be burnt up,
 And above shall his branch be cut off.
- 17 His memory shall perish in the land,
 And no trace of him be in the public streets.
- 18 From day-light shall he be driven into darkness,
 And hunted out of the world.
- 19 No son of his, no kinsman of his
 Shall be among his people;
 Yea no posterity among his sojournings.
- 20 At his day shall the young be astonished,
 And the aged be panic-struck.
- 21 Surely such is the allotment of the wicked,
 And this the state of the unacquainted with God.

The Deity has never, perhaps, been so magnificently described in the character of the God of the tempest and the thunder storm, as in the following terrific delineation, from chap xxxvi. 24, to chap. xxxvii. 5, in which we have to remark a similar error in the common division of two chapters, to that we pointed out in the last quotation but one. The first verse of chap. xxxvii. is a direct continuation, not only of the same subject, but of the same paragraph as that with which chap. xxxvi. concludes; and Mr. Good has, with equal force and correctness, given the sense of *wrath* to the Hebrew, *אף*, in both verses, which, in our common lection, is sunk into a mere particle, and rendered *also*. From not having attended to this error in the division of the chapter, as well as from not having hit upon the real meaning of one or two of the Hebrew terms, this passage has been found by all the commentators peculiarly doubtful and obscure, instead of peculiarly perspicuous and sublime.

CHAP. XXXVI.

God of the
 tempest and
 thunder-
 storm.

- 24 O! reflect, that thou mayst honour his dealings
 Whom mankind jointly celebrate.
- 25 Every mortal looketh towards him;
 Man gazeth afar off.

- 26 Behold! God is great—surpassing knowledge:
The number of his years!—surpassing research.
27 Lo! he exhaleth the drops of the waters;
They throw off the rain for his tempest.
28 Then down flow the heavens;
They pour upon man impetuously.
29 But if he heap up the spreadings of the cloudy-woof,
The tapestry of his pavilion,
30 Behold! he throweth forth from it his flash,
And investeth the roots of the very ocean.
31 Lo! thus judgeth he the nations;
He passeth sentence amain.
32 He brandisheth the blaze athwart the concave,
And launcheth his penetrating bolt:
33 Along with it rusheth his roar,
The fierceness of wrath, because of wickedness:

A.M. 2484.
B.C. 1520.

CHAP. XXXVII.

- 1 Wrath—at which my heart trembleth,
And staggereth in his post.
2 Hear! O hear ye, the clangour of his voice,
And the peal that issueth from his mouth.
3 Under the whole heavens is his flash,
And his lightning unto the ends of the earth.
4 After it pealeth the voice;
He thundereth with the voice of his majesty;
And there is no limit to them when his voice soundeth.
5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice.

The original of this passage has other difficulties than what we have noticed above; and hence the translators have various differences in their rendering. But we have not space for verbal criticism, and must refer, in the present instance, to the author from whom we have quoted.

The name of Job occurs in the ancient martyrologies with the title of prophet, saint, and martyr. The worship of him, under the one or other of these characters, is of high antiquity, and was at one time very extensive, both in the Greek and Latin churches. The Greeks made choice of May 6, for his festival, and have been followed in this arrangement by the Christians of Arabia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Russian empire. The Latins hold his festival on May 10. Next to the Maccabees, who were brothers as well as martyrs, Job is the first saint to whom the western church decreed public and religious honours.

Among the patriarchs and prophets there is no character to whom more churches have been consecrated, or chapels dedicated, than to Job. A pretended tomb of him has been shown in many places. The most celebrated is that of the Trachonitis, towards the springs of the Jordan. It is situate between the cities still bearing the names of Teman, Shuah, and Naama. There is another tomb publicly shown for that of the patriarch in Armenia, where Cock, the Chaldee paraphrast, contended that he had lived. And as another Chaldee interpreter placed his residence in the vicinity of Constantinople, we have also a third tomb of Job exhibited near the walls of this city; but which, by soberer historians, has been referred to an Arabian warrior of the same name, who fell at the

Honours
paid to the
memory of
Job.

A. M. 2484. siege of Constantinople in the year 672. In this city, however,
B. C. 1520. was a monastery in the sixth century, dedicated to the patriarch
himself; yet the ecclesiastics did not venture to affirm that it was
erected in consequence of their being in possession of his remains,
as is usually done on the foundation of monasteries.

CHAPTER IV.

MOSES.

BORN A.M. 2433, B.C. 1571—DIED A.M. 2553, B.C. 1451.

MOSES, who is characterised in the Scriptures as “meek above A.M. 2433. all the men that were upon the face of the earth,” and who as such B.C. 1571. was singularly qualified to be the agent of Providence in some of its most wonderful operations, was born in Egypt, of Amram and Jochebed, about sixty-four years after the death of Joseph, and one hundred and thirty-six from the descent of Israel into that country. Period of the birth of Moses. His history is interwoven with that of the people over whom he presided, whose deliverance from a state of bondage he was destined to effect, and whose civil and ecclesiastical polity he was chosen to establish. His life, which spreads over a period of one hundred and twenty years, brings down the annals of the Israelites from the two thousand four hundred and thirty-third, to the two thousand five hundred and fifty-third year of the world;—a period replete with prodigies, and illustrative both of the divine perfections and the character of man.

The period now to be introduced to the reader’s consideration admits of an advantageous division into three parts: the first of which will comprehend the personal narrative of this illustrious Hebrew, including such collateral histories as connect themselves with the general subject; the second, a demonstration of his divine mission; the third, an inquiry into the nature, character, and spirit of those laws which he promulgated amongst the ancient Israelites.

I.—THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF MOSES.

At the time when Moses was born, a king had arisen, who His personal history. cherished very different feelings towards the Israelites from those with which a sense of obligation had inspired his celebrated predecessor, who had introduced them into Egypt; and who perceiving they had multiplied so rapidly that they might soon be in a condition to take possession of the entire kingdom, determined upon a very cruel method of checking their progress: this was to oppress them with exactions and labour of the most intolerable kind. The inspired history states, that “the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the

A.M. 2433. field: all their service wherein they made them serve was with
 B.C. 1571. rigour:" which is subsequently explained by the recorded com-
 mands of the king to his officers; "Ye shall no more give the
 people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather
 straw for themselves; and the tale of bricks which they did make
 heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought
 thereof." In this instance, however, as in most others, persecution
 failed of effecting its purpose; the severities with which they were
 treated not in the least tending to prevent their multiplication. The
 country indeed had been always notorious for the fruitfulness of the
 women, which was attributed, says Strabo, to the air, and particu-
 larly to the waters of the Nile; but the strangers seem at this
 period to have so excelled the natives as to excite their alarm;
 which can be attributed to nothing less than the interposition of an
 extraordinary providence, whose designs were hastening to the
 moment of their intended development.

Pharaoh's
 cruelty.

The king accordingly enacted, that every male child of the
 Hebrews should be cast into the Nile: a measure which was
 unquestionably aimed at the total extermination of the race. Even
 parents were required to be instrumental to the death of their
 offspring; and the attendants upon the women were ordered to
 strangle the sons, but spare the daughters. Josephus represents
 the immediate occasion of this decree to have been the prediction of
 an Egyptian prophet, that a Hebrew child was about to be born
 who would hereafter diminish the power of Egypt, and enhance that
 of the Israelites.

At this critical juncture Moses was born; but notwithstanding
 the anxieties which must have pervaded the maternal bosom at
 such a season, in addition to the usual pains of child-bearing,
 (which, however, according to the testimony of Josephus, were in
 this case providentially prevented,) Jochebed was able instantly to
 nurse and to set about the concealment of her beloved little son.
 The same writer states, that assurances had been given to his father
 in a vision, that he should be miraculously preserved and raised up
 to the important work of effecting the deliverance of Abraham's
 posterity.

Moses is hid
 in the
 bulrushes.

At the expiration of three months, his solicitous parents found
 it impossible any longer to elude the sanguinary decree of Pharaoh:
 in order, therefore, to avoid the misery consequent upon being the
 direct murderer of her own infant, the ingenious mother contrived
 an ark of bulrushes, and besmearing it with slime and pitch to
 render it water-tight, committed it to the rushy brink of the river,
 but with better hope to the care of the invisible God. Her daughter
 Miriam was at the same time placed at a convenient distance to
 watch the event. It was early in the morning, and the daughter of
 Pharaoh, accompanied by several female attendants, went down to
 the river to bathe. Her eye was caught, and her curiosity excited,

Found by
 Pharaoh's
 daughter.

by the little ark or basket among the flags, and upon examining its contents, her heart was touched with sympathy at seeing one of the most attractive objects in creation—a beautiful child of three months, whose tears seem to correspond well with its melancholy situation, and whom she instantly conjectured to be one of the Hebrew's children. A. M. 2433.
B. C. 1571.

Encouraged by the compassionate expressions and affectionate manner of the Princess, his sister approached to ask if she should go in search of a nurse for the child, and by this little artifice obtained the real mother to become the protector of her own infant, under the promise of an ample recompense. Thus, in the very family of Pharaoh, the future emancipator of Israel found an asylum, and was trained up, under the inspection of the Princess who adopted him, in all the learning and wisdom which the Egyptian Magi were capable of imparting. It was customary to name the child at his circumcision, which took place on the eighth day after his birth; but whether this had been omitted in consequence of the confusion and distress which the edict of the king had every where diffused, or whether the royal protectress determined to substitute another which should better transmit to posterity the remarkable history of his infancy, it is certain that she gave him the name by which he is now universally distinguished. *Mo* and *Mos* in the Egyptian, as well as in other ancient languages, signified *water*, as Philo, Clemens, (who expresses it *Möu*,) Artapanus, (who styles him *Μωυσοϛ*, *Moïsius*,) and other authorities testify.

Educated in
Pharaoh's
Court.

Although the situation he occupied in the court of Pharaoh was favourable to his temporal advancement, it was by no means conducive to the accomplishment of those magnificent designs in which he was predestined to become the instrument of his nation's deliverance. If, instead of imbibing the superstitions of the age and country in which he resided, he acquired the knowledge and lived in the fear of the true God, it may be attributed with the greatest probability to the private instructions of his mother, to whom the care of his infancy was so singularly intrusted. And if, at the age of maturity, instead of lingering with fond delight and forgetfulness of his kindred and nation, amidst the attractions of earthly splendour, he was influenced to renounce every prospect of distinction for the friendship and fellowship of his brethren in adversity; we must attribute the choice, not only to that right thinking which his mother had inspired, and that judicious mind with which he was endowed, but to the overruling of providence; to the immediate influence of Him who had formed him for the accomplishment of his omniscient purposes. He had, besides, intimations of his calling; and when, at the age of forty, he quitted the prospects of elevation which Egypt afforded in order to visit his countrymen, he took the deepest interest in their concerns; and on one occasion, when he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in

Slays an
Egyptian

A.M. 2433. the sand. By this action he imagined that his brethren would be
 B.C. 1571. led to understand his destination as the deliverer of Israel; but that they mistook it can excite no astonishment. Probably this proceeding ought to be considered as indiscreet, resulting rather from the impatience of zeal, than from purity of intention: and it was succeeded by very disastrous consequences; for on the following day he saw two Hebrews striving together, and upon his attempting to settle the dispute by remonstrating with the aggressor, he was indignantly repulsed, with the inquiry, "Who made thee a Prince and a Judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" By this it was evident the action of the past day was discovered; and as the king was resolved to put him to death, according to the laws of the country, no alternative remained but immediate escape. Having fled across the desert into Arabia Petræa, he stopped and took up his residence in the land of Midian, which was situated upon the farther side of the two inlets of the Red Sea, to the east of the wilderness of Sin and Etham. Upon his arrival he sat down by a well of water, where he had an opportunity of displaying both his sensibility and his courage. The daughters of Reuel or Raguel, seven in number, coming to water their father's flocks, the rival shepherds of the neighbourhood rudely drove them away, upon which Moses rose up and volunteered his successful interference. They hastened home—and their father, astonished at their early return, inquired the reason; which was no sooner discovered, than he sent to invite him to participate his hospitality. Jethro (for such was the name of his host,) soon formed a more permanent connection with Moses, by marrying one of his daughters to the stranger, who took up his residence in the family to superintend his possessions. By this marriage he had two sons, named Gershom and Eliezer.

Flies to
Midian.

A.M. 2473.
B.C. 1531.

Marries
Jethro's
daughter.

Composes
the
Pentateuch.

The father-in-law of Moses was the Priest of Midian, and, probably, as these offices were usually conjoined, the ruler also of the people, who were Cuthites. It has been supposed, that in this retirement Moses, under the influence of inspiration, composed the five historical books of the Pentateuch, which constitutes the first portion of the sacred record. The book of Job is also assigned to the same author, and the same period. Others, however, are of opinion, that in this seclusion he relinquished his former views, and that his zeal expired with his hopes. Midian was unfavourably situated for any communication respecting his brethren in Egypt; and, perhaps, imagining that if the design itself were not abandoned, his particular agency was dispensed with, he alienated himself from the Hebrews by forming an intimate connection with another race. Year after year rolled on, till another forty years was added to his life, but no deliverance was effected; and none, according to human probability, likely to be effected for his people, who continued to groan beneath the yoke of Egyptian bondage. Circumstances

seemed to have encircled him with an impassable barrier, and could he even return to his brethren, what influence did he possess, or what patronage could he anticipate? A question may here very naturally arise, why should God permit the nation, for whom so wonderful a manifestation was intended, to continue for a succession of years in a state of such galling servitude—or why, if Moses were to become their leader, was he suffered to waste the strength of his days in solitude and inaction? To this there is but one reply—the ways of God are above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts. So *certain* are all his arrangements, that no event need to be hurried, to secure it against contingency; and so *wise*, that the general advance of the entire system of things resulting from mutual dependence, requires that no particular circumstance be precipitated into undue rapidity, or pushed into disproportionate prominence.

The hour of liberation at length arrived. Having led the flock of Jethro to a part of the desert near mount Horeb, Moses was surprised, amidst his usual occupations, by the phenomenon of a bush involved in flames, without being consumed. Having immediately approached, for the purpose of investigating the cause of this mysterious appearance, a voice suddenly issued from the fire; and after twice distinctly uttering his name, commanded him to put off his shoes, declaring that the spot on which he stood was consecrated by the presence of the eternal God. Overawed by the manifestation, he hid his face while he listened to the solemn proclamations of majesty and mercy. He was assured, that the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob was there; and that having watched with incessant solicitude the condition of his afflicted people in Egypt, he was come down to deliver them out of a state of servitude, with a view of eventually establishing them in the luxurious borders of Canaan, whence the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, and other nations were to be expelled. Moses was further informed, that he was fixed upon as the agent of providence to accomplish this change, and must immediately repair to Pharaoh to commence the undertaking. With a modesty which is eminently characteristic of this extraordinary man, he expressed his consciousness of being disqualified for so important a service; but “certainly,” said God, “I will be with thee:” a declaration which ought to have removed every apprehension from his mind, and to have induced the most unhesitating compliance. He was, however, still scrupulous; partly from a sense of personal incompetency, and partly from a suspicion of some possible illusion. “When I come,” said he, “to the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, what is his name? What shall I say unto them?” The reply to this question was truly striking and impressive—“I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” In

A.M. 2473.
B.C. 1531.

A.M. 2513.
B.C. 1491.

Divine
appearance
at Horeb.

Moses
appointed to
deliver the
Hebrews
from
bondage.

A.M. 2513. addition to this he was furnished with a detailed answer to the
 B.C. 1491. anticipated inquiries of the people of Israel, which contained an exposition of the merciful designs of God respecting their future happy destiny. Moses continued reluctant: domestic fondness, perhaps, played about his heart; he had formed interesting connections in the country; he recollected the severity with which he had once been treated by the people from whom he had now been many years estranged; he felt aware that he incurred the forfeiture of his life by returning to Egypt; and he imagined that those to whom he was especially sent would dispute his commission. We cannot justify this distrust; but we must admire that amazing condescension in the Divine Being, which performed successive miracles in order to inspire him with a proper degree of confidence. Being directed to cast the rod which he held in his hand to the ground, it instantly became a serpent; when he put forth his hand to regain it, the serpent was re-transformed into a rod. He was then commanded to thrust his hand into his bosom, and it became leprous as snow, till, upon his repeating the action, it was perfectly restored to its original appearance. These signs he was directed to repeat in the presence of the Egyptian King.

Miracles performed to inspire him with confidence.

After this, a new objection is named: "O, my Lord," said Moses, "I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." A promise was immediately given of affording him every requisite assistance, which does not appear to have removed his unwarrantable hesitation, till the further assurance that his brother Aaron, who was, by the special appointment of Jehovah, already on the way to meet him, should be his spokesman, while he was to be endowed with the power of performing miracles with his rod. It is singular enough that Moses was afterwards called by the Egyptians *Alphi*, which signifies the *mouth* or *oracle of God*.

He leaves Midian.

Determined at length upon pursuing the course which duty prescribed, he introduced the subject to Jethro, and gained his consent to visit his brethren in the land of bondage. His wife and his sons accompanied him on his journey: when the Lord met him, and it is said "sought to kill him." The reason of this remarkable circumstance is mentioned in the history. Circumcision had been prescribed to Abraham as a badge of admission into the covenant with which it had pleased God to enter with the Israelites through his instrumentality, and it was enjoined with the attendant penalty of excision to every uncircumcised individual. It seems probable that Moses had been seduced by his wife into a neglect of this ordinance, with regard to their son, and it was nothing but an apprehension of danger that urged her to comply; which she did, however, with this bitter taunt, "a bloody husband art thou to me."

"We see now," says Mr. Bryant, "the shepherd of Horeb, the man of slow speech, arrived upon the confines of Egypt, with a

design to free his people. If we set aside all supernatural assistance, he stands single and unsupported, without one requisite towards the completion of his purpose. How can we suppose a person so circumstanced, capable of carrying on a scheme so arduous in its execution? We must continually bear in mind the time that he had been absent, and his ignorance of every thing which had happened in that interval. We are assured that he did not know whether his brother Aaron was alive. Hence it is manifest, that previous to his departure from Midian, he had never sent to try the temper of his people, nor to know how the Prince of the country stood affected towards them. Great revolutions might have happened during the time that he had been away; and those whom he intended to deliver, might not have stood in need of his assistance. He purposed to lead them to another country, when they might have been contented with that which they enjoyed; or they might already have migrated, and Moses not have been apprised of it. These were circumstances of consequence, of which he should have obtained some intelligence; but he seems not to have had power or opportunity to gain it. His brother was alive, and appears to have resided in the court of Pharaoh. And there must have been, among the elders of the people, persons who could consult for their brethren, and preserve them, if their deliverance were to be effected by human means. Moses sets out singly to perform what their wisdom and experience jointly could not effect; and this without knowing for certain, that he had any friend or ally. Let us, however, suppose, that his zeal, which had been dormant for so many years, at last induced him to prosecute this scheme; and that, having quitted his place of ease and retirement, and bidden adieu to his connections of very long standing, he arrived, with his staff in his hand, like a pilgrim in Egypt. He had here two difficulties to encounter. The first was to get together some hundreds of thousands of people, who were scattered over the face of the country, and then to persuade them to follow him to Canaan. This was a real difficulty, as it could not be easy to collect them, much less to gain their confidence. Some of the Tribe of Ephraim, had, upon a time, made an invasion upon the land of Canaan, but were cut off by the natives of Gath. This could not afford any encouragement to the remaining Israelites, to undertake an expedition against the people of that country. The next difficulty was to get access to the Prince who reigned; and request, or demand, the dismissal of so many useful subjects. Moses was quite a stranger at the Egyptian Court, and not gifted with the powers of persuasion; and at the same time, in character no better than a Midianitish shepherd. What plea could he use, or what art employ? All that he could say upon the occasion was, that he was a prophet of the Lord, the God of the Hebrews; and that he desired, in his name, to carry the people collectively, old and young, to sacrifice in the wilderness. But this would prove but a weak plea, when not sup-

A.M. 2513.
B.C. 1491.

Circumstances of his return to Egypt.

Natural difficulties of the task undertaken by Moses. Exod. v. 12.

1 Chron. vii. 21.

A.M. 2513. ported by some sign, to show that it had the sanction of divine
 B.C. 1491. authority. What answer could be expected from a monarch upon
 Exod. v. 2. such an occasion? Even the same which was really given,—“Who
 is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know
 not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.—Get you unto your
 burdens.” And what was the consequence?—An imposition of
 Exod. v. 9. double duty, “Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they
 may labour therein: and let them not regard vain words.” They
 were in consequence of this to make bricks without the requisites,
 Exod. v. 12. being denied straw, “So the people were scattered abroad throughout
 all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble instead of straw.” Yet the
 same tale of bricks was demanded. This was enough to make the
 people detest the name of Moses. It must have ruined him in their
 opinion, and defeated all his views; for the people, whom he wanted
 to collect, were separated more than ever. Their disaffection may
 be learnt from their words, when Moses had delivered his message:
 Exod. v. 20, “And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way as they
 21. came forth from Pharaoh, and they said unto them, The Lord look
 upon you and judge; because ye have made our savour to be
 abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to
 put a sword in their hands to slay us.”

Divine in-
 terposition
 necessary
 for the
 deliverance
 of the
 Israelites

“Thus,” as the same author observes, “we see from the wonder-
 ful texture of this history, that the deliverance of the Israelites could
 not be effected without the divine interposition. For these were
 difficulties which neither the wisdom nor ability of men could remedy.
 Yet they were remedied; but it was by a far superior power. It
 was by God himself, who suffered his people to be in this perplexity
 and distress, that they might wish for deliverance, and be ready to
 obey. Accordingly, when upon the display of his wonders, they
 acknowledged the hand of the Almighty, and proffered their obedience
 to his prophet, they were delivered by him from those evils, from
 which no power on earth could have freed them. Thus we see that
 the same mode of acting may be wisdom in God, and folly in man.”

Interview
 with
 Pharaoh.

It was not without extreme difficulty, nor till after repeated
 miracles, that the commissioned agents of a wonder-working pro-
 vidence, succeeded in procuring the escape of the enslaved children
 of Israel. The application for their release only exasperated the
 king, and for a time increased the miseries of these poor people.
 The first in the series of miracles performed by Moses and his
 associate, Aaron, was in the immediate presence of Pharaoh: the
 latter cast down his rod, and it became a serpent. The magicians
 and sorcerers of Egypt being sent for to confront the servants of the
 most High God, imitated this action, and each man's rod became a
 serpent; but there was this proof of superiority furnished—the rod
 of Aaron swallowed up their rods. Prejudice, however, is never
 discriminating, and the evidence of divine interposition not only
 failed to subdue the incredulity, or allay the vengeance of the king,

but it hardened his heart the more against every proper impression. A.M. 2513.
 Moses was consequently directed to adopt a larger scale of miraculous B.C. 1491.
 operations, in the distinct mention of which, we propose to give the
 reader a brief illustration of the peculiar adaptation of each of these
 PLAGUES OF EGYPT (as they have been designated,) to the idolatries
 of the people upon whom they were inflicted.

The first plague consisted in *the river being turned into blood*, of First plague
 which the account is preserved in the VIIth chapter of the book of of Egypt.
 Exodus. This was effected by Moses striking the waters with that
 rod which had once been converted into a serpent; and as a rebuke
 to the obduracy of the Egyptian monarch, the river immediately
 became putrid, and the fish perished. A very powerful blow was
 thus aimed at one of their most deeply rooted idolatrous prejudices.
 No nation carried their reverence of the Nile to such a pitch of
 extravagance. On solemn occasions, they invoked it as their chief
 guardian and protector; and imagined, that it gave birth to all their
 deities—*ποταμὸν Νεῖλον* (says Diod. Siculus,) *πρὸς ᾧ καὶ τὰς τῶν θεῶν*
γενέσεις ὑπάρξαι. This opinion spread extensively amongst other
 nations, and produced a very general veneration for all Rivers amongst
 the Pagans. It was, therefore, calculated to strike a salutary con-
 viction of their folly into the minds of the Egyptians, and to have
 proved a warning to the Israelites, when they perceived the
 insufficiency of this divinity, and the baseness of this now desecrated
 stream. Nor was it merely polluted, but changed into blood; than
 which nothing was more abhorred by the priests, who pretended to
 extraordinary sanctity. The destruction of the fish is particularly
 specified, for in some cases, they too were worshipped as real deities;
 and to complete the absurdity, there was a city built in honour of
 one species called Oxurunchus, and a temple wherein these fish were
 publicly worshipped. (Strabo, i. 7.)

The second plague was that of the *frogs*, which was accomplished Second
 by Aaron, who, by the direction of Moses, stretched out his hand plague.
 over the waters; upon which the frogs came up and overspread the
 land, where they died in immense multitudes, filling the air with
 pestilential exhalations. This was a second disgrace inflicted upon
 their sacred river; and it prevented the natives from performing
 their usual ablutions. It is not absolutely certain, whether the frog
 were an object of worship, or of abhorrence in Egypt, possibly of
 both—as in other instances, where religious adoration was offered
 from sentiments of terror; and if so, they were punished as well by
 what they venerated, as by what they abominated. Most aquatic
 animals, however, were in Egypt sacred and emblematical; and as
 frogs were engraved upon the basis of Apollo's statue at Delphi,
 the seat of prophecy, they were, it is probable, characteristic of the
 priests and prophets, and sacred to the Nymphs and Muses. This
 animal is notorious for swelling itself up, and hence it became an
 emblem of Apollo, the god of inspiration, and of priests, and pro-

A.M. 2513. phets in general, particularly of the magicians of Egypt. The
 B.C. 1491. present miracle, therefore, constituted an appropriate punishment
 inflicted upon them, and their royal patron.

Third
 plague.

The third plague was that of *lice*. This was inflicted by the rod of Aaron, under the express direction of Moses, who, as before, received the command from God. The Egyptians were peculiarly solicitous of external purity; for which purpose they were continually bathing themselves, and observed the utmost nicety in their clothing. Herodotus has furnished ample evidence of their care in this respect. "The priests," says he, "wear raiment of linen only.—And the linen garments which they put on are continually fresh washed: concerning which they take particular care." It was usual for the people to wear a woollen garment over a linen one; but the former was thrown off when they approached their deities, from an apprehension of its harbouring vermin. It was also dispensed with at burials, from considering it as an impurity. The priests had their heads and bodies shaved every third day for the same reason. Plutarch furnishes a similar testimony, stating, that they abhorred all woollen as foul, and extolling flax, for λιτην δε παρεχει και καθαραν εσθητα, ημιστα δε φθειροποιον—it affords a delicate and pure covering, and is not at all liable to produce lice. As, therefore, these infatuated worshippers made the essence of religion to consist in external cleanliness, to the utter neglect of internal sanctity, (for their temples were defiled with the most abominable practices,) the present judgment was peculiarly adapted to confound their superstition; and so obvious was the interposition, that the magicians appealed to Pharaoh in the language of astonishment and conviction, "this is the finger of God!"

Fourth
 plague.

The king, however, remaining obdurate, he was visited with the plague of *flies*, the fourth of this melancholy series. Moses went out in the early morning to meet Pharaoh when he was taking his walk upon the banks of the Nile, and repeated his request for the liberation of Israel, threatening, in case of his persistence in the refusal, that his own house, the houses and premises of his courtiers, and of all the people, should be covered with swarms of flies; while, as a certain indication of the power that accomplished this judgment, the land of Goshen should be exempted from the calamity. The appeal was received as before, and the predicted evil filled the country. The Egyptians had allotted to several deities the office of driving away flies, and many heathen temples were supposed to be free from these troublesome insects, in consequence of the influence of the presiding deity. Nor was this all: they were even worshipped in various places. Ælian mentions, that in his time, an ox was sacrificed to them in the temple of Apollo, at Actium; Clemens confirms the statement; and Antiphanes, in Athenæus, alludes to a similar observance at Olympia, in Elis. There was anciently a deity styled *Deus Musca* and *Accaron*, who was worshipped under

the semblance of a fly. This idolatry originated in Egypt, whence A.M. 2513. it was brought by the Capthorim to Palestine, and by the Phenicians B.C. 1491. to Sidon, Tyre, and Biblus, and thence diffused into other regions. Hence, the Egyptians must be led to perceive, by the miraculous multiplication of the flies which they so absurdly revered, that instead of being able to defend them from mischief, they were under the control of a superior will, and their punishment was inflicted in the very track of their superstition.

The fifth plague was the *murrain of beasts*, which was attended Fifth plague. with two striking peculiarities:—the speediness of the execution, for it was to be on the morrow after the denunciation by Moses; and the exemption of the people of God from the visitation;—“All the cattle of Egypt died, but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.” Their idolatrous attachment to animals is universally known, and is ridiculed with great keenness of satire by Lucian: “In Egypt,” says he, “the temple itself is found to be beautiful and ample in its dimensions, built with choice stones, and ornamented with gilding and hieroglyphics. But if you pry within to find out the god, you meet with a monkey or a crane; or else a goat or a cat.” The lion, wolf, and dog, were also objects of adoration; but the greatest reverence was shown for the ox, the cow, the heifer, and the ram. The Apis, or sacred bull, was worshipped at Memphis, and the mnevis at Heliopolis; both of them being esteemed gods. This judgment, therefore, was very appropriate and significant; for their imaginary deities were seen to yield to the God of Israel, without the capacity of offering the least resistance. In vain did the soul of Osiris, as they believed, reside in the body of Apis; the infection spread far and wide, in defiance of his power, exhibiting the despicable imbecility of their divinities.

To the murrain of beasts succeeded the sixth plague of *boils and blains*. Sixth plague. Handfuls of ashes being taken by Moses and Aaron, and sprinkled towards heaven in the sight of Pharaoh, they became dust, producing a boil, breaking forth with blains upon man and beast! It is particularly stated, that the boil was upon the magicians as well as on the Egyptians in general. This was another evidence of the impotency of their gods, who could neither prevent nor alleviate the calamity. Many of them were supposed to possess extraordinary skill in pharmacy and medicine, among whom, Esculapius was regarded with singular esteem and confidence. The action of Moses was highly significant. The ashes were to be taken from the fiery furnace, which is referred to perpetually as a type of the miseries suffered by Israel during the period of their Egyptian bondage; and it contained an allusion to a cruel rite to which they were addicted. In several of their cities they sacrificed men, who were foreigners, for the good of the people. At the end of the ceremony, the priests collected the ashes of the victims, and scattered them upwards in the air, probably with an idea of entail-

A.M. 2513. ing a blessing wherever the particles descended. Moses did the
 B.C. 1491. same with an opposite purpose, diffusing plagues and a curse around
 in every direction, and thus confronting the operations of providence
 with the superstition of the age.

Seventh
 plague.

The seventh plague was that of *rain, hail, and fire, attended with thunder*. The Egyptians could scarcely fail of perceiving the drift of these complicated judgments. Rain is extremely rare in that country, and not to be met with at all in Delta, or Egypt Proper. Hence Claudian designates the country, *Ægyptus sine nube ferax*—*Egypt, fruitful without a cloud*. In addition to this, hail and fire mingled with it, as it ran along upon the ground, to the great annoyance of their characteristic superstition respecting portents and prodigies. This visitation was distinctly foretold, and none of their gods were able to afford them deliverance. It should be observed also, that they were strangely addicted to the worship of the elements of fire and water, as deities: and the former they even believed to be a living creature, endowed with a soul—*νενομισται το πυρ θεριον ειναι εμψυχον*.—*Herod*. And hence, not only the presiding deity, but the elements themselves were adored: consequently the present judgment was a formidable attack upon their vain and idolatrous confidence.

Eighth
 plague.

Locusts constituted the eighth plague; which, as on other occasions, Moses inflicted after a plain and solemn warning. They overspread the whole country, devouring every herb, and all the fruit trees which remained after the hail. It is scarcely possible to conceive a more terrible calamity than that of swarms of locusts, who speedily convert a paradise into a desert, eating up the very bark and roots of vegetation. They are known to come in clouds, extending in length fifteen or eighteen miles, and ten or twelve in breadth; and wherever they settle, all the corn vanishes in two hours. Moreover, of the present swarm it is said, “Before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.” The Egyptians cherished great confidence in some of their gods, who were supposed to be able to preserve their country from these invading insects, especially Isis and Osiris, the gods of plenty; but Moses so confounded their misplaced dependence by this desolating miracle, that Pharaoh sent in haste to solicit deliverance from death. A strong west wind was accordingly brought over the land, which carried off these terrible assailants to the Red Sea.

Ninth
 plague.

It was not long before it became requisite to inflict a new calamity on Pharaoh, in the form of *thick darkness*, for the space of three days, which constituted the ninth plague. The Egyptians, in common with the Persians, Phenicians, Syrians, and other nations, esteemed themselves as descendants of the Sun, which they worshipped as their sovereign and parent, believing it to be the soul of the world, the mundi caput, the principal being in the universe.

Thus Homer, who took his theology from Egypt, ascribes intellect A.M. 2513.
to the Sun :— B.C. 1491.

Ἡελίος, ὃρ παντ' εφορα, και παντ' επακουει.

Odyss. B. XII. v. 108.

Originally, indeed, they viewed the light and the fire as proper *emblems* only of deity, on account of their being the purest of all the elements, and because of their salutary influence upon created nature; but this specious sentiment soon degenerated into an adoration of them as primary sources of being, to the dishonour of the universal Creator: nothing, consequently, could be more significant, nothing more illustrative of their crime, nor better calculated to warn others, than to fill the land with palpable darkness. Their god arose, but could not afford them the least assistance in this perplexing and preternatural obscuration.

The tenth and last plague, which consisted in the infliction of Tenth plague.
death upon all the first-born in the land, exceeded, both in terror and effect, the preceding. This was accomplished at midnight, and after Moses had given them a full warning; in consequence of which the calamity must have been considerably aggravated by anticipation. The Egyptians were addicted, above most nations, to extravagant mourning, running through the streets, smearing their faces, beating their breasts, and rending the air with cries, not only at the funeral of a friend or relative, but even at the death of any sacred animal. They were accustomed, moreover, to scourge themselves, and to conduct most of their ceremonies with stripes and lamentations in honour of Isis, and Adonis, or Osiris: but now they were supplied with a real cause of the deepest grief, in the deprivation, by a single stroke of the sword of Omnipotence, of every first-born in the country; so that there was a cry, “such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.” This was surely a just retaliation for their disobedience, and a proper expression of the divine displeasure for their cruel behaviour to Israel, who is represented as God’s *first-born*, the object of his special favour, and the family whence Christ, “the first-born of every creature,” was Exod. iv. 22.
to proceed. This judgment, besides, was attended with another Col. i. 15.
significant purpose. The Israelites were liable to lose their elder children by the destroying angel, unless they observed a particular conservatory regulation, in consequence of which the *passover* was instituted, not only with a view to their present security, but as containing secret intimations of the blessings to be hereafter dispensed by the Saviour of the world.

It was worthy of the infinite God to punish the Egyptians by that series of calamitous visitations which have now been briefly stated and illustrated; because they prostituted the noblest talents, and the best attainments in general knowledge and learning, to the very basest purposes; and after the preservation of their nation by one

A.M. 2513. of the family of Israel, they had, contrary to every principle of
B.C. 1491. integrity, every pledge of security, and every feeling of gratitude,
reduced their benefactors to abject slavery.

Departure of
Israel from
Egypt.

The people being at length suffered to depart, they began their journey exactly at the expiration of 430 years from the date when Abraham quitted his kindred in Mesopotamia. At their original settlement in Egypt, their numbers amounted only to seventy, but so prodigiously had they multiplied, in defiance of the worst of treatment, that in about two hundred years, they were increased to 600,000 men capable of bearing arms, which, together with their families, may be estimated in the whole, at four millions of individuals, who set out with vast possessions of flocks, herds, and other property, on the most extraordinary adventure that was ever recorded by the pen of history. If Moses, as their leader, had acted by his sole authority, the measure must have been pronounced imprudent, and the way in which he conducted them, impracticable: for instead of proceeding northward, in the short and direct road to Canaan, he took them eastward to the wilderness, which bounds Egypt and Arabia Petræa, in consequence of which they wandered about for many years, enduring the most painful and unexpected privations. This, however, was wisely ordered by that God who superintended their journey, and who was too well aware of their refractory spirit to allow them to pursue a route through Palestine, which would have allowed them easily to return at the first appearance of difficulty. Marshalled, therefore, under Moses, as the commander-in-chief of the expedition, God himself went before them, "by day in a pillar of a cloud; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light."

First en-
campment.
Etham.

The first encampment of the children of Israel was at the top of the Red Sea, in Etham, on the edge of the wilderness, which stretched from this point towards Midian and Edom eastward, and towards Paran southward. Pharaoh was now preparing to pursue them with a force which he deemed adequate to compel their return, or effect their destruction; but though they might easily have escaped into the fastnesses of the wilderness, Moses, who acted solely under divine direction, led them into a narrow defile between the mountains, through which there was no outlet; so that when the enemy approached, they were enclosed on all sides. This appeared to the people so bad a piece of generalship, and they were in consequence exposed to such extreme danger, that their complaints were most bitter and clamorous. They tauntingly inquired whether he had brought them into this situation because there were no graves in Egypt; and loudly declared, that they should have considered prolonged servitude far preferable to so melancholy a fate. Had the object been merely to effect their escape, or had Moses acted solely from his own authority, their remonstrances might have been correct; but we are informed that God wisely

contrived this dilemma for the purpose of exciting Pharaoh to the pursuit, that, by his manifest interposition, he might acquire honour to his great name, and effectually cure those prejudices in favour of Egypt, which were still so prevalent in the camp. In these critical circumstances, the cool fortitude, magnanimity, and piety of their leader, were most conspicuous: he silenced their murmurings, allayed their agitation, and in the exercise of strong faith, stood up in the midst of them, stretching his rod over the sea, which instantly divided to form a dry and commodious passage. They passed in safety; guarded on either hand by the watery element as by walls of adamant. In vain did their foes attempt to follow; Moses again stretched forth his rod, and the deep closed upon them—chariots, horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh—for ever! This deliverance was commemorated by Moses in a song, which is not only worthy of attention on account of its numerous beauties as a composition, but as the most ancient piece of poetry in the world, antedating the works of Homer, by at least six hundred years.

Miracle at
the Red Sea.

It is now generally agreed, that the transit of the children of Israel, was at the bay of Colsum or Clysma. It is now called by the Arabs *Bedeaa*, and is almost dry; and in the immediate neighbourhood the natives still preserve a tradition of the drowning of a numerous army near the place.

Three days after this miracle the Israelites marched through a barren wild without any water; on the fourth they arrived at Marah, where, indeed, they found a supply, but it was bitter. This occasioned prodigious murmurings; upon which Moses, as in all his difficulties, applied to the Lord, who directed him to cast in a tree, by which it became instantly sweetened. Hence they proceeded to Elim, and then again encamped by the sea, but afterwards went in a northerly direction inland to the wilderness of Sin, where manna was first afforded them from heaven. Subsequently, as they approached the borders of the Amalekites, they were opposed by that people and pursued to Rephidim. In this place the people again complained for want of water, and were miraculously supplied by the rod of Moses being struck against the rock in Horeb. (Ex. xvii.)

The Israelites were now conducted to the wilderness of Sinai, in the third month of their departure out of Egypt, where the law was given them, with all the circumstances of terror and magnificence which suited that extraordinary period. Moses was, on this occasion, admitted to an intercourse with the Supreme Being, more familiar than any which had hitherto fallen to the lot of a mortal; but for which he had been prepared by the manifestation of the burning bush, and by the capacity to work miracles with which he had afterwards been endowed. Having been called up into Horeb, by a voice which proceeded from the summit of the mountain, Moses was desired to remind the people of the past interpositions of providence, as evidences of the divine goodness, and to assure them of

A.M. 2513. God's intentions respecting their future destination, to which they
 B.C. 1491. had been introductory. They were now to become the "peculiar treasure" of the Most High, "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." When this declaration was reported to the camp by an assembly of the elders, the whole multitude expressed their readiness to comply with unhesitating obedience with every divine requisition. Moses conveyed this language to the Lord, who, having intimated his determination to appear in a thick cloud, and communicate his will in an audible conference with his chosen servant, directed the use of certain precautions previously to the solemn manifestation. The people were to sanctify themselves, and a fence was prepared, that no one should touch the borders of the mountain upon pain of death. On the third day from the interview of their leader with God, in which these preparatory measures were arranged, thunders, lightnings, and a thick cloud, invested Sinai, accompanied with the sound of a trumpet, so tremendously loud as to put the whole camp into extreme agitation. The mount itself shook to the very base; while smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, into the midst of which Moses entered, ascending to the very summit, where he received a new charge to preserve the multitude from indulging an eager and obtrusive curiosity: after which the ten commandments were pronounced, in a voice so solemn and superhuman, that the people requested Moses to become the medium of future communication. Accordingly, after endeavouring to allay their fears, he approached the thick darkness, and received from the present Deity a minute specification of laws, by which Israel was henceforth to be governed. These were all written in a book, and an altar, to serve as a sacred memorial of the wonderful transactions, was erected on the spot, with twelve pillars to correspond with the number of the tribes. Having first sprinkled blood upon the altar, Moses read the volume; and when the people expressed their unanimous consent to every requisition, he proceeded to sprinkle blood upon them, in attestation of the solemn covenant. After this, he was again called into the mount, where he abode forty days and forty nights, receiving instructions for the building of a tabernacle, in which it was the divine purpose to display his glory to his favourite nation, for the benefit of the universal world.

Idolatry of
 the people.

During the absence of Moses, the people relapsed into idolatry, persuading Aaron to form a golden calf: which so justly incensed the Lord, that his anger was only appeased by the intercession of Moses, who, upon descending the mountain with the two tables of the law written upon stone in his hands, was filled with such indignation, that he threw them upon the ground, and dashed them to pieces. As a further punishment for their rebellion, he ground the idolatrous image to powder, and strewing it upon water, compelled them to drink it. Aaron endeavoured to excuse himself, by pleading the importunity of the people; and when Moses saw how

completely they had stripped themselves, in order to furnish the means of forming the calf, he went to the gate and proclaimed, “Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me.” The Levites instantly repaired to the spot, and by divine command, they were ordered to pass through the camp sword in hand, by which three thousand perished miserably. The people were now threatened with the withdrawment of the presence of God, which occasioned the deepest lamentation; but their faithful leader and friend pitched the tabernacle in the midst of the congregation, into which he entered when the cloud descended upon it, and successfully interceded for their preservation. For himself, he requested some encouraging display of the divine glory, which was graciously accorded, and an account of it is given in the concluding passage of the thirty-third chapter of Exodus. In addition to this distinguishing favour, he was directed to prepare two other tables of stone, and bring them into the mount, where they were again inscribed with the commandments, by the finger of God; and whence, having remained for forty days and nights in a state of strict abstinence from food, he descended with such a supernatural splendour upon his countenance, that he was under the necessity of putting on a veil, to allay the apprehensions of Aaron and the children of Israel. Whenever he went in before the Lord, he removed the veil till he returned to the people.

The tabernacle was now erected in exact conformity with the pattern that had been presented to Moses in the mount. It was completed in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, when the glory of God appeared in a cloud, which so entirely pervaded it, that Moses was unable to enter; and this miraculous cloud continued with them in all their future journeyings; so that they halted while the cloud rested on them, and went forward as often and as long as it was taken up. In the night it always assumed a luminous appearance, and was every where conspicuous.

The first remove of the Israelites from Sinai, was into the wilderness of Paran, and on their way we find several acts of divine forbearance at the intercession of Moses. At the voice of his supplication, fire was quenched, and manna and quails supplied. It would have been strange indeed, if a person of so much eminence had been exempted from that envy which commonly prevails, upon occasions far less calculated to excite it; yet we cannot but wonder that his dearest connections should have attained the first ignoble distinction of attempting to depreciate his character, and diminish his well-merited reputation. Miriam and Aaron were, however, both influenced by this detestable spirit; on which account, the former was smitten with leprosy, that was only healed at the powerful entreaty of their injured brother, who procured her the mitigated punishment of only a seven days’ exclusion from the camp.

Hitherto, no measures had been taken to obtain information

A.M. 2513.
B.C. 1491.

A.M. 2514.
B.C. 1490.
The
tabernacle.

A.M. 2514. respecting the country they were marching to invade: at length, a
 B.C. 1490. ruler from each tribe was despatched as a spy, secretly, to ascertain
 Sends to search the land. the nature of the soil, the disposition of the inhabitants, and the military state of the cities. At the expiration of forty days they returned, bringing with them a favourable report of the fertility of the land, of which they produced some satisfactory specimens in the grapes of Eshcol, with several pomegranates and figs; but they described the fortifications which they had seen, as so strong, and the people as of so gigantic a stature, that every one seemed dispirited, and refused to attempt the proposed conquest. So much, indeed, did the spirit of rebellion display itself, that they were on the point of selecting a new leader to guide them back to Egypt, and were about to stone Joshua and Caleb, whose report widely differed from that of the other spies, and whose remonstrances they could not endure; when the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, and the smiting pestilence was threatened to exterminate the rebels. Nothing, indeed, could have prevented its fatal and immediate operation, but that earnest entreaty, with which it was the honour and privilege of Moses so often to avert the displeasure of the Almighty: but to mark with an indelible sign of disgrace the offending multitude, they were made to understand, that only two individuals, whose fidelity had rendered them worthy of such a distinction, Joshua and Caleb, out of their numerous thousands and tens of thousands then alive, should ultimately see the promised inheritance: nor should even their children enjoy it, till after they had wandered forty years in the wilderness, in correspondence with the number of days it had occupied to survey the land. The individuals who had given the report which occasioned the present murmuring, were instantaneously smitten by a fatal plague "before the Lord." The next morning, a party, deeply affected with the predicted chastisement, presumed, contrary to orders, to attack the enemy, and were repulsed by the Amalekites and Canaanites with great loss. But Moses did not aim to remedy the misfortune, to renew the contest with a larger and more efficient force, or to march directly forward towards the desirable residence of which they were in search; but, in obedience to a heavenly intimation, turned back to the wilderness of Sin, and then passing near Ezion Gaber, at the eastern extremity of the Red Sea, and proceeding round the land of Edom, he at length led the people to the plains of Moab, near mount Nebo.

Defeat of the Israelites.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

At different times, during this circuitous journey, several memorable events occurred, in which Moses was particularly implicated. An envious spirit having again manifested itself in the revilings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, ministers before the Lord, who had formed a party of 250 princes of the assembly, they were summoned to the door of the tabernacle, each with his censer having incense. The Lord then appeared in glory, requiring Moses and Aaron to

separate themselves from the congregation, who were to be consumed in a moment. The former, as at other times, interceded, and the three ringleaders of the faction were placed apart; when, at the voice of Moses, the earth opened and swallowed them up, their families and property, with their associate delinquents. Surprising as it may appear, this awful judgment failed to produce a proper impression upon the infatuated multitude; for, on the very next day, there was an universal murmur against Moses and Aaron, when the God of Israel again descended in the magnificence of his displeasure. Fourteen thousand seven hundred were consumed by a plague, which was only arrested in its fatal progress by Aaron, at the command of his brother, standing up between the living and the dead, to offer incense, and make an atonement for the people.

On arriving at Mount Hor, Moses had the melancholy task of accompanying Aaron in his ascent to its summit, where the latter died; immediately after which, he invested his son Eleazar with his sacerdotal garments, at the express command of God. This loss was commemorated in a general mourning of thirty days.

Soon afterwards, at an encampment on the borders of Edom, the people became extremely discouraged; and, as usual, gave vent to their feelings in impious speeches against Moses and against God. This produced the tremendous visitation of fiery flying serpents, through the effects of whose envenomed bite multitudes perished. The people once more humbled themselves; and, upon their application to Moses, he besought the Lord, by whom he was directed to make a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole: "and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." It has been supposed, that in this emblem there was at once a significant punishment of the idolatry of the times, and a striking typical representation of the Saviour of the world, and the redemption which he accomplished for the human race. Had it pleased God, says Mr. Bryant, to have explained his meaning to his prophet upon the spot, I presume, that in express terms, it would have amounted to this: "You have been devoted to serpent-worship; and I punish you by these very reptiles which you have idly adored. You have esteemed the serpent the emblem of health, life, and divine wisdom; and under this symbol, you have looked up to an unknown power, styled Thoth and Agathodæmon, *the benign genius*. For these things you suffer. But I will show you a more just and salutary emblem, by which health and life, as well as divine wisdom, are signified. It is a type of the true Agathodæmon, that human divinity, the physician of the soul, by whom these blessings are one day to accrue. Behold that serpent upon a perch or cross; whoever looks up to him shall be saved from the present venom of the serpent, as well as from primeval infection. This is an emblem of that benign power, that good genius, by whom the world will be cured of every inherent evil."

A.M. 2514.
B.C. 1490.

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Aaron's
death.

Visitation of
fiery flying
serpents.

Serpent
worship

A.M. 2553. After occupying various stations, upon their arrival at Mount
 B.C. 1451. Pisgah, ambassadors were sent to Sihon, king of the Amorites, to
 negotiate for a passage through his border; but instead of consent-
 ing, he collected a numerous army, and attacked the Israelites;
 who, under the direction of Moses, vanquished the enemy and took
 immediate possession of all his territories. A similar result soon
 afterwards followed the hostility of Og, king of Bashan.

Defeat of
 Sihon and
 Og.

Moses now led forward the people to an encampment in the plains
 of Moab, where they continued till they crossed over Jordan. Balak,
 the king of the country, invited Balaam to come and denounce
 curses upon these multitudinous strangers; but the magician having,
 contrary to the requisition of his sovereign, blessed them, Balak
 endeavoured, at the instigation of Balaam, to corrupt them by send-
 ing women into the camp to allure them to idolatry and fornication.
 This impious stratagem so far succeeded, that 23,000 who had con-
 formed to the worship of Baal-peor were put to death, besides 1,000
 others consigned to execution by the judges. The Midianites having
 adopted similar measures, Moses was commanded to make war
 against them; and Phineas, the grandson of Aaron, who had nobly
 resisted the prevalent iniquity, being appointed to head the expedi-
 tion, overthrew the foe with 12,000 men.

Moses
 warned of
 his death.

Num. xx. 7—
 13.

The fortieth year of Israel's predestined residence in the wilder-
 ness, was now hastening to its termination, when Moses was
 apprised, that he would not be permitted to enter the promised
 land, in consequence of an act of disobedience of which he had for-
 merly been guilty; but that he should enjoy the satisfaction of
 surveying it from the summit of Nebo, and then expire. His
 eminent prudence, and his resigned piety, were remarkably con-
 spicuous on this occasion. Having first entreated the appointment
 of a successor to his office of leader of the children of Israel, who
 should faithfully discharge the high duties of such a situation, he
 was commanded solemnly to designate JOSHUA to the work; a man
 whose extraordinary qualifications enabled him honourably to perform
 it. Moses then proceeded to order a variety of regulations with
 regard to civil and ecclesiastical affairs; particularly stating the
 limits of the land they were to subdue, and the divine will respecting
 its distribution: then assembling the people about him, he recapitu-
 lated the principal events that had occurred since the time of their
 departure out of Egypt, and exhorted them to fidelity, plainly
 declaring the fatal consequences of rebellion, and the felicities which
 would certainly accrue from obedience. Afterwards he caused the
 nation to assemble and ratify the covenant of Horeb; and present-
 ing a copy of the law to the priests and elders, enjoined the solemn
 reading of it every seventh year to the whole assembled nation.
 His charge to Joshua is most pathetic and affectionate, assuring
 him of the presence of his God in going to take possession of
 Canaan, and the divine determination never to leave or forsake

His
 measures.

them. The substance of his different addresses being compressed A.M. 2553. into a song of exquisite beauty and finish, it was first read, and B.C. 1451. then delivered to his successor to be learned by the people and their descendants. At length he summoned them together once more, to receive his final benediction, which was not only pronounced with great solemnity, but blended with several predictions relating to each tribe distinctly. He had no sooner uttered it, than he ascended Mount Nebo alone, and from its highest point, distinguished by the name of Pisgah, he contemplated the promised inheritance, and departed to that "recompence of the reward," which he had so Death. often and so long anticipated. This occurred in the year before Christ, 1451, when Moses had attained the age of 120, and when none of his faculties were impaired: "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." His sepulchre is said to have been in the valley of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but the precise spot was miraculously concealed, probably for the purpose of preventing an idolatrous veneration of it. The children of Israel held a general mourning on account of their illustrious chief for thirty days.

To these authentic particulars of the life of Moses, which we have deduced from the volume of inspiration, the Jewish Rabbins have, as usual, made a variety of whimsical additions, which it is quite needless to quote; but the accounts of Josephus, and other historians, must not be wholly discarded as fabulous. This author and Eusebius, affirm that he acted as a general in the wars of Egypt, and obtained many splendid victories. Philo states, that at his birth, he was distinguished by a more than ordinary beauty of countenance, which seems confirmed by the testimony of the Acts, where he is said to have been "exceeding fair:" and Josephus represents his aspect and figure as so engaging at an early age that people would leave their occupations to gaze at him.

The *meekness* of his spirit is repeatedly mentioned in scripture; and it was combined with what are very uncommon associates, Personal character. *fortitude and zeal*. With what boldness did he censure the disobedience of the people; and with what a fearless and peremptory tone did he frequently address them, though wholly exposed to the mercy of an incensed multitude! Still more than this, there was a portion, and no ordinary portion of that vehement *enthusiasm*, which is an essential ingredient in the constitution of every great character; for, discontented and rebellious as the people were, so devoted was their leader to their interests, that on one occasion, he declared that he would submit to death and the loss of the promised Ex. xxxii. 32. blessings, if he could obtain a pardon for the Israelites. This feeling betrayed itself in almost every remarkable action of his life, and led him to become the intrepid opposer of sin, and the no less intrepid and powerful intercessor with God for the transgressors; on the one hand, checking, by his holy heroism, the progress of rebellion, which must have proved ruinous in its consequences; and

A.M. 2553. on the other, arresting in mid-way the divine displeasure, already
 B.C. 1451. on its destructive march. It was long indeed before the flame of
 enthusiasm appeared; but when once kindled, it blazed with a
 glorious and inextinguishable brightness. His affectionate regard
 for the people, whom he had guided through the wanderings of the
 desert, was in no degree diminished by the prospect of his own
 departure; for, after it was revealed to him, that he should not
 enter the promised land, he continued the same unwearied assiduity,
 in promoting the interests of the Israelites, as had distinguished his
 previous conduct. In all the great transactions of his eventful
 life, we perceive a singular *wisdom* in his proceedings: in the dis-
 tribution of wealth and honour, he furnished the most decisive proofs
 of *liberality and disinterestedness*. His freedom from all the *vices*
and littlenesses that are apt to adhere to eminent rank and exalted
 station, was strikingly manifest; particularly on one occasion, when
 the spirit of prophecy was diffused amongst the seventy elders, and
 Joshua desired Moses to forbid Eldad and Medad, who were
 Num. xi. 29. reported to be prophesying in the camp:—"Enviest thou," said
 he, "for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were
 prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them." Over
 all these virtues was thrown the charm of *piety*—a piety not
 only genuine, but of so pre-eminent a nature as to qualify him for
 extraordinary intercourse with the Deity. Scripture testifies, that
 he conversed with God, "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his
 friend;" and accordingly the Jews have always affirmed, that he
 enjoyed a much higher species of inspiration than any subsequent
 prophet. It was his exclusive privilege to address God at all times
 without the assistance of the High Priest, who consulted, by means of
 the Urim and Thummim; which, with the miracles he was enabled to
 perform, conferred upon him a decided pre-eminence and superiority
 above every other human being. His character as a *legislator*,
 must be referred to a future part of this account of his life. As a
writer, his peculiarities are modesty, simplicity of narration, diversity
 of style, and copiousness of information. In the Pentateuch he has
 furnished an account, luminous, concise, and accurate, of the earliest
 period of time, commencing with the creation itself, and closing with
 the arrival of the Israelites on the borders of the promised land; of
 which they were to take possession under the guidance of his illustri-
 ous successor in office. This narrative comprehends a period of more
 than two thousand two hundred and fifty years. Moses is also said
 to have composed many of the psalms; and the most anciently re-
 ceived opinion is, that he was the author of the book of Job. Many
 apocryphal works have been ascribed to him; the evident design of
 which was to raise them to distinction, by investing them with the
 splendour of his name.

Character
 as legislator
 and writer.

The celebrity of Moses extended far beyond the limits of his
 nation; so that his history, in its main features, though distorted

by many additions and misrepresentations, may be traced in the A.M. 2553. narratives of pagan antiquity. The Greeks, the Romans, the B.C. 1451. Chaldeans, the Egyptians, and others, not only admitted his veracity as a historian, and his superiority as a legislator, but enrolled him under different names among their gods, and preserved a no very obscure memorial of his actions in the fables of their mythology. The dispersion of the Jews into different countries at an early period, furnished them with the means of authentic information: and the love of the marvellous, which is so inherent in the human mind, induced them to construct entertaining, and ingeniously deceptive narratives, upon the narrow basis of historic reality. Among the most distinguished inventors of this kind, may be reckoned Manetho, an Egyptian, and priest of Heliopolis, who lived under Ptolemy Philadelphus, and whom Josephus quotes liberally in his first book against Appion; distinguishing, however, what he derived from the records of the Egyptian temples, to which he was secretary, from what he relates of his own, or has collected from mere report.

II. PROOFS OF THE DIVINE MISSION OF MOSES.

The most cursory perusal of the preceding biographical sketch, must not only have prepared the reader for this division of the subject, but have suggested some of its most obvious demonstrations. They are not so recondite as to require a very profound and laborious investigation; though, unhappily, the passions and prepossessions of mankind render it necessary to bring forward, into more distinct prominence, what, to an unprejudiced mind, is already quite apparent. Omitting a variety of minute details, we shall endeavour to establish the argument by an induction only of the most important particulars.

1. There was an extreme improbability in the attempt of Moses to release the nation of Israel from Egyptian servitude,—an improbability which would have stamped it with the indelible disgrace of adventurousness, not to add, of folly—upon the supposition of his being undirected by a commission from heaven, and unsupported by supernatural assistance. Some part of his conduct in early life had, as we have seen, exposed him to the severity of the Egyptian law—he had no external means of recommending himself to the nation he proposed to emancipate, or to justify his pretensions to become their leader: but, without a friend or ally amongst them, he expected to gain their universal concurrence, to place themselves under the direction of his yet untried capacity. How was it probable, that an individual so circumstanced, should be able to collect and combine under his standard, so many hundred of thousands of people in a state of considerable dispersion? How could he hope to gain access to the court and the king, without either eloquence to attract, or retinue to overawe them? And yet, in defiance of every

His divine mission.

His difficulties.

A.M. 2553. obstacle and improbability, he not only succeeded in this mighty
 B.C. 1451. project, but every step was so easy, every circumstance so accurately adjusted to promote his design, and yet so perfectly independent of his control, that we are forcibly and at once impressed with a conviction of his superiority to any other person, and behold in him the agent of a superintending Providence.

2. All the proceedings of Moses, subsequently to the deliverance out of Egypt, were characterized by an imprudence bordering upon insanity, if he be considered as acting from his own sole authority, uninfluenced by a divine appointment. The people, whom he voluntarily undertook to guide, were plunged by him into labyrinths of inextricable difficulty. Instead of leading them in the short and direct road to that luxurious residence, of the possession of which they were assured after expelling the present occupiers, he takes them in an opposite direction; so that a journey, which might have been accomplished in a few weeks, was protracted into forty years; during which, they wandered about from wilderness to wilderness—in a thousand contrary paths—defenceless, destitute, and anxious. His personal safety was evidently endangered by this apparent misconduct; for what else could he anticipate than discontent and rebellion? Was there not every reason to suppose they would rid themselves of so injudicious a commander? and, in point of fact, they frequently upbraided him in the bitterest language, and demanded to be carried back to the country from which they had been induced to depart. But infinite wisdom knew how to relieve the people from distress, and to supply their every want. No embarrassments could possibly perplex the mind of God; and the Israelites were obviously involved in them according to his directions given to Moses, as the chief agent in his mysterious movements, in order to evince their dependence upon his power and goodness, and to show them that human means were altogether unavailable for their salvation.

Miracles he
 performed.

3. The miracles of Moses, could not but afford to the Israelites, as the well authenticated record of them affords to us, indisputable attestations to his mission. Miracles must be considered in the light of divine credentials when they are performed by one who delivers a message in the sacred name of God; and appeals to them as evidences of having received a commission from heaven—supposing them to be wrought at the time by or in favour of the person himself who makes the pretension. They are to be viewed in such a case, as signs and testimonies of the divine approbation; and nothing can be more decisive. For the Supreme Being could never sanction falsehood by a miraculous interposition, inasmuch as he could neither deceive others, nor be himself deceived: and it is most obvious, that nothing but the execution of some design of the highest importance, could induce the Supreme Being to depart, in such a manner, from the order of his government, and suspend

those laws by which he regulates the universe. The twofold purpose of Moses, was to prove his own commission, and to exhibit the true character and undoubted supremacy of that God, in whose name he demanded the release of the Israelites from their servitude: the miracles he performed, both before Pharaoh, and during the sojourn in the wilderness, furnished these requisite illustrations. At the outset, he was indeed confronted by the Egyptian magicians; but Farmer has shown, by a series of ingenious demonstrations, that his opponents were not able to perform work really supernatural, nor were they assisted by any superior invisible being. They pretended to magic, and were jugglers by profession and practice; so that Scripture not only denies them the power of discovering or effecting any thing miraculous, but denounces them in express terms as *liars*, and their performances as *lying vanities*. The intention of Pharaoh in sending for them, was to ascertain from them whether the sign given by Moses, was really supernatural, or only such as their art enabled them to accomplish: it would be contradictory to the fundamental principles of the pagan theology, to represent them as engaging the gods of Egypt in a contest or trial of strength with the God of Israel, because the claims of their deities were supposed to be consistent with each other; and, instead of being taught that one deity should act in defiance of another, for their protection, they were led to believe that they should rather attempt to appease and conciliate other divinities. They had, at the same time, a very powerful inducement to try their utmost of deceptive skill, since they must perceive the solicitude of the king to retain the Israelites as his subjects and servants. All the sacred writers, and Moses in particular, describe the heathen deities as unsupported by any invisible aid, and as utterly impotent; and the point which the legate of heaven was to establish, was the *sole divinity of Jehovah*, in opposition to idolatry; it is not, therefore, conceivable, that the gods of the heathen should be able, through the instrumentality of the magicians, to perform supernatural works: Moses, besides, appropriates all miracles to God, and urges each one distinctly, as a separate proof of his divinity and of his own mission.

4. The prophetic character of Moses ought to be viewed, in connection with his miraculous performances, as furnishing accumulative evidence in his favour. The volume of inspiration has transmitted to our age a variety of his predictions, particularly with regard to the advent of the Messiah, the character by which he should be distinguished, and the condition of his far distant posterity in the closing dispensation of time. There is to be observed, in all these prophetic intimations, a precision and accuracy of reference, by which the shadowing forth of the marvellous events anticipated, may be discerned with all that certainty which arises from the most exact coincidence. The frame of the prophecy is in every case so accurately constructed, that the subsequent and corresponding event fits into it

Prophetic
character.

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

A.M. 2553. as by a sort of moral mechanism; evincing the designed connection
 B.C. 1451. and conformity. After furnishing a general illustration of the Mosaic predictions, a learned writer concludes in these terms: "Here are instances of prophecies, prophecies delivered above three thousand years ago, and yet, as we see, fulfilling in the world at this very time: and what stronger proofs can we desire of the divine legation of Moses? How these instances may affect others, I know not; but for myself, I must acknowledge, they not only convince, but amaze and astonish me beyond expression. They are truly, as Moses foretold they would be, *a sign and a wonder for ever.*"

Laws of
 divine
 authority.

Bp. Warbur-
 ton's
 hypothesis.

5. An important and decisive argument, in support of the divine authority of the mission of the Jewish leader, may be deduced from the very nature and character of those laws which he promulgated among the Israelites. These we shall have occasion hereafter to explain: and to the *whole* of our subsequent statement upon this subject, we refer the reader for corroborative evidence; but there is one peculiar feature of Mosaic legislation, which has excited no small discussion in modern times; and which, from the celebrity of its author, and the eloquence with which he defended it, requires upon the principles of our work a brief development. "We demand only," says WARBURTON, "this single postulatam, that hath all the clearness of self-evidence: namely, that a skilful lawgiver, establishing a religious and civil policy, acts with certain views and for certain ends; and not capriciously, or without purpose or design. This being granted, we erect our demonstration on these three very clear and simple propositions. 1. *That the inculcating the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, is necessary to the wellbeing of civil society.* 2. *That all mankind, especially the most wise and learned nations of antiquity, have concurred in believing and teaching that this doctrine was of such use to civil society.* 3. *That the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is not to be found in, nor did make part of, the Mosaic dispensation.* Hence it must be inferred, *that the law of Moses is of divine original:* upon this principle, that whatever religion and society have no future state for their support, must be supported by an extraordinary Providence. Such was the Jewish religion and society; and as this was the universal conviction of all ancient lawgivers, Moses, who instituted such a religion, and was a person of that description, believed his religion was supported by an extraordinary Providence. With regard to the first of these propositions, be it observed, that society is in itself essentially defective; for its laws can have no further efficacy than to restrain mankind from open transgression; private delinquency being concealed from view, escapes censure. But even the influence of civil laws cannot extend to every case, as when the prohibition of one irregularity tends to produce another—the care of the *whole* may often lead to the neglect of *individuals*; civil laws are necessarily silent respecting duties of imperfect obligation, such

Warbur-
 ton's
 arguments.

as gratitude, hospitality, and charity; and besides it originates a new set of duties of the same description; society tends also to increase those very desires it was contrived to correct, in consequence of the multiplication of our wants proportionally with the arts of civilized life. Society is not only imperfect with respect to the administration of that power which it possesses, of punishing the disobedient, but still more so, in the dispensation of rewards to the obedient; understanding by this term, not the recompense bestowed in consideration of meritorious service, but such as is conferred on every one for obeying the laws of his country. Two things are here to be noticed—the first, that by the original constitution of civil government, the sanction of rewards was not established; the only stipulation between the magistrate and the people being the *mere protection* on the one side, and *obedience* on the other, which arose out of their respective conditions: the second, that by the very nature of civil government, rewards could not be enforced by it; for society could neither distinguish the objects of its favour, all that could be done being merely to discover whether the act were wilful or voluntary, without taking cognizance of the motive; nor could it reward, though it should discover them, because no society can find a sufficient fund without raising it on the people as a tax to pay it back as a reward. Some other power, therefore, is needed to remedy these defects, and preserve society from confusion; but there is no other power to be found than *religion*, which teaches an overruling Providence, the rewarder of good men, and the punisher of bad ones; and thus obliges to the duties of what are technically termed *duties of imperfect obligation*, which are overlooked by human regulations. Were it possible, which it is not, that there could be religion not founded on the doctrine of a Providence, it would be of no service to society; consequently, whatever is necessary to support this doctrine, is necessary to the wellbeing of society. The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is thus necessary, and must be inculcated. The second proposition relating to the concurrence of all mankind, in believing and teaching the utility of this doctrine, is demonstrable by appealing, *first*, to the *conduct of lawgivers and institutors of civil polity*; who always propagated religion wherever they instituted laws. There never was a people in any age, the Jews only excepted, who had a religion, the chief foundation of which was not the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments. The care of the civil magistrate in cultivating religion, is evinced from the universality of it amongst all civilized nations;—from the very apparent absence of all traces of it, in many savage people, proving the extraordinary care taken for its preservation in a different state of society;—and from the genius of pagan religion, with regard to the origin and nature of their gods, who were chiefly departed legislators, kings, and founders of civil polity; the attributes assigned to them, which corresponded with the nature and genius of each

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Second
proposition.

Proofs from
paganism.

A.M. 2553. government, as gentle or severe; and the mode of their public worship,
 B.C. 1451. which concerned *individuals* who were confessed to be under an unequal Providence, which necessarily introduced the doctrine of a future state for the support of the divine government and *society* in its corporate character, which displayed a more equal Providence administered to the state. Hence, religion and government were blended together, and prodigies constituted a part of the public administration, no less than civil edicts. The particular arts employed by the magistrate to support and propagate religion, consisted in pretending a revelation from some god, by whose express commands his policy had been framed: and hence Plato represents legislation as proceeding from God, and not from man; and Homer constantly describes kings by the epithets *Διογενεις* *born of the gods*; and *Διοτρεφεις*, *bred or tutored by the gods*. This pretence to inspiration was adopted for the purpose of establishing the opinion of the superintendence of the gods over the affairs of mankind, not to secure the reception of their laws, nor to render those laws perpetual and immutable. Aristotle, in his maxims for setting up and supporting tyranny, gives this direction: "To seem extremely attached to the worship of the gods, for that men have no apprehension of injustice from such as they deem to be religious, and to have a high sense of Providence. Nor will the people be apt to run into plots and conspiracies against those whom they believe the gods will, in their turn, fight for and support."¹ Another measure of the legislator was to introduce the general doctrine of a Providence, as a preface to give a sanction to his regulations: of this, antiquity has transmitted two valuable specimens in the prefaces to the laws of Zaleucus and Charondas, lawgivers of the Locrians, and contemporaries with Lycurgus. The next art was the institution of the mysteries, the most sacred part of the pagan religion, precisely adapted to strike the imaginations of the multitude, and instituted solely for the support of the doctrine of a future state of retribution. They consisted of secret worship; which, in addition to the public solemnities, was paid to each of the gods; and to which none were admitted, but those who were properly *initiated*, by certain preparatory ceremonies. This secrecy was observed for two reasons: the one, to excite curiosity; the other, to secure the sole instruction of the initiated, into some things which it would have been improper to have communicated to all. A further instance of the care of the magistrate for religion, was evinced in the establishment of a national worship. The direct purpose, in this case, was to support the religion which was already propagated, by taking it into civil protection, and uniting it with the state. This touches upon a subject of much and frequent controversy. Warburton endeavours to show, that an established religion is the universal voice of nature, and that the right to establish it is vested in civil government: but in whatever manner these

From the
 establish-
 ment of
 religion.

Arist. Polit. L. 5, C. 11.

questions may be decided, the general argument, illustrating the intention of the magistrate to secure the interests of religion, is by no means affected; but apparently corroborated, by his extending toleration to those who conscientiously differed from the public faith. There is one remarkable circumstance which the progress of discovery has disclosed, tending to show the unremitting zeal with which the rulers of nations have cultivated the belief of the doctrine of a future state. Amidst the various transmigrations which have arisen out of the contentions of rival states and empires, and the confusions incident to society, many people have probably fallen from a civilized to a savage condition, who have been found to have little or no knowledge of God, or observance of religion: notwithstanding which, they have still retained the belief of a future state. This could only have occurred in consequence of the legislator's assiduity in the propagation of this sentiment, and of the powerful hold which it naturally and easily obtains of the human mind. So that, as it has been well observed, no religion ever existed without the doctrine of a future state; yet the doctrine of a future state has sometimes existed without a religion.

Secondly. Having examined the conduct of legislators, and the founders of civil polity, in proof of the concurrent opinion of mankind, with regard to the utility of the general doctrine in question; it remained to specify *the views of the wisest and most learned of the ancient sages*: and however at variance upon other topics, on this point they appear to have been unanimous. Without multiplying quotations, one from Polybius, and another from Pliny, will suffice. The first of these writers says, "The superior excellence of this (the Roman) policy, above others, manifests itself, in my opinion, chiefly in the religious notions the Romans hold concerning the gods: that which, in other places, is turned to abuse, being the very support of the Roman affairs. I mean the *fear of the gods*, or what the Greeks call *superstition*; which is come to such a height, both in its influence on individuals, and on the public, as cannot be exceeded. This, which many may think unaccountable, seems plainly to have been contrived for the sake of the community. If, indeed, one were to frame a civil policy only for wise men, it is possible this kind of institution might not be necessary: but since the multitude is ever fickle and capricious, full of lawless passions and irrational and violent resentments, there is no way left to keep them in order, but by the terrors of *future punishment*, and all the pompous circumstance that attends such kind of fictions. On which account, the ancients acted, in my opinion, with great judgment and penetration, when they contrived to bring these notions of the gods, and of a future state, into the popular belief; and the present age as inconsiderately and absurdly, in removing them and encouraging the multitude to despise their terrors."² Pliny the elder speaks in a similar strain: "It is

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Heathen
writers.

Polybius.

Pliny.

² Polyb. Hist. Lib. 6, C. 54.

A. M. 2553. expedient for society that men should believe that the gods concerned themselves in human affairs; and that the punishments they inflict on offenders, though sometimes late indeed, as from governors busied in the administration of so vast an universe, yet are never to be evaded."³ It is observable, that none of the ancient theistical philosophers believed the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, though they all taught it to the people, obviously because they were deeply impressed with the conviction of its being essential to the support of religion. The contrary of this statement has been usually supposed; but this mistake has originated in not observing the distinction between the philosophic ideas of immortality, or the *eternity* of the *soul*, and the doctrine of rewards and punishments in another life; that is, where the happiness and misery consequent on virtue and vice, are the positive and free appointment of the divine will, not merely the necessary consequences of things. It is indeed a grave charge to affirm, that the sages of antiquity taught one thing, when they really believed another; but it is substantiated by an appeal to the general practice in the Greek philosophy of a twofold doctrine: the external and the internal; a vulgar and a secret. The former communicated to all indiscriminately; the latter to a select number: and this occurs, not only with regard to different subjects, but to the very same; which is treated popularly or scientifically, according to *opinion*, and according to *truth*. This representation is not applicable only to individuals. The Academics and Pyrrhonians agreed in this, that nothing could be known; and that without interfering in any sentiments of their own, every thing was to be disputed. Neither the Pythagoreans, the Platonics, the Peripatetics, nor the Stoics, believed in the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. Nor is this all: the fundamental principles of the ancient Greek philosophy were altogether inconsistent with the doctrine in question, so that it was *impossible* they should believe it. They universally embraced two metaphysical principles: the one relating to the nature of God, that he could neither be angry nor hurt any one; and that, having no affections, he could neither reward nor punish:—the other to the nature of the human soul; some conceiving of it as a *quality*, and therefore totally annihilated at death; others, and the far greater number, believing it to be a *substance*, and as such a separated part of a mighty whole; which whole was God, into whom it was again to be resolved. Imagining God to be the soul of the universe, and the body the matter; they concluded, that as the human body was resolved into its parent matter, so the soul was resolved into its parent spirit.

The
Academics,
Pyrrhonians
&c.

Third
Proposition.

We now proceed to the THIRD PROPOSITION before mentioned, which concentrates the previous arguments in the final and principal demonstration. In the Mosaic institutes, there is no mention of the

³ Plin. Hist. Nat. L. 2. C. 7.

rewards and punishments of a future life; the promises by which they were incited to obedience, including only health, peace, plenty, dominion, exemption from disease, war, famine, captivity, and whatever else belongs to the class of *temporal* blessings. Nor is any thing further intimated in the language of the prophets, during their long succession, to the times of Malachi. It is observable, also, that Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, when addressing an ardent supplication to heaven, for the continuance of the ancient covenant, distinctly appeals to the sanction of the Jewish law and religion; which, as he explains it, comprised nothing more than temporal rewards and punishments.

That this omission was not accidental, but designed, appears from several considerations. It is obvious, from the history of the book of Genesis. In detailing the account of the fall of man, the *serpent* only is mentioned, not the diabolical agent; because there was an intimate connection between that agency and the future redemption of the world, which developed the doctrine of a future state, with all its destined arrangements. There is a singular obscurity thrown over the brief notice of the death of Enoch; but how much more circumstantial is the narration of the translation of Elijah: because, in the latter instance, the period was arrived, when it was deemed proper to prepare the human mind for the revelation of a future state, by unquestionable intimations of its reality. In the history of the patriarchs, those discoveries which, as we learn from the New Testament, were made of the redemption of mankind, to certain favoured individuals, are either wholly omitted, or veiled by cursory statements, which evince the *intentional* nature of this concealment. That Moses really understood the importance of this doctrine to society, is evident, from a provision made in his institutes to obviate the evil consequences likely to result from so extraordinary an omission; for as the irregular passions of men would render some of them superior to all apprehension of personal and temporal evil, the due ascendancy was maintained by the punishments inflicted on their posterity, which the strength of natural affection must render truly distressing; and that this was devised as substitutionary for the doctrine of a future state appears hence, that as soon as the *new dispensation*, in which such a state with its rewards and punishments were revealed, the law of punishing children for the crimes of their parents was annulled. (Comp. Jerem. xxxi. 20—33; Ezek. xi. 19—21, xviii. 2—4.) And further, as Moses did not teach this doctrine, but studiously concealed it from view; so, as might indeed be inferred, the Israelites were ignorant of it during that entire dispensation to the period of their captivity. The Bible contains a very circumstantial account of this people, not only with regard to their public transactions, but private and individual histories, and their compositions of every kind; yet in none of these is any knowledge of future rewards and punishments displayed, or any curiosity upon the subject

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Omission of
a future
state
considered.

That Moses
did not
teach it.

A.M. 2553. expressed. This life, and this life exclusively, circumscribes the
 B.C. 1451. good and the evil, which excites their pursuit or kindles their aversion. Nor does the mere silence of the inspired writers support this conclusion: the non-existence of any popular belief of a resurrection or future state, is demonstrable from their positive declarations. To this purpose, the following may be cited as a remarkable evidence:—Job vii. 9: xiv. 7—12; Ps. vi. 5. The question, therefore, is here triumphantly put, “Could this language have been used by people instructed in the doctrine of life and immortality? or do we find one word of it on any occasion whatever in the writers of the New Testament, but where it is brought in to be confuted and condemned?”

New
 Testament.

But the argument presses with resistless weight, when it is recollected, that the inspired writers of the New Testament, expressly assure us that the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments did *not* make any part of the Mosaic dispensation. The evidence is in two parts: 1. They show that *temporal* rewards and punishments were the sanction of the Mosaic dispensation: thus it is explained in 1 Tim. iv. 8, that though numerous ritual observances were enjoined by the law, and some there must be under the gospel; yet they are of little advantage in comparison with real piety; the reward of the *life that now is* referring to temporal rewards, and the *life which is to come* to those of the christian economy. In the epistle to the Hebrews, vii. 15, 16, the Jewish religion, called a *carnal commandment*, is opposed to the christian, called *the power of an endless life*. 2. The Mosaic dispensation had *only* the sanction of *temporal* rewards and punishments, which is proved by an appeal to the express language of the inspired writers, in the following passages:—Rom. v. 12, and *seq.*; 2 Cor. iii. 7, and *seq.*; Gal. iii. 23; 2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. vii. 19, viii. 6, 7, *cum mult. aliis*.

Conclusion.

From the preceding premises, then, the conclusion is short and obvious:—if the doctrine of a future state be necessary to the well-being of civil society, under the ordinary government of Providence; if all mankind have uniformly so considered it; and if the Mosaic dispensation were destitute of this support, and yet did not need it, then the affairs of the Jewish nation must have been administered by an extraordinary Providence, distributing with impartial propriety both rewards and punishments: consequently the mission of Moses was DIVINE.

Such is the celebrated argument of Bishop Warburton, upon the merits of which the learned world is still divided. Excessive admiration of this mighty disputant has been generated on one side; and, perhaps, excessive fears of some consequences of his argument on the other. We simply state it: observing, however, that were this argument resigned, the great truth of the divine authority of the Jewish legislator appears to us (as it might with perfect consistency have appeared to the ingenious author of the Divine Legation) to rest on still higher and firmer ground.

III. THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THOSE LAWS WHICH MOSES
PROMULGATED AMONG THE ISRAELITES.

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B.C. 1451.

In the wrecks of time, the most ancient specimens of legislative wisdom have perished; so that we have no knowledge, by direct communication, of the laws of Minos, Zaleucus, or Charondas: but a singular providence has preserved entire to the present day, in the hands of the Jews, and fully authenticated by their acknowledgment and religious observance of them, those regulations which were prescribed to ancient Israel in the wilderness, and which are worthy of investigation; not merely on account of their theological application, but as tending both to gratify a legitimate curiosity respecting remote ages, and to furnish a guidance to enlightened and pious speculation.

Laws of
Moses.

The first object we have in view, in the present inquiry, is to point out *the basis on which the Mosaic laws were founded*: a distinct idea of which, is essential to a just estimate of this very extraordinary system of legislation. The whole depended upon one great fundamental principle, which stamped it with a characteristic simplicity and grandeur. In opposition to the polytheistic inventions of surrounding nations, Moses at once asserted the worship of ONE GOD as the central truth, and which, in intimate association with it, every other doctrine, every service, and every enactment should be arranged. Idolatry was, at that period, prevalent among all the people with whom the Israelites had any intercourse; and absurd as all its observances appear at this day, and to every enlightened understanding, that very nation were not fully purified from its infectious influence by the wisdom of that policy which was introduced by their great legislator; nor even by the miraculous attestations which sanctioned his original proceedings. It was not even peculiar to the multitude to relapse continually into these strange superstitions; for their wisest men, in subsequent periods of their history, nay, Solomon himself became addicted to them: nor did this impious and foolish habit suffer much, if any, diminution of its prevalency till a considerable portion of Asia was subjected to the power of Cyrus. Considering the degradation which the human mind suffers wherever idolatrous worship prevails; the strong propensity which has ever been manifested towards the adoption of its absurdities; the consequent difficulty with which the introduction of a new principle of thinking and acting must be attended; and the favourable effects which resulted with regard to the peace, purity, and dignity of mankind, Moses conferred a benefit of the highest order upon the world, by establishing the simple but sublime doctrine of *God the only object of worship*, as the fundamental article of his legislative policy.

Their basis.

The method adopted by the Hebrew lawgiver, was precisely calculated to give stability and permanence to the principle he had

A.M. 2553. avowed; for he engaged the Israelites in a solemn covenant, by
 B.C. 1451. which they accepted God as their king; he having the most unquestionable claim upon them, not only as the universal Creator, but as their deliverer from Egyptian servitude; and to whom, in consequence, they were indebted by obligations the most peculiar, and the most binding. This voluntary acceptance of the theocracy as their form of government, rendered idolatry an act of direct rebellion against the state, as now immediately under divine superintendence, and exposed the delinquent to those punishments which necessarily attached to the worst species of crime. It became not only a sin, but a treason, and the commission of it incurred the most marked displeasure. In conformity with this idea of God as the King of Israel, in a sense totally distinct from that general sovereignty which he exercises over universal creation, the Israelites are frequently represented in Scripture as a *chosen generation*, a *peculiar people*, a *holy nation*, a *kingdom of priests*, the *portion of God*, the *lot of his inheritance*. As the circumstances in which this people were thus placed, multiplied their privileges, they would proportionally enhance their responsibility, and perpetuate the impression of duty and allegiance to the one supreme Jehovah.

Consequent
policy.

Connected with this principle, and in fact resulting from it, was the legislative policy adopted by Moses to prevent an intercourse between the Israelites and other nations: and this was wise, considering the contagious influence of example, and the imbecility of the human mind; especially as it was found, at the period in question, in the infancy of its views and attainments. Foreigners might indeed become partakers of the rights of citizenship and naturalization; but they were not sought, nor studiously welcomed; and the Canaanites, Ammonites, and Moabites, were expressly excluded from the privilege. The object perpetually kept in view was, the multiplication of their nation, not by an accessory, but a natural population: on the other hand, obstructions were thrown in the way of an Israelite who was disposed to withdraw from the community, and settle in a foreign land; for by such a measure, he incurred the forfeiture of his hereditary possessions. Moses was careful to guard against the possibility of his nation becoming dependent and tributary; assigning its particular limitations, and interdicting the choice of a foreigner as their king. Not only did he frame no regulations for the advantage of commerce, he evidently discouraged it. Every Israelite had his own land, which was adequate to his subsistence; and interest for the use of money was prohibited, consequently there was no temptation to lend, and therefore, no possibility of borrowing for the sake of pursuing a system of mercantile speculation. Commerce, then, was discouraged, probably because of its contrariety to the adopted policy of insulating the people of Israel from other nations; its tendency to entice the citizens of a trading country to leave their homes and establish

Effects.

colonies; the decrease of population which it naturally produces by multiplying the hazards of life; its influence in diminishing the martial spirit, which it was at that period deemed necessary to cherish; its introduction of luxurious habits, which would have impoverished the state; and the enemies it would have been likely to create, by the natural and almost necessary effect of national competition. Hence, the system of Israelitish polity was founded on agriculture alone, comprehending the cultivation of vineyards, olive-grounds, and gardens.

Our attention is required, in the next place, to *the originality which characterizes the Mosaic institutions*. The learned Michaelis, indeed, in his *Mosaisches Recht*, or *Mosaic Law*, has endeavoured to show that Moses in his statutes pre-supposes a more ancient law, the *Jus consuetudinarium*, or that which is founded on established usage; which he sometimes confirms, sometimes improves, and sometimes annuls. The author in question contends, that several of the Jewish legislator's own laws existed long previously to his enactment of them; and that, in other cases, the very manner in which they are delivered, often evinces that they cannot be new. The ancient traditionary law which Moses occasionally adopted and improved, was that which arose from the condition of the illustrious ancestors of the Israelites, as wandering herdsmen. There are, moreover, traces in his writings of a judicious policy, founded on the results of long experience, which the author, alluded to, believes to be in a great measure Egyptian, as the foundation of government on a system of agriculture; the formation of a great and powerful state, independently on foreign commerce, which the Egyptians abhorred; and the measures resorted to for keeping the Israelites distinct from other nations.

Originality
of Mosaic
institutions.

It may surely be allowed, that there did exist an ancient consuetudinary law; and that in forming a grand system of legislation, the wisdom of past ages was in some degree incorporated with the enactments of the new and superior plan, or even taken as a model of particular regulations, adapted either to the circumstances or prejudices of the people among whom the new system was promulgated: all this and more may be admitted, without essentially derogating from that originality of character, which attached to the Mosaic institutions as a whole.

Dr. Priestley, in a dissertation on the originality and superior excellence of the Mosaic institutions, maintains, that they who suppose that Moses, in framing the institutions that bear his name, borrowed much from the Egyptians, or other ancient nations, can never have compared them together, otherwise they must have perceived many circumstances of essential difference. The most considerable of these, he represents to be the following: 1. No heathen ever conceived an idea of so great an *object* as that of the institutions of Moses; which appears to have been nothing less than

Priestley, on
the laws of
Moses.

Excellencies.

A.M. 2553. the instruction of all mankind in the great doctrine of the unity and
 B.C. 1451. universal moral government of God, as the maker of the world, and
 the common parent of all the human race; in opposition to the
 polytheism and idolatry which then prevailed. The Hebrew nation
 was placed for this purpose in the most conspicuous situation among
 all the great civilized nations of the world, which were universally
 addicted to idolatry of the grossest kind;—to divination, necro-
 mancy and other similar superstitions, practised as acts of religion.
 All mankind supposed that their prosperity depended upon the
 observance of their respective religions; hence, that of the Hebrews
 was made to do so in a remarkable degree, so as to furnish a visible
 lesson to the world: they were to prosper or to suffer in the most
 exemplary manner, according to their adherence to their religion,
 or departure from it. These ideas are distinctly advanced by Moses,
 and more fully in their latter prophets; but nothing of the kind
 could have been suggested by any thing he saw in Egypt, or heard
 of in other countries. 2. In no system of religion, besides that of
 Moses, was *purity of morals* any part of it. All the heathen religions
 were systems of mere *ceremonies*; on the observance of which it was
 imagined that the prosperity of the several states depended; and the
 sole business of the *priests* was to attend to the due observance of
 these rites, many of which were so far from being favourable to
 morals, that they were of the most impure and abominable nature, as
 is well known to all who have any knowledge of them. On the con-
 trary, it appears, not only from the ten commandments, but from all
 the writings of Moses, and those of the prophets who succeeded him,
 that the purest morality, the most favourable to private and public
 happiness, was the principal object of the system. 3. Nowhere,
 in all the heathen world, could Moses have heard of such a proper
national worship, as that which he introduced. The Hebrew
 nation had not only one single object of their worship, in which
 they differed essentially from all others, but one national altar; one
 precise ritual, and only one place for the meeting of the whole nation
 at the public festivals. Three times in the course of every year, all
 the males of a proper age were required to attend at this place,
 where they spent about a week in acts of worship and decent festivity;
 and at one of them the law was publicly recited, that all persons
 might be acquainted with it, and with the awful sanctions of it. A
 whole tribe, a twelfth part of the nation, was set apart for services
 of a religious nature, and their provision made to depend in a great
 measure upon their performance of them, being not in lands culti-
 vated by themselves, but in the produce of lands cultivated by others.
 At this one national altar, sacrifices were performed every morn-
 ing and evening, in the name and at the expense of the whole
 nation; and the manner in which this was done was invariable, and
 not left to the discretion of the performers. In all other countries
 the places of worship were numerous; and the diversity in the

Purity.

National.

modes of worship varied with the objects of them. 4. In no country, A.M. 2553. besides that of the Hebrews, were the *public festivals* expressly B.C. 1451. instituted in commemoration of such great events respecting their Feasts. history and religion. It is peculiar to this nation also, that the directions for the celebration of them were reduced to writing at the time of their institution, so that there could never be any uncertainty about the origin or the reasons of them. They were only three: the passover, on their deliverance from their state of servitude in Egypt, when the first-born of all the Egyptians were destroyed, and all theirs preserved; the pentecost, on the giving of the law from mount Sinai; and the feast of tabernacles, in commemoration of their living in tents and booths during their travels through the wilderness. 5. In no other country was the place, and other circumstances of the public worship, so well calculated to inspire a profound respect for the object of it as among the Hebrews. No heathen temple could be compared, for riches and splendour, with the temple of Solomon, or even the tabernacle of Moses, erected in the wilderness, though designed for a temporary use and portable. Into the holy place none were allowed to enter besides the priests; and into the holy of holies, only the high priest, and that only once in *the year* when he was habited in the most humble manner, to confess his own sins and those of the nation: at other times, his dress was the most costly and splendid, far beyond that of any high priest, or any prince in the heathen world. The garments of the common priests were particularly neat and decent, but not costly: and when the nation was in the wilderness, moving from place to place, they were far from marching in a disorderly manner, or encamping without regularity. How different from this were the most solemn processions of the heathens, when they carried the images of their gods from one place to another, generally on the idea, at least in the East, of giving them an airing and amusing them with an excursion from their temples and back again! 6. Sacrificing was a mode of worship more ancient than idolatry, or Sacrifices. the institutions of Moses; but among the heathens, various superstitious customs were introduced respecting it, which were all excluded from the religion of the Hebrews. In the Hebrew ritual, the original and most natural idea of a sacrifice, *viz.* that of a *gift* by way of acknowledgment for the blessings we receive, or the partaking of an *entertainment* with the object of worship, was strictly adhered to; nothing being offered but what was an article of food, or what was used at entertainments as incense, with which at this day the entertainments in the East are closed: whereas several of the heathen sacrifices consisted of animals that were never eaten but such as it was supposed the deity would be gratified in having destroyed. The Egyptians, from whom it might be supposed Moses would borrow the most, Plutarch says, always sacrificed such animals as were hateful to their deities. The

A.M. 2553. heathen sacrifices were also different according to the rank and
 B.C. 1451. character of the deity to whom they were offered. Thus, to the
 infernal gods, they offered black victims; to the good, white ones;
 to the barren, barren ones; to the fruitful, those that were preg-
 nant; to the masculine gods, males; to the feminine, females.
 To Hecate, they sacrificed a dog; to Venus, doves; to Mars, a
 bull; and to Ceres, a sow. 7. If the heathens had any *temples*
 before the time of Moses, which is uncertain, they were constructed
 in a manner very different from the tabernacle or temple of Solomon.
 The furniture of the Hebrew and heathen temples, and the business
 that was done in them, bore no resemblance to each other. In the
 latter we have no account of such a symbol of the divine presence, as
 the covering of the ark between the cherubims in the holy of holies;
 the fire on the great altar was always maintained to consume the
 remains of the sacrifices, and the lamps were preserved burning to
 afford light; but the perpetual fires of the heathens were of no
 use for the purpose of fire or of light. 8. Both the Hebrews and
 the heathens allowed the privilege of *asylum* to those who fled to
 their temples: but with the latter, this was arrived to a length
 equally superstitious and dangerous to the community; for what-
 ever was the alleged crime, the perpetrator could not be appre-
 hended without the dread of incurring the vengeance of the deity
 who was supposed to afford protection. But no person charged with
 homicide, or any other crime, was secure from punishment by flying
 to the Hebrew altar, except till the cause could be heard by regular
 judges; when, if found guilty, he was ordered to be taken, even
 from the altar itself, to execution. Wherever *design* was discovered,
 no refuge could be found; but in case of accidental homicide, the
 person might continue in security till the death of the high priest.
 This singular provision was not copied from any other nation. 9.
 The provision of proper *instruments* or vessels for the performance
 of sacrifice, was dissimilar from every mode of worship practised
 in heathen temples. 10. Had Moses copied any thing from the
 heathens, he would probably have introduced something of their
mysteries; but nothing of the kind is to be found in his institutions.
 There was no *secret* in the Hebrew ritual of worship; every thing
 is described in the written law, and though the priests only could
 enter the holy place, and the high priest, the holy of holies, every
 thing they did is particularly described; and no service, as in the
 case of the mysteries, was performed during the night, excepting the
 attendance at the great altar, to keep the fire in a proper state for
 consuming the remains of the victims; and of this no mention is
 made in the ritual. 11. There was provision for an *oracle* among
 the Hebrews as well as with the heathens; but the difference is
 most obvious. With the Hebrews, the responses were in a clear
 articulate voice, free from ambiguity, only on solemn occasions,
 and gratuitous; those of the heathens, obscure, ambiguous, delivered

Heathen
and Hebrew
temples
compared.

Instruments
of worship.

Oracle.

in a frantic manner, only at particular seasons, and at great expense. 12. The Hebrews and the heathens both had symbolical *purifications*, but the difference was great. Nothing was used for this purpose at the tabernacle or temple, for the priests or the people, but pure water, in which they washed or bathed; but the heathens, imagining that sea water was more efficacious, put salt into common water, and dipped in it a burning brand from the altar, flaming sulphur, or a branch of olive or laurel: but all the ceremonies of the Mosaic institution bore some relation to cleansing, and were not taken from other nations. 13. Religion directed the choice of the proper articles of *food*, both with the heathens and the Hebrews: but with the latter, nothing was forbidden but what was in some degree unwholesome; while the interdictions of the Egyptians, Syrians, and Hindoos, were evidently superstitious. 14. The Hebrew priests were not obliged to practise any peculiar *austerities*, as were many of those of the heathens. They might marry; the high priest only being forbidden to marry a widow. Moses assigned no part of the national worship to women; but in the heathen temples there were priestesses, and the oracle at Delphi was always delivered by a woman. 15. Moses could nowhere, in the whole heathen world, have obtained his idea of the *annual feast* for a general confession of sin and absolution; the latter denoted by the emblem of the dismissal of a goat, over whose head confession had been made. 16. A weekly *sabbath*, a *sabbatical year*, and the *jubilee*, were institutions peculiar to the Hebrews, and what Moses could not have borrowed from any other nation. The rite of *circumcision*, on the eighth day after the birth, was an indelible mark of the promise of God concerning their future destination; a token of the covenant of God with their ancestor Abraham. 17. Had Moses borrowed any thing from the heathens, he could not have overlooked the various modes of *divination*, sorcery, and witchcraft; their omens of a thousand kinds, their rites for consulting the dead in the art of necromancy; their distinction of days into lucky and unlucky; which constituted a great part of the religious observances of all the heathen nations: but all these are spoken of with the greatest contempt and abhorrence, and the pretenders to them are directed to be put to death. 18. The general system of *civil government* laid down in the institutions of Moses, is fundamentally different from any thing he could have seen or heard of in his time, and infinitely more favourable to personal liberty and happiness. The principal nations were governed by *kings* with no *written laws*: but in the institutions of Moses, there is no provision for a king whose powers should descend to posterity, and the government was a government of fixed laws reduced to writing. Nothing was left to the arbitrary will of any individual, whatever might be his office or eminence in the state. 19. In the *civil laws* of Moses, we find several, and those of par-

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Sacred
times.

Jurispru-
dence.

A.M. 2553. ticular importance, of which we can trace no resemblance in those
 B.C. 1451. of any other nation, ancient or modern; though, had they been found among those of Solon, Lycurgus, in Hindostan, or in China, they would have been admired for their excellence. 20. In all ancient nations, there were trials by various *ordeals*, in which the accused person was supposed to be guilty, unless fire or water did not injure him. In the institutions of Moses, we find one trial by ordeal; but so essentially different from what was in use in other countries, that it could never have been borrowed from them. The case referred to is that of a wife suspected of adultery; to which recourse was had only in defect of any other evidence.

From all these statements, the originality of the Mosaic institutions is to be deduced, while the wisdom which pervades them all, demonstrates their divinity.

Civil code. The third consideration we have to propose, respects the *civil part of the Mosaic code, as not intended to be unalterable or universally obligatory*. Though the laws in question were adapted to the circumstances of the Israelites, during their journey through the wilderness, yet when those wandering habits ceased by their settlement in the promised land, many alterations must necessarily occur.

Necessary alterations. In the course of time, for example, the value of money changed by the increased opulence of the community: it became requisite, therefore, to make a difference in the infliction of pecuniary punishments; otherwise, what in one state of society would be adequate to answer the ends of justice, in another would prove altogether disproportionate. Several changes took place in the time of Solomon, as in the case of a thief, who, by the law of Moses, was to make restitution four or fivefold, but who, at the latter period, is required to restore sevenfold. (Prov. vi. 31.) When Israel was encamped in the wilderness, Moses ordained that every one that killed an ox, a sheep, or a goat, should bring it as an offering unto the Lord, so that they could only eat flesh at the *sacrifice-feasts*: notwithstanding which, when they became fixed in their promised residence, and multitudes must have performed several days journey to comply with such an appointment, it in fact became impossible, and even Moses himself allowed that at that period it should be lawful to kill their cattle and eat them at their respective places of abode. Some things were enacted expressly with a view to an alteration, when the improved state of society should render it expedient, as in the case of *divorce*, respecting which Jesus Christ affirms, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.” (Matt. xix. 8.) To the same cause may be referred the allowance of polygamy, the direction for the marriage of a brother’s widow who was left childless, and the appointment of the avenger of blood to kill the person who had slain one of his relations. And from this it is obvious, that the wisdom of the Mosaic institutions partly

consisted in the skilful adaptation of them to the character of the people among whom they were established: for though they were the best that could be framed for that people, and at that period, they were not, in the most absolute sense, the best that could possibly have been devised; and consequently do not constitute an invariable rule of future legislation. They were, undoubtedly, regulated by those considerations which must ever enter into the views of judicious lawgivers in every age: such as the particular nature of the climate where they are to be enforced; the state of the soil in point of agricultural capacity; the connection of the country with adjacent or with remote nations; its relative power and political importance; the manner of life to which its inhabitants are addicted; and their general prejudices and prepossessions; which tend to show that future statesmen are not under an absolute obligation to adopt the laws of Moses, but are at liberty to use those which experience evinces to be most applicable to their own circumstances, and to reject others which the different state of the community renders either needless or pernicious.

Further, *the ceremonial part of the Mosaic institutions is to be considered as figurative*—the shadow of the gospel as the substance—or the elementary form which contained, as a model, the essential principles of that spiritual dispensation. Some divines of eminence have contended for a much more extensive application of this sentiment; maintaining with great plausibility, that the entire condition of Israel in the wilderness was a historical figure, in which future events were indistinctly represented; and, according to this interpretation, they consider the emancipation of the children of Israel, from the servitude of Egypt, as illustrative of the deliverance of Christians from the bondage of Judaism, and from the slavery of sinful passions and habits; the difficulties and sufferings which that ancient people underwent in the course of their journey, as significant of the trials with which the people of God are exercised in every period of time, during their passage through the world; and the final settlement of the Jewish nation in Canaan, as emblematic of the ultimate attainment of the heavenly felicity by all who commit themselves by faith to the divine guidance, which still, by the light of Scripture, as formerly by the splendour of the Shekinah, directs them on the march to immortality.

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Ceremonies
figurative.

Various
interpreta-
tions.

And still further, the interpreters to whom we allude, maintain, that the principal persons of the Mosaic dispensation were also figurative, and had each his antitype under the evangelical economy. Among these, the patriarchs and Moses are particularly specified. From the intimation of the latter, with regard to a prophet whom the Lord their God should raise up unto them, of their brethren, like unto himself, Bishop Newton and Dr. Jortin have traced out, from the original suggestion of Eusebius, points of analogy between the legislator of the Jews and the head of the christian church: and the

A.M. 2553. latter justifies the method he has adopted, by various preliminary
 B.C. 1451. remarks, adding, "the resemblance between Moses and Christ is so very great and striking, that it is impossible to consider it fairly and carefully, without seeing and acknowledging, that he must be foretold when he is so well described;" "and," says he, "it deserves consideration whether this consequence may be deduced,—that if Moses were a type of Christ, the people whom he delivered and conducted, may be a type of the people to whom Christ was sent, and of the church which he established."

Extremes.

We apprehend, that no errors of interpretation are attended with more pernicious consequences, than those which arise out of forced and unnatural analogies. Once permitted to pass its legitimate boundary, the spirit of allegory and accommodation will find an ample field in which to range, to the utter neglect of Scripture, truth, and even common sense. It is obvious, that as every interpreter possesses the same liberty of adapting his analogies to his own particular taste, and of appropriating them to the support of his own favourite system of faith, there can be no limit to the wanderings of fancy, and no safe method of acting among the pretensions of rival absurdities, but that of rejecting them all, and returning at once to the only standard of unsophisticated truth. This principle of interpretation being once adopted, is the more dangerous on account of its fascination: it possesses the charm of novelty; and is withal, when not duly regulated, so easy, that a very child in intellect and knowledge may practise it with considerable success.

Rule.

The question therefore is, and a question of great importance, the answer to which is not only requisite to be given, in order to check the progress of future adventurers into the mazy paths of the allegorical wilderness, but to vindicate the statements we are about to give of the emblematic character of the ceremonial law;—what is the legitimate boundary of allegorical and analogical interpretation? We reply, in the most condensed form of explanation we can devise—that it is *Scripture itself*, pointing out its own *designed coincidences*, as it does in the most perspicuous modes of language. If, therefore, we maintain, among other intelligible figures, and among an infinite variety of proofs, that the language of other parts of the sacred word is derived from the language of the Mosaic economy; that the ceremonial *law* significantly represented the system of salvation contained in the *gospel*; we do so, not because an ingenious imagination is subsidized to effect this analogy, but because it is given in the most express terms in *Scripture itself*, where in different parts of the apostolic writings, but especially in the epistle to the Hebrews, we are furnished with a detailed exposition of the Levitical institutions, the most important of which were the sacrifices and priesthood. How striking and express is the representation of the *paschal lamb*, as illustrative of our Saviour, who is called the lamb of God; who went as a lamb, meek and unresisting to the slaughter, and who was

Scripture
 the
 interpreter.

without blemish! The occasion of his sacrifice was similar to that of the *passover*. The destruction of the first-born in Egypt was inevitable, had it not been averted by the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon the houses;—in allusion to which, we are said to have “redemption through his blood.” The frame of mind in which the Jews were to celebrate the *passover*, and the various other ceremonies which were prescribed at the original institution, find their distinct illustration in the system of Christianity. This feast is to be kept with the “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,” “having our loins girded, our shoes on our feet, and our staves in our hands;” that is, in the *posture* of pilgrims on their heaven-directed journey. The case of the *scape-goat* turned loose into the wilderness, with the burden of sin upon his head, and the action of the congregation in laying their hands upon the head of the guilty person previous to his execution, were very significant of Christ as our substitute and Saviour, upon whom “the Lord is said to have laid the iniquity of us all.” Christ is, moreover, described as a *priest*, which he was not literally, and a *priest after the order of Melchizedec*, whose priesthood was prior to that of the Levitical order, who united the character of *king* with his other distinction, and who administered *bread and wine*, the very provision of the gospel festival: and “we have such a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.” The *intercession* of Christ was annually prefigured in the service of the tabernacle, when the high priest went on the great day of atonement into the holy of holies with the blood of sacrifice; for the apostle declares, that Christ, as our high priest, should enter “not into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” In fact, all the Jewish sacrifices may be justly regarded as types of the sacrifice of Christ; the purity required in every victim prefiguring his perfection, and the death of each prefiguring his offering upon the cross. The apostle seems to compare all the different kinds of victims with the one sacrifice of Christ, as types with their antitype, in Heb. x. 5—10. The expression, “he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second,” shows beyond a question, that the sacrifice of Christ succeeded in the room of all the sacrifices which were offered by the law; and hence, upon the accomplishment of his sacrifice, they all ceased.

Outram, in his two dissertations on sacrifices, (lib. i. c. 18,) successfully contends, that there can be no doubt, that those victims whose carcasses were to be burned without the camp, were types of Christ, and that in a more eminent degree than the rest: for they not only prefigured Christ, in common with others, in his unblemished perfection and death; these victims were *piacular*, as was the sacrifice of Christ. But the circumstance of their presentation *without the camp* is most observable. (Comp. Heb. xiii. 10—12.)

There would be no force in the apostle’s argument in this passage

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Instances.

Outram on
Sacrifices.

A.M. 2553. respecting the place where Christ must suffer death, unless all the
 B.C. 1451. victims whose blood was to be taken to the sanctuary had typified his sacrifice; for although those victims were burned without the camp, it could not be necessary on this account, that Christ should die without the city of Jerusalem, which evidently corresponded to the camp in the wilderness, but to produce a greater resemblance between those victims and Christ. Hence, all the victims who were burned without the camp, were types of the sacrifice of Christ, and in a more eminent degree than any other victims, because they prefigured not only his death, but the place where it was to occur. “The correspondencies of types and antitypes,” says Clarke, “though they be not themselves proper proofs of the truth of a doctrine, yet they may be very reasonable confirmations of the foreknowledge of God; of the uniform view of Providence under different dispensations; of the analogy, harmony, and agreement between the Old Testament and the New. The words in the law concerning one particular kind of death, *he that is hanged is accursed of God*, can hardly be conceived to have been put in upon any other account, than with a view and foresight of the application made of it by St. Paul. The analogies between the *paschal lamb*, and the *lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world*; between the *Egyptian bondage*, and the *tyranny of sin*; between the *baptism of the Israelites in the sea and in the cloud*, and the *baptism of Christians*; between the *passage through the wilderness*, and through the *present world*; between Jesus (Joshua) bringing the people into the *promised land*, and Jesus Christ being the captain of salvation to believers; between the sabbath of *rest* promised to the *people of God* on the earthly *Canaan*, and the eternal *rest* promised in the heavenly *Canaan*; between the liberty granted from the time of the *death of the high priest*, to him that had fled into a *city of refuge*, and the *redemption* purchased by the *death of Christ*; between the *high priest entering into the holy place every year with the blood of others*, and *Christ’s once entering with his own blood into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*:—these, I say, and innumerable other analogies between the *shadows of things to come, of good things to come, the shadows of heavenly things, the figures for the time then present, patterns of things in the heavens, and the heavenly things themselves*; cannot, without the force of strong prejudice, be conceived to have happened by mere chance, without any foresight, or design. There are no such analogies, much less such series of analogies, found in the books of enthusiastic writers living in such remote ages from each other. It is much more credible and reasonable to suppose, what St. Paul affirms, that *these things were our examples*; and that, in the uniform course of God’s government of the world, *all these things happened unto them of old for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*. And hence arises, that

Clarke on
the Types.

aptness of similitude in the application of several legal performances A.M. 2553.
to the morality of the gospel, that it can very hardly be supposed B.C. 1451.
not to have been originally intended.”⁴

The last observation we have to offer, concerns the *moral part of the Mosaic law as a rule of life*. Moral part of the law permanent. Some theologians have denied that the moral law of Moses is still of obligatory force upon the consciences of mankind. The persons referred to, place the gospel in opposition to the law; and blending the various parts of the code of Mosaic legislation into one mass, they sweep away the whole with indiscriminating zeal. Its requisitions, they plead, were fulfilled by Christ, and its penalties discharged; and all who are interested in his meritorious death, by the participation of its benefits, which faith confers, have nothing more to do with the demands of the law of Moses. Instead, therefore, of aiming at conformity to its precepts, as the evidence of an interest in evangelical blessings, persons of this habit of thinking seek visionary enjoyments as their favourite mental repasts.

To this it may be replied, that there is indeed a sense in which Argument. the law is abolished; namely, that in which it is considered as a covenant of works, and as a yoke of bondage, Christ having called his people to liberty;—a liberty characterized by the apostolic writers as *glorious*; that enfranchises them from the servitude of ceremonies and observances, with which even the true religion was primarily encumbered. It is to the disciple of the New Testament no longer a source of justification, or an occasion of alarm; the thick darkness, and the awful thunder, disappearing for ever from the peaceful summit of Calvary. But, in other respects, the law is of an invariable and unalterable character; and so far from being abrogated, the religion of the gospel places it on the most solid foundation, and invests it with peculiar dignity and lustre. To the disciples of the Son of God, it exhibits what is holy, just, and good; pointing out the duties which ought to be performed, and the evils which a man’s regard to his superior and immortal interests will teach him to avoid. It reflects, like a clear well polished mirror, the genuine character of the individual who applies to it, exhibiting with perfect accuracy the impurities of the heart, the imperfections of the conduct, and the deformity of human nature: and while it diminishes that high self-estimation which all men are so apt to cherish, by the unyielding strictness of its requisitions it virtually displays the importance of the means of salvation developed in the gospel, and disposes the man who feels himself condemned by its holy severity, to a ready reception of the Christian system. Connection with the Christian system. That system in the administration of the supreme lawgiver of his church republishes the law; reiterating its claims, enforcing them upon a new basis, and creating new obligations to obey its authority.

⁴ Clarke’s Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Religion.

A.M. 2553. Hence it is called "a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," and B.C. 1451. we are "under the law to him." As the two great principles upon which the Mosaic commandments are founded, and upon which, as the legislator of the Christian church explained, "hang all the law and the prophets;" namely, supreme love to God, and proportionate love to the whole neighbourhood of mankind, must have existed as obligatory on human beings, wherever they were to be found, independently of their distinct specification and enactment by Moses, and from the very commencement of the world: as these principles have their foundation in eternal rectitude, resulting from the constitution of the universe, the dependence of creatures upon their Creator and upon each other, nothing can annul them; not even the rebellion of any portion, or of the entire universe. While there is a God, the intelligent creation must be under an obligation to love him, and to spread their affections as far as their nature, and through the vast extent of being. The resistance of any creature to the authority which he is required to obey, does not diminish the force of that authority; and consequently the sin of man can have no tendency to subvert the claims of heaven upon his obedience. He is not the less obliged, because he has refused, or persists in refusing, to fulfil his obligations. And under whatever dispensations mankind may be placed, and whatever new requirements the Creator may see fit to institute, man can never be released from the binding duties which originate in the very constitution of his nature, and arise out of his existence as an intelligent being; and every further enactment of the Creator must be directly founded upon what is essentially consistent with the nature and comfort of man. The forms of obedience may change, but virtue is unalterable: consequently, moral obligation is the same in its principle, under the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian dispensations.

It may be further argued, that it would reflect upon the character of God, to suppose him, under one dispensation, to have prescribed a law which is at variance with the institutions he has established under another. It is to place the Deity in opposition to himself, and virtually to deny his perfections: for this alleged abrogation of the entire law, with all its moral sanctions, is widely different from admitting the removal of its ceremonial services or typical adumbrations, which would only imply, that the former system, adapted expressly to the peculiar circumstances of the people for whom it was framed, naturally ceased with the progress of the human character, and the appointed manifestation of a sublimer order of worship. Hence it annihilates all personal religion, and all progression of moral character: it is a virtual reflection upon the conduct of our Saviour, who obeyed the precepts of the law and fulfilled its requisitions, not surely to abrogate, but to exemplify and honour them; and it is moreover, contrary to that spirit of attachment to all its demands, which the eminent men upon sacred record have expressed, in the

language of praise and celebration. The greatest of the kings of Israel, in those devotional hymns which have been transmitted to us, perpetually, and in a thousand varied forms of expression, declares his love to the divine law, and the complacency of his mind in all its requisitions. He affirms, that it was his constant meditation and delight; that it was even sweeter to him than honey, or the honey-comb; and that nothing should divorce his affections from it: and the apostle Paul triumphantly asks, "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid—yea, we establish the law." A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

We have entered with considerable particularity of detail into the personal history of Moses, the proofs of his divine commission, and the characteristics of the law which was promulgated by him, in its civil, ceremonial, typical, and moral parts; because, these constitute, not only so many separate portions of a narrative thus distinctly and individually interesting, but because they form themselves into one mighty subject, that comprehends one of the most extraordinary appearances of heaven to man. The Mosaic dispensation is that central point *in* which the past movements of Providence converged, and whither, throughout all the generations of antecedent time, they tended: it also appears to have been the point *from* which the occurrences of succeeding periods emanated and diverged in every direction; no future state of mankind being unconnected with its transactions, or uninterested in its civil and ecclesiastical institutions. Recapitulation.

Among other peculiarities, we wish to have it distinctly marked as introducing the ÆRA OF THE WRITTEN WORD. God had, indeed, from the very creation, maintained a constant intercourse with his creatures by means of dreams, visions, voices, and celestial messengers; but he had not hitherto communicated his will in a permanent form. By means of the longevity of the patriarchal ages, the incidents of past time could be transmitted through many centuries, with a degree of certainty which the veracity of those few individuals, through whom these traditionary accounts were conveyed, might well inspire. In addition to this, the possibility of mistake, as to truth, was prevented by the overruling care of providence. The historic facts in which Moses was not personally concerned, were most probably collected by him in this manner, and narrated in his writings with the utmost fidelity. There were, besides, certain *understood* principles of moral conduct, which descended from father to son, and which the finger of God had engraven upon human consciences; but never, till the ten commandments were inscribed upon the two tables of stone, was any commencement made towards the formation of that volume, whose sacred inspirations now constitute the source of hope, and the guide of reason to mankind. The necessity for this measure was apparent. Previously to this period, Adam might have conversed with Lamech, the father of Noah; Lamech, with his grandson Shem; and Shem with his descendants Æra of the written word.

A.M. 2553. Abraham and Isaac: and these, with their immediate posterity: by
B.C. 1451. which means, four persons would transmit the essentials of divine revelation through a series of upwards of two thousand years. But about the time of Moses, human life became reduced to nearly its present ordinary duration; in consequence of which, tradition would naturally become more uncertain, and the necessity of a written standard of faith and practice increasingly urgent. It was no longer possible to make a direct appeal to those venerable men who had held intercourse with predecessors that almost breathed the air of primeval paradise, and who were laden with the mental treasures of a thousand years: a disadvantage which was compensated by the kind arrangements of providence, in separating one people from the rest of the nations, and intrusting to them the sacred oracles.

CHAPTER V.

JOSHUA.

BORN, A.M. 2452. B.C. 1552—DIED, A.M. 2561. B.C. 1443.

THE disappearance of a person of eminence from the scene of useful labour, is apt to occasion a feeling of despondency in survivors. They look around for a competent successor, with an air of vacant and wondering inquiry, which is strongly expressive of the deep-seated apprehension, that no one is to be found adapted to occupy the forsaken office, in a manner equally or comparably honourable. Affectionate remembrance magnifies the virtues, and assiduously obliterates the imperfections, of the departed friend or ruler who once inspired confidence in every bosom, or shed a lustre upon the annals of his country: and if feelings of this nature are prompted by the ordinary deprivations of life, or the common course of human affairs, it is easy to believe that the sentiment of regret would be most poignant in every Israelitish heart at the loss of such a well tried leader as Moses. But he who had taken this singular people under his patronage, was at no loss to accomplish his purposes by raising up qualified agents, and did not suffer them to remain destitute of a guide long trained and precisely suited to their circumstances. Moses had, indeed, previously to his departure, been directed of God to place JOSHUA over the congregation; to give him a public admonition respecting the diligent discharge of his office; and, according to the remarkable phraseology of the Scriptures, “to put some of his honour upon him.”

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Num. xxvii.
20.

Joshua assumed the government of Israel about A.M. 2553. He was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, originally called Osea or Hosea; but Moses made the alteration to commemorate his appointment to spy out the land; and to intimate, according to the Hebrew idiom, the assurance of salvation. Hence, he was not to be denominated, *הוֹשֵׁעַ*, Hosea, salvator, but *יְהוֹשֻׁעַ* Joshua, dominus salvator: corresponding, both in title and character, to Jesus, the author of eternal salvation; of whom, conformably to the character of the Jewish dispensation, he was an eminent type.

Joshua's
accession
to the
government.
A.M. 2553.

Of his qualifications for the station to which he was elevated, we have the most decisive testimony of God himself, which is amply corroborated by his splendid career. His personal courage, integrity, and piety, are always conspicuous; and he was instrumental in those

His qualifi-
cations.

A.M. 2553. successes which have raised him to the pinnacle of heroic fame. He
 B.C. 1451. was "a man in whom was the spirit;" "full of the spirit of wisdom;"
 Num. xxvii. sometimes obtaining his information by immediate revelation, some-
 18. times from the sanctuary, and by Eleazar the high priest, Aaron's
 Deut. xxxiv. son, who consulted God by the Urim and Thummim, when he
 9. presented himself before the veil opposite the mercy seat, and was
 answered by a voice issuing from that sacred spot. The ancient
 Talmudists, in common with universal tradition, represent him as the
 author of that perspicuous and striking narrative which appears
 under his name; in which, with the faithfulness of the historian, the
 piety of the saint, and the ardour of a hero personally engaged in
 conducting the military operations recorded, he carries forward the
 history of Israel through seven years, during which the conquest of
 Canaan was completing, and eighteen additional ones of his sub-
 sequent government: the book itself, which includes the death of
 Eleazar, proceeds about five or six years by another pen.

Divine com-
 munication
 to him

It is not improbable that, knowing the warlike spirit of the nations
 whom the Israelites were about to dispossess of their territory, and
 the preparations which the report of the meditated attack had
 induced them to make, Joshua felt the necessity of some assurance
 immediately from Heaven, to afford him encouragement. Accord-
 ingly, he was no sooner invested with the supreme authority, than
 God spake to him, either immediately from the sanctuary, or by
 some angelic messenger, in terms which were highly calculated to
 dissipate every apprehension. He was given to understand, that to
 him should be accorded similar assistance and success as were
 bestowed on his illustrious predecessor; and that, upon the condi-
 tion of his strict adherence to every command of the law, the
 promised possession should become an easy conquest. He was to
 act with the same zeal and courage, as though the result depended
 exclusively upon his exertions; but at the same time to preserve in
 constant recollection, that the real and supreme governor of Israel
 employed him only as an agent of his providence.

Prepara-
 tions for the
 attack on
 Canaan.

After these intimations the Hebrew general issued his orders.
 In three days they were to attempt the passage of the Jordan, and
 to prepare a supply of provisions, probably because the miraculous
 supply of manna was beginning to fail, as they had attained the
 extremity of the wilderness. This provision they were enabled to
 obtain from the country of Sihon and Og, which they had lately
 subdued, and in which they at present sojourned. In the mean
 time two spies were despatched to collect information respecting the
 state of the opposite shores, especially the fortifications of Jericho,
 which was to be first assaulted. By some good contrivance the
 spies entered the city, and were received into the house of Rahab,
 who was probably the keeper of a public lodging-house. The king
 was soon informed, however, of the entrance of these strangers, and
 suspicious of every such intruder at so momentous a crisis, he shut

Spies sent
 to Jericho.

the gates and sent in search of the men. Their hostess, to conceal them from this dangerous inquiry, took them up to the roof of her house, and covered them over with some stalks of flax, stating in reply to the questions of the king's officers, that the two strangers had made but a very cursory stay at her house, departing at the close of the evening; and if they had a wish to secure them, no doubt they might be easily overtaken: by which deception the officers were inveigled into an useless pursuit towards the fords of Jordan. No sooner were they out of sight, than she hastened to the spies, expressed her firm conviction that their God was the supreme sovereign of the world, whose miraculous interpositions on behalf of their nation had struck her countrymen with the utmost alarm, and that the land would inevitably be subdued by their arms; soliciting at the same time a benevolent requital of the kindness she had that day manifested towards them, in the future protection of herself and family. This was instantly and solemnly promised; when, as it was dark, and her house was built upon the city wall, she was able to facilitate their escape by means of a cord let down through one of the windows. This scarlet cord was the agreed signal which, on the day of victory, was to distinguish and protect her house. By Rahab's advice the spies remained three days in the neighbouring mountains, and afterwards hastened to the camp to give an account of their adventure, and represent the consternation of the Canaanites.

Joshua immediately advanced to the banks of the river, and prepared to pass over. The country which they had recently conquered was bestowed upon the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, in order probably to be a barrier, or line of defence for the Israelitish possessions; nevertheless they were to assist their compatriots in the meditated conquest. The general, having marched the army forward, communicated precise directions respecting the particular order in which they were to proceed to the river, which at this period of the year, it being spring, usually overflowed its banks, through the melting of the snow upon mount Lebanon. When they advanced, the priests with the ark went in front, and no sooner had their feet touched the river, than it miraculously divided and stood on heaps on either side, opening a passage for the thousands of Israel. The priests stood in the centre of the bed of the river till the entire movement was accomplished: when, upon their gaining the opposite shore, and rejoining the people, the waters flowed back into their forsaken channel. By divine direction, twelve persons were nominated, an individual from each tribe, to select twelve stones in the middle of the bed of the Jordan, where the priests were commanded to stand; to set them up upon the spot; and to bring twelve others on shore for a similar memorial of the interference of providence. Thus they departed out of the wilderness by miracle, as by miracle they had entered it. Moses

A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Passage of
the river
Jordan.

A.M. 2553. conducted them through the Red Sea, and Joshua through the
 B.C. 1451. river Jordan; the one into the desert, the other into the promised
 and plentiful land; the one to prove their character, the other to
 secure their inheritance. These striking coincidences and contrasts
 it is the business of the historian only to name: the reader will find
 them worthy of being retraced in the hour of solitary reflection.

Two memorable circumstances attended the introduction of the
 Israelites into the promised land: the renewal of the rite of circum-
 cision, which had been suspended during the long sojourn of the
 wilderness; and the ceasing of the manna by which they had
 hitherto been miraculously supported. Gilgal was the first place of
 their encampment; and so great was the terror that diffused itself
 throughout the country, that for the present, at least, they had
 little reason to apprehend any very considerable military impedi-
 ments to their progress. Joshua seems to have availed himself of
 the earliest opportunity of going out to survey Jericho, from which
 place the army was only about two miles distant. Here he was
 met by an extraordinary personage, either an angel, or as some
 suppose, the Divinity, in the form of a human being, clothed in
 armour, with a drawn sword in his hand. Unacquainted with the
 real character of this appearance, the Hebrew general advanced,
 and put the question, whether he was a friend or a foe? when the
 disclosure of his being the captain and guard of Israel, produced in
 him those reverential feelings which inspired his predecessor at the
 manifestation of the burning bush. Similar injunctions, also, to
 put off his sandals were given on the present occasion; and very
 explicit orders were communicated respecting the manner of con-
 ducting the siege of Jericho. The whole army marched round the
 city six days successively, with seven priests having trumpets
 formed of rams' horns in their hands, preceding the ark: the
 armed men went before them, and the rest of the people followed
 the priestly procession. On the seventh day, the march commenced
 about the dawn, and the circuit was accomplished seven times, at
 the last of which Joshua commanded the people to shout, pro-
 claiming the divine will to give them immediate possession of the
 city: the walls instantly fell flat to the ground in such a manner as
 to present no obstruction to the conquerors, who hastened forward,
 spreading the sword of destruction on every hand, irrespective of
 either age or sex, man or beast. To complete the work, the place
 was set on fire, and every thing consumed, with the exception of the
 silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, which were reserved
 for the treasury of the house of the Lord. According to the
 engagement of the spies, Rahab and her friends were saved amidst
 the general massacre, with all the property contained in her house.
 Joshua denounced a solemn curse upon whoever should venture to
 rebuild the city; which anathema, it was remarked by Maimonides,
 was pronounced that the miracle of the subversion of Jericho might

Taking of
 Jericho.

be kept in perpetual memory; "for whoever," says he, "saw the walls sunk deep into the earth, would clearly discern that this was not the form of a building destroyed by men, but miraculously thrown down by God." A.M. 2553.
B.C. 1451.

Proper persons were now despatched to take a view of Ai, a place about twelve miles from Jericho, the report of whose inconsiderable size and ill state of defence induced Joshua to send only a detachment of three thousand men, which he supposed to be amply sufficient for its capture. They were, however, entirely routed, and pursued to their encampment. The effect of this failure was extremely dispiriting: Joshua rent his clothes, and prostrated himself before the ark of God, while the priests covered their heads with dust, in token of mourning. The expressions of the leader of Israel in his address to heaven on this occasion must be considered as tinctured with too much despondency, and he was ordered to rise from the ground, and instead of indulging in vain complaints or alarming forebodings, to institute an inquiry into the offence which he was given to understand had been committed, to occasion this early disaster. It was soon discovered that, notwithstanding the express injunctions of Joshua previous to the approach upon Jericho, not to spare any part of the property which was found in that devoted city, or to conceal any thing consecrated to a sacred purpose, Achan, a man of the tribe of Judah, seized upon some of the spoil and hid it in his tent. He had secured and appropriated a rich Babylonish garment, with two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight. The culprit, with all his newly acquired treasure, his family, his cattle, and his tent, were immediately taken into a valley, where the goods having been burned, and the several persons connected with him as participators in his crime stoned to death, a heap of stones was collected on the spot as a perpetual monument of this melancholy transaction. Attempt upon Ai.

The Israelites defeated.

A second attempt against Ai was now arranged by the direction of Heaven. The army advanced on the northern side of the town, and an ambuscade was planted on the western. The king hastened out with his army and the inhabitants, and being drawn to a distance by the feigned retreat of the troops under Joshua's immediate command, the thirty thousand men who constituted the ambuscade sallied forth at a preconcerted signal, and took and destroyed Ai by fire. At the same moment the main body turned upon their pursuers, who were soon cut to pieces: every man, woman, and child, was given to the sword; and the king, having been hung till sunset, was afterwards buried at one of the gates beneath a heap of stones: the cattle were reserved for the use of the victorious Israelites. Ai taken.

For the particular circumstances accompanying these and the future achievements of Joshua, we must refer our readers to the detail of the Sacred History; it being only necessary for us to mark the most important transactions, and offer such general observations The Gibeonites.

A.M. 2553. as certain memorable events seem to require. The petty kings on
 B.C. 1451. that side the river Jordan now entered into a league, with a view to
 their mutual defence; but the Gibeonites consulted rather their own
 safety, by the adoption of a singular stratagem to obtain a peace
 with their invaders: they had deceived them into the idea that they
 were foreigners coming from a great distance; but three days after-
 wards, having discovered the imposition, they took measures to
 reduce them to a state of perpetual slavery, making them hewers of
 wood and drawers of water; an expedient which appeased the dis-
 contents of the people, and prevented the danger of incurring the
 divine displeasure for violating a solemn oath of alliance.

A.M. 2554. Displeased at this separation from the Canaanitish confederacy,
 B.C. 1450. the Gibeonites were soon surrounded by the Amorites, and shut up
 in their principal city. This reduced them to a state of great
 distress, and incited them to make application to Joshua, who
 instantly accorded to them a prompt and effectual assistance. Early
 in the ensuing morning he marched upon the enemy, and completely
 routed them with dreadful slaughter. In addition to the ordinary
 sufferings of a retreat before an incensed and warlike enemy, it is
 stated in sacred story, that "it came to pass that as they fled before
 Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast
 down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they
 died: they were more that died with hail-stones than they whom the
 children of Israel slew with the sword." This circumstance has
 given birth to several elaborate dissertations, in which learned men
 have adduced instances of the falling of immense stones from the
 atmosphere, to the destruction of many lives. None of those cases,
 however, afford any very satisfactory elucidation of the present event;
 the truth of which appears to have been, that a heavy hail-storm
 overtook the retreating forces of the Amalekites, and cut them off;
 the peculiarity of which consisted not so much in the circumstances
 of the storm, as in the time of its occurrence. Destructive hail has
 in other cases fell upon men, but this was in connection with an
 express promise from heaven to assist the Israelites. It descended
 at the moment which must have been anticipated, exclusively too
 upon the enemy, and cannot be viewed in any other light than that
 of a miraculous interference. Joshua had been expressly assured
 before the battle that God would be with him; that the confederate
 princes should be delivered into his power, and not a man should
 stand before him; and while this excited his confidence in prospect
 of the conflict, it justified and substantiated that confidence in the
 progress of the victory.

Shower of
 stones
 Josh. x. 11.

Another accompaniment of this day's achievements has awakened
 a still greater curiosity, and produced in the minds of mankind a
 more wondering attention, than the preceding miracle. It is
 related in the following words:—"Then spake Joshua to the Lord,
 in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the

Standing
 still of the
 sun and
 moon.

Josh. x. 12-
 14.

children of Israel; and he said, in the sight of Israel, ‘Sun, stand A.M. 2554.
 thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon.’ B.C. 1450.
 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.” It will obviate the objections which have sometimes been advanced against this miracle, to remark, that the Hebrew general did not use a philosophic, but popular language, which was, indeed, absolutely necessary, unless he had chosen to incur the charge of insanity. In the ordinary intercourse of life, and even in those written communications which are not strictly scientific, philosophers themselves do not deem it necessary to deviate from the common idiom, otherwise they would be unintelligible to the mass of mankind. Besides, in the days of Joshua, and long posterior, the system of astronomy was conformable to the *appearances* of nature, and science had not yet conducted her votaries into those vast fields of discovery which have been thrown open to modern times, and are become accessible to the multitude: and yet, even at this advanced period of the world, it would be deemed pedantic, rather than necessary, were the language of science to be transfused into the records of history. Some have supposed that the command in question was issued, not at noon, when the sun was, according to the literal interpretation, “in the midst of heaven;” but at the time of his setting; when Joshua, observing the unfinished state of the conflict, requested a miraculous prolongation of the day. It has been remarked, that the words in question, כחצי השמים, signify merely that division of the heavens which is formed by the visible horizon; and that שמש, rendered *sun*, properly signifies the *solar light*, which it is supposed was made to linger in the heavens or in the horizon about twelve hours. In this case the rotatory motion of the earth was not suspended; but the miracle consisted in the retention of the light, by giving it perhaps an unusual refraction, so as to render it visible at once over the whole, instead of half the globe. It is by this means that the sun, according to the present laws of nature, actually appears above the horizon for some time after his descent below it; a phenomenon, which is not only of daily occurrence, but easily explained: the same refractive power of the atmosphere, being proportionally increased by a direct interposition of providence, might produce the extraordinary prolongation of the day, which took place at the voice of Joshua. If the narrative of this extraordinary occurrence be considered, according to its most obvious and most natural interpretation, we must suppose that the motion of the earth upon its axis was suddenly suspended by a volition of God; and there are really no difficulties attendant upon this hypothesis, which a reflecting mind

A.M. 2554. will deem it all insuperable. He, whose omniscient intelligence fore-
 B.C. 1450. knew, and whose perfect wisdom arranged all the harmonies of nature, could as easily and did as certainly provide for this as for any other event in the progress of time; an event which, however it deviated from what our limited experience has induced us to denominate the course of things or the law of nature, could not possibly be contingent to an infinite and eternal being; and might as certainly as any other circumstance, whether important or insignificant, have formed a part of that system, whose basis is the eternal past, and whose consummation is the illimitable future. To a providence which spreads its operations over the whole of time, it was quite as natural, that at that precise æra, when Joshua was pursuing the fugitive Canaanites, the sun and moon should be made to stand still; or that *that* should occur in nature which inevitably produced such a phenomenon; as that, at a previous period, these orbs should begin to shine, or that at any subsequent moment they should retain their station, and diffuse their influence. It may be inquired, indeed, if the revolution of the earth upon its axis were so suddenly suspended, how is it possible to account for the circumstance, that none of those disastrous consequences ensued, which in such a case would seem inevitable? As every being and substance upon the earth's surface is carried round with it at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, must not a sudden stoppage of this motion have whirled every thing moveable from the surface, dashed the ocean into air, and overturned the most stupendous rocks and mountains? Surely this instantaneous suppression of the diurnal movement of our planet must have necessarily produced a most calamitous re-action! The reply is obvious: the same miraculous energy which arrested the luminaries of heaven in their course, or, to speak philosophically, which caused the earth to rest upon its axis; could have prevented, at the same moment, the effects which, in an ordinary case, would have naturally resulted from the suspension of any one of the laws of nature. The same volition which arrested the whirling globe, could unquestionably, and would most assuredly avert the ill consequences of that mighty jar which must otherwise have overspread the world with confusion and ruin. The one of these operations is quite as conceivable as the other, and both were equally requisite to complete the miracle.

Ancient superstitions respecting the sun and moon.

The sun and moon were worshipped as gods throughout the heathen world, and many nations boasted of the title of Heliada, or descendants of the sun. This was an ancient superstition, and may be traced in the records of the very earliest times. All things were supposed to be under their influence, as the chief deities, and universal preservers and creators. Heliodorus introduces the queen of Ethiopia as invoking the sun, *Επικεκλησθω μαρτυς κ. τ. λ.*—*Let the sun, the great author of our race, be invoked as a witness upon this occasion.* Both luminaries are thus addressed at a sacrifice,

Ω Δεσποτα Ηλιε, και Σεληνη δεσποινα.—*Our Lord the sun, and our A.M. 2554.
governess the moon.* We find the sun invoked by the Egyptian B.C. 1450.
priests, at the funeral of a deceased person, as the fountain of
being, Ω εσποτα Ηλιε, και θεοι παντες κ. τ. λ.—*O sovereign lord, the
sun, and all ye other deities who bestow life upon mankind; receive
me, I beseech you, and suffer me to be admitted to the society of the
immortals.* (Cons. Helioid. L. 10; Æthop. L. 4; Porphyry de
Abst. L. 4.) If, as is most probable, if not absolutely certain, the
inhabitants of the district where this extraordinary battle occurred,
were worshippers of the celestial luminaries, esteeming the sun
and the moon as their principal deities; nothing could have been
more appropriate than the miraculous interposition of the God of
Israel at the voice of Joshua. The very gods of these people were
compelled to see the overthrow of their votaries, and even to lend
an unwilling aid to the hostile forces of their enemies. The
Gibeonites had certainly joined, in considerable numbers, the army
of the Israelites, and must have been witnesses of that stupendous
miracle, which was so calculated to nullify their religion, and con-
firm the faith of the people of God. Each must distinctly perceive
an omnipotent agency, as the towers of Gibeon retained the linger-
ing splendour of the day, and the valley of Ajalon was filled with
the undeparted mildness of the lunar beam. The Providence which
operated these effects, will appear to have been still further trium-
phant, if it be admitted, what is indeed most probable, that Gibeon
had a relation to the sun: for *Giba*, as Bryant observes, signifies a
hill; and the term *On* is well known to denote the sun. *Gibaon*,
therefore, is literally the *hill* or *high place of the sun*. In like
manner Ajalon, which, from גִּבְעֹן, should be expressed *Aia-Lun*,
denotes the *place* or *shrine* of the *moon*; for *Ai* or *Aia*, in the
language of ancient Egypt and of many other countries, signified
a *place*, as *lun* signified the *moon* among the ancient Hetrurians,
Germans, and many other nations. Gibeon, therefore, most likely
contained a temple of the sun, the king of heaven, and the valley
of Ajalon, a temple of the moon, the queen of heaven; by resting
on whose turrets, each heavenly luminary would diffuse an
unwelcome radiance through the recesses of idolatrous adoration.

While their forces were in full and disastrous retreat, the five
confederate kings hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah, a place
about eight miles distant from Eleutheropolis; in which they
were blockaded by the orders of Joshua, as soon as he obtained
information of their attempted concealment. Upon his return from
the pursuit, the cave was opened, the royal fugitives brought
forth, and hung upon the spot: after which the sword of excision
traversed Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, and other places, in
rapid succession; till the whole of southern Canaan having yielded
to the desolating power of the conqueror, he returned to his encamp-
ment at Gilgal. A new confederacy, however, was soon formed to

Cave of
Makkedah.

A.M. 2554. the north, under the direction of Jabin, the king of Hazor, in
 B.C. 1450. which a number of petty princes entered, who assembled an
 immense force at the waters of Merom; to the amount, according
 to Josephus, of three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse,
 and two thousand chariots. As the Israelites were interdicted the
 use of horses and chariots, by the express command of God, this
 new confederacy assumed a very formidable aspect, and presented
 itself in an imposing and advantageous attitude. But Joshua did
 not hesitate to meet the fierce encounter; and, encouraged by a
 divine assurance of success, he fell upon them suddenly, defeated
 them completely, slew Jabin, and burnt his city; and delivered up
 all the cities of the confederacy, to be plundered by the Israelitish
 soldiery.

A.M.
 2554-60.
 B.C.
 1450-44.

A.M. 2560. After these transactions, it became necessary to apportion out
 B.C. 1444. the lands which had been subdued among the several tribes which
 Division of had hitherto been unsettled: for which purpose, proper commis-
 the land. sioners were appointed to survey the country, and the lot resorted
 to as the most unexceptionable mode of determining the partition.
 And here the superintendence of Providence ought not to be over-
 looked, nor the prophetic character of Moses and Joshua. The
 appeal to the lot gave every tribe the possession which these
 servants of God had predicted, in all the circumstances of soil and
 situation. The tribe of Judah became enriched with a district abound-
 ing in vines and pasture grounds; Asher had a province full of oil,
 iron, and brass; Naphtali possessed a part extending from the
 west to the south of Judea; Benjamin, one in which the temple
 was erected; Zebulon and Issachar comprehended the different
 seaports; Ephraim and Manasseh, places celebrated for the
 "precious fruits of the earth." No particular district was appro-
 priated to Simeon and Levi: the former participating with Judah,
 and the latter being diffused among the other tribes. Eight and
 forty cities, however, were bestowed upon them. Six places were
 also appointed as cities of refuge for those who had committed
 involuntary murder. Joshua had a residence in the vicinity of
 Shiloh, where the tabernacle was set up, to which perpetual recourse
 might be had for divine instruction.

Reubenites,
 Gadites, and
 half tribe of
 Manasseh
 honourably
 dismissed.

These regulations being completed, the Reubenites, the Gadites,
 and the half tribe of Manasseh, were called together by Joshua,
 who dismissed them from the service in which they had so honourably
 engaged, with very solemn and wise admonitions respecting the
 distribution of the booty they had acquired in the war, and the
 future observance of the Mosaic institutions. To the other half
 tribe of Manasseh which had received no inheritance from Moses,
 Joshua appointed a residence among their brethren on this side
 Jordan, westward. Thus, as the sacred historian emphatically
 represents it, "The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he
 swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt

Josh. xxi.
 43-45.

therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”

As soon as the two tribes and-a-half had crossed the river, they proceeded to erect an altar at the place where the miraculous passage of the Israelites had been so recently accomplished, as a memorial to future ages of their connection with the inhabitants of the opposite banks and country, and a testimony of their similarity of religion. Too suspicious of their friends, and neglectful of the proper methods of obtaining information, the people assembled in Shiloh, to concert a warlike expedition against the offending tribes, whose altar they had hastily concluded to be an idolatrous construction. But previous to the commencement of hostilities, they despatched an embassy under the direction of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest. Ten princes of distinction accompanied him. The overheated zeal of the multitude appears to have so far infected the individuals of this mission, that they addressed the persons to whom they were sent in a manner sufficiently blunt and uncourteous; prejudging the case by a direct impeachment, and referring with an intelligible severity to the history of the trespass of Achan. To this the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, promptly answered, that so far from intending to adopt a measure calculated to seduce any part of the people of Israel from their allegiance to God, they had raised the altar in question for the very opposite purpose of perpetuating his worship, and transmitting to their posterity the rich inheritance of the true religion. If in time to come, it should ever be objected to them, as it probably might be, that they were excluded, by their very circumstances and situation, from the body of the Israelitish nation; they thought it highly expedient to make an altar conformably to the divine pattern, as a proof that Jordan could not separate them from a participation in the privileges and religion of their brethren: and they expressed a horror at the thought of being guilty of that apostacy which had been so unexpectedly imputed to them. This explanation was, of course, satisfactory; the embassy returned, and the people dispersed. A name significant of its real design was given to the altar, that it might occasion no future misapprehensions: it was called *Ed*, that is, a *witness*.

An altar erected by the two tribes and a half.

Civil peace being thus restored, and external quiet secured by the undisputed sovereignty of the country acquired by the arms of Israel, a long period of prosperity and leisure attended the declining life of Joshua. At length, perceiving the approach of that day, when he must tread the valley of death, in which so many illustrious men had preceded him, he imitated the conduct of Moses, in assembling the chiefs and magistrates, with their tribes, at She-

A.M. 2561.
B.C. 1443.

A.M. 2561. chem; where he delivered to them a farewell and affectionate
 B.C. 1443. address. He retraced the goodness of that God who had guided
 and guarded them through the years that were gone by, reminding
 them of the assistance they had received, and the victories they
 had obtained; and faithfully warning them of the fatal consequences
 that must inevitably ensue, should they forget their obligations,
 falsify their vows, and amalgamate themselves in any degree, with
 the nations whom they were bound to exterminate. With a
 calmness peculiar to a good man, he adverts to the subject of his
 own speedy departure; and with the zeal of an eminent Israelite,
 he engages them to renew their covenant with God, by fresh and
 solemn asseverations of eternal obedience. The words of each
 party were written in the book of the law, and a great stone was
 set up under an oak, near the sanctuary of worship, that they might
 be perpetually reminded of their renewed engagements. After
 this solemnity the people were dismissed to their several residences,
 and their illustrious leader, at the age of a hundred and ten years,
 died in faith, and invested with a glory which religion only can
 confer upon mortality. He was buried at Timnah-serah, in mount
 Ephraim, in the year of the world 2561, B.C. 1443. Soon after-
 wards, Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, followed him to the
 grave; and was interred in one of the neighbouring hills, which
 descended as a possession to Phinehas, his son and successor in
 the priesthood. The two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, availed
 themselves of this opportunity of public mourning, to fulfil the
 wishes of Joseph, whose bones were brought out of Egypt, accord-
 ing to his request, and now buried in Shechem, in a piece of ground
 which Jacob purchased of the sons of Hamor, and bequeathed to
 Joseph's posterity.

Death of
 Joshua.

Josh xxiv.
 32.

His
 writings,
 character,
 and fame.

Joshua is the reputed and probable author of the book which
 passes under his name; with the exception of a few concluding verses,
 containing an account of his death, which were supplied by one of
 his successors. The whole narrative is distinguished by that anima-
 tion and preciseness of description which evince, that the historian
 was also the principal actor. His mode of writing is at once simple,
 concise, and glowing. His exploits were long preserved in memory,
 through the distorted representations of the pagan nations of antiquity.
 There is an evident allusion to the miraculous passage of Jordan, in
 the story of Neptune drying up the river Inachus. Hercules was
 certainly the same with the Hebrew general: the scene of his
 victories, and his various achievements, may be traced in the accounts
 of the Phœnician hero, who is stated to have carried on a war with
 Tryphœus and the giants, in behalf of the gods, as Joshua fought
 the Canaanites; many of whom were reported to be of gigantic
 stature. The scripture facts of the descending stones, and the arrest
 of the sun and moon in their spheres, have each their respective
 antitypes: for Hercules received a similar kind of assistance in his

contest with the sons of Neptune; and Callimachus describes the sun A.M. 2561.
 as stopping the wheels of his chariot, to hear the melodious chorus B.C. 1443.
 of nymphs; which occasioned the prolongation of the day. Statius
 also represents the sun as standing still at the sight of the unnatural
 murder committed by Atreus.¹

The measure of extirpating the nations of Canaan, has been charged
 with extreme cruelty, and cited as an instance of unwarrantable
 aggression: but whatever objections may be urged against it, they
 cannot be imputed to Joshua, since he acted under a commission of
 paramount authority. The councils of heaven, therefore, are
 impeached by the objection; than which nothing can be more
 presumptuous in a short sighted mortal. The governor of the
 universe may have reasons for his conduct which it would be improper
 or unnecessary to communicate to his creatures, and which, in many
 cases, could not be fully comprehended even by the utmost stretch
 of human sagacity. It is sufficient for a man that he has the
 commission of God, acting in obedience to which, it is impossible to
 err; and whether the line of conduct we are directed to pursue,
 coincide with our predilections, or oppose them, the principle of
 obedience is simply the will of God. But we need not recur merely
 to this sentiment, in order to vindicate the conquest of Canaan:
 satisfactory reasons are assigned for the proceeding, in the sacred
 page. The iniquities of its inhabitants rendered them obnoxious to
 the divine displeasure, and proper subjects of punishment. When
 Moses summoned the Israelites to a general audience, previous to the
 passage of Jordan, he expressly states, and with reiterated declara-
 tions, "for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth
 drive them out from before thee." Deut ix. 34. In executing that decree, which
 was founded upon this consideration, an ample space was afforded
 them for repentance, which would, no doubt, have had the effect of
 averting those calamitous visitations which they sustained by the
 hands of the Israelites. In this sense the severities which were
 predicted were conditional, implying the happy consequences that
 might result from their reformation: but instead of improving in
 character, they degenerated, becoming more and more confirmed in
 sin. The language of Rahab renders it highly probable, that some
 means had been adopted, some special monition had been given them,
 respecting the determinations of heaven; for this subject appears to
 have been familiar to her mind. Her acknowledgments of the
 supremacy of the true God, and the predetermined capture of the
 land, are not a little remarkable, betokening the existence of an
 impression in her own mind, and in that of her countrymen, respecting
 their real situation. "I know," said she, "that the Lord hath given
 you the land . . . the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above,
 and in earth beneath."

¹ Callim. in Dian. Stat. Theb. Lib. 1 et 5. Comp. also Ovid, Metamorph. de Phæton.

A.M. 2561. The following judicious remarks of Dr. Paley are highly illustra-
 B.C. 1443. tive of this subject, and must prove eminently satisfactory to those
 Paley's who, being scrupulous of the divine honour, have strongly felt the
 remarks. difficulties which involve this dispensation. "When God, for the
 wickedness of a people, sends an earthquake, or a fire, or a plague
 amongst them, there is no complaint of injustice, especially when
 the calamity is known, or expressly declared beforehand, to be
 inflicted for the wickedness of such people. It is rather regarded
 as an act of exemplary penal justice, and as such, consistent with
 the character of the moral governor of the universe. The objection,
 therefore, is not to the Canaanitish nations being destroyed, (for
 when their national wickedness is considered, and when that is
 expressly stated as the cause of their destruction, the dispensation,
 however severe, will not be questioned;) but the objection is solely
 to the manner of destroying them. I mean there is nothing but the
 manner left to be objected to; their wickedness accounts for the
 thing itself. To which objection it may be replied, that if the
 thing itself be just, the manner is of little signification: of little
 signification, even to the sufferers themselves. For where is the
 great difference, even to them, whether they were destroyed by an
 earthquake, a pestilence, a famine, or by the hands of an enemy?
 Where is the difference, even to our imperfect apprehensions of
 divine justice, provided it be, and is known to be, for their wicked-
 ness that they are destroyed? But this destruction, you say, con-
 founded the innocent with the guilty. The sword of Joshua and of
 the Jews, spared neither women nor children. Is it not the same
 with all other national visitations? Would not an earthquake, or a
 fire, or a plague, or a famine amongst them, have done the same?
 Even in an ordinary and natural death the same thing happens.
 God takes away the life he lends, without regard, that we can
 perceive, to age, or sex, or character. But, after all, promiscuous
 massacres, the burning of cities, the laying waste of countries, are
 things dreadful to reflect upon. Who doubts it? So are all the
 judgments of Almighty God. The effect, in whatever way it shows
 itself, must necessarily be tremendous, when the Lord, as the
 Psalmist expresses it, "moveth out of his place to punish the
 wicked." But it ought to satisfy us—at least this is the point upon
 which we ought to rest and fix our attention—that it was for exces-
 sive, wilful, and forewarned wickedness, that all this befell them,
 and that it is all along so declared in the history which recites it."

The directions which the Israelites received with regard to the
 method of proceeding in the conquest of Canaan, were as follow.
 Every city to which they approached belonging to another nation,
 was to be formally summoned: if the surrender were refused, they
 were to besiege it, and smite every male with the edge of the
 sword, the women and children being spared: if on the other hand
 the gates were opened to them, the inhabitants were to be spared,

but reduced to the condition of slaves and tributaries. A different course was to be pursued when those cities were taken, which belonged to the land of promise: nothing that breathed was to be saved alive: the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebuzites, were to be unconditionally exterminated. They were required most scrupulously to avoid all alliance with these nations, lest they should be tempted to conform in any degree to their idolatries. A.M. 2561.
B.C. 1443.

Whoever is acquainted with the human mind, is aware, that moral contagion is much more easily diffused than moral purity; and that, other things being equal, a system of religion comporting with human passions is more likely to predominate over one that opposes their indulgence, than that the latter should displace the former, by the mere influence of its intrinsic excellence over minds already enlisted in the service of evil. Besides, the government of Israel during this period being essentially *Theocratic*, it was peculiarly proper to maintain the divine authority, by an absolute interdiction of every measure calculated to alienate the mind from God, or dissatisfy it with his service. Contact with surrounding nations might have spread the infection of disobedience; for while a conquered people are apt to contract the manners of their conquerors, they are capable also of diffusing their own habits amongst them, and the two nations in time, lose a considerable portion of their respective and characteristic peculiarities. Hence, it was necessary to prevent this intermixture, by requisitions tending to insulate and dissever Israel from the vanquished Canaanites; on which account, they were commanded to “overthrow their altars, break their pillars, burn their groves with fire, and hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them.” Deut. xii. 3.

Nor is this all. It is notorious, that victory in war was at that period, considered as the most decisive evidence of the power of any of the gods of the nations, and the conquerors claimed the superiority in behalf of their own deities, above those who were adored by the vanquished party. Nothing, therefore, could be better calculated to impress upon the Canaanites, and upon surrounding countries, a sense of the glory of the only true God, than these signal and repeated successes; nor would the ordinary judgments of Providence, as earthquakes and tempests (against which, by the way, infidelity does not venture to object, although the *means* of effecting the extermination were comparatively of little consequence,) have accomplished in any proportionable degree so important an impression.

CHAPTER VI.

THE JUDGES OF THE ISRAELITES,

TO THE MONARCHY UNDER DAVID.

A.M. 2561. B.C. 1443—A.M. 2941. B.C. 1063.

A.M. 2561. B.C. 1443. JOSHUA had no immediate successor. The dispositions of the people over whom he had presided with such singular success, were now relaxing into that indifference to the divine favours which is the sure presage of their withdrawment; and thus neglectful of the principles of their unity, as a nation, they lost the secret of their strength and of their past progress. Joshua, indeed, as presiding over the whole of the tribes of Israel, and carrying forward victoriously the accomplishment of God's promises to give them all the land of Canaan, had no successor until the times of DAVID. It will accord, then, at once with our plan, and with the circumstances of the case, to give a brief view of the fates of this remarkable people during the time of their JUDGES, under the name of the most distinguished of them, (and perhaps their own historian,) SAMUEL, as the connecting link between the conquests of Joshua and those of David.

Tribe of
Judah
presides.
Caleb.

By a divine decision, the tribe of Judah was selected, shortly after the death of Joshua, to lead forward their brethren in their future wars; and over that tribe CALEB, the distinguished and faithful companion of their late commander, appears at this time to have presided. As the possessions of Judah closely bordered upon those of the tribe of Simeon, the cautious veteran was induced to call for the assistance of the latter tribe more particularly than for that of the rest, and their first efforts were directed to the deliverance of their own respective territories from the hand of the enemy. The two tribes unitedly undertook the siege of Bezek, (a town of Canaan, near the Jordan, about seventeen miles from Shechem,) and Jerusalem. In the neighbourhood of Bezek they obtained a complete victory over the united forces of the Canaanites and Perizzites, amounting to upwards of 10,000 men, and finding in the city seventy mutilated princes who "gathered their meat under the table" of Adoni-Bezek, the tyrant of the place, they inflicted upon him a retaliatory punishment by cutting off his thumbs and great toes. Jerusalem, then called Jebus, submitted to their arms at about the same time, for to this place they brought the captive king of Bezek,

(whose conscience appears to have been touched with the justice of the government of God,) and there he died. Though the king of Jerusalem had formerly placed himself at the head of that alliance over which Joshua gained his great victory at Gibeon, the Jewish general does not appear to have subdued the capital, which was now taken by assault and burnt; except a strong fortress on the top of Mount Zion, which resisted every attack. The mountainous country around, and towards the south, to the wilderness of Paran, was immediately added to the lot of Judah; and the united tribes proceeded to attack in succession, Hebron, Debir, Gaza, Askelon, and Zephath, the possession of which they divided between them. At Debir we hear finally of Caleb, in the proclamation which he issued, offering his daughter in marriage to whoever might subdue the place; and on his nephew Othniel, the son of Kenaz, (afterwards the first of the *Judges*,) becoming the successful champion, he adds a liberal dowry to that honourable gift. The character of Caleb will always rank high among that of the greatest of men. He was one of the *two* "among the faithless, faithful" found, when twelve princes of the tribes were deputed from the wilderness to search the promised land; and their report was so important to the hopes, and even to the peaceable conduct of the people. Joshua and Caleb were the heroes and helpers of that day, who, when the whole of their companions discouraged all further trust in God, and in his servant Moses, "stilled the people," avowed the difficulties, but anticipated the future triumphs of their way; and at the peril of their lives insisted that what their eyes had seen of the promised possessions, would abundantly compensate for every effort in obtaining them. He had the testimony of God "that he followed" Him "fully"—was the only individual then above twenty years of age, except Joshua, who afterwards was permitted to enter into the land he had described—and at the period before us, of his last achievements, as a leader and commander of God's people, was engaged in the subjugation of a portion of that very race, ("the sons of Anak,") whose gigantic stature had been transferred to all the people of the land, and formed one of the chief grounds of the cowardly and faithless apprehensions of his brethren.

Character of
Caleb.

The other tribes, aroused by these repeated successes, made several efforts to extend their respective territories. The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh assisted the Danites in the subjugation of the Amorites, and took possession of Bethel; but contented themselves, even "in their strength," with rendering the conquered nations tributary, instead of fulfilling the divine commission to extirpate them from the land. This now became the general conduct of the fickle but highly favoured tribes. They found, perhaps, in the immediate possession of the skill and labours of their captives, in the splendour and imposing character of their idolatry, the soothing solemnities of their groves, and the silver and gold of their idols,

- A.M. 2561. (which they were commanded "utterly to detest,") as well as in the
 B.C. 1443. personal charms of their females, those very seductions from obedience
 to the true God, of which they had been so often warned, and which
 constituted one of the principal reasons for the awful mandate of the
 Apostacy of the Israelites. entire destruction of these nations. While the Canaanites, on the
 other hand, would have every motive to submit for a time to that
 yoke to which resistance was so evidently in vain, and to contract
 alliances which enervated the conquerors more than the conquered;
 as they might ultimately have the opportunity of shaking them off
 at pleasure. A divine messenger announced to the Israelites God's
 high disapprobation of this idle and unfaithful policy; but at the
 death of Caleb that generation was swept away, which had seen His
 greater interpositions on their behalf, and the rising generation
 appears to have mingled without reluctance in all the habits and
 idolatries of the land.
- A.M. 2599. During these times of confusion and apostacy, occurred the two
 B.C. 1406. events, highly characteristic of such a period, which are related, at
 considerable length, at the conclusion of the book of JUDGES, that
 the narrative of the public affairs of this people might not be too
 much interrupted. An Ephraimite, of the name of Micah, having
 erected a splendid private temple for certain idols belonging to his
 Micah's idolatry. mother, made his own son his priest. But a young Levite acci-
 dentally travelling into the neighbourhood, Micah persuaded him to
 accept the office, regularly stipulated his salary, and provided for
 him habiliments in imitation of those in which the regular priest-
 hood were accustomed to appear before God in Shiloh. This
 ignorant devotee now anticipated with confidence that his worship
 would be acceptable to Jehovah; but the Levite, upon whose
 idolatrous services he so warmly congratulated himself, became the
 means of his utter ruin. A party of Danites, in their researches
 after a more extended territory, came to Mount Ephraim, and
 lodged at Micah's house. Finding in the Levite an old acquaint-
 ance, and having inquired into the nature of his present occupa-
 tions, they first pretended to ask the counsel of God respecting their suc-
 cess in a projected enterprize upon Laish, and receiving a favourable
 answer, the army of the tribe assembled in the neighbourhood. But
 instead of manifesting any gratitude for the hospitality of Micah to
 their messengers, or reverence for the character assumed by his
 priest, they now took advantage of their numbers to seize upon his
 idol, and the riches of his shrine, which they carried, with the
 accommodating priest, to Laish; and having subjugated the city to
 their own dominion, set up the idol for public worship there. Here
 it is said to have been established and resorted to, all the time that
 the ark of God was in Shiloh. The *idols* of Micah remind us of the
teraphim of Laban, the *talismans* of the oriental nations, and the
penates of the Romans. In some instances, as in the case of Micah,
 they seem to have been hieroglyphics, or symbols, borrowed per-

haps from the cherubim, or such figures as were commanded to be made for the tabernacle, and which might be supposed to be emblems of Deity; although image worship was expressly forbidden, and the Israelites were reminded that, neither in the giving of the law, nor upon any other occasion, had the Deity appeared in a visible shape. In the case of Laban, they were not unlikely household gods, similar to the *penates* of the later ages of idolatry, as it is highly probable that such a man as Laban would yield to the superstitious customs around him, especially if it should in any way conduce to his worldly interest. It seems, by the testimony of the Rabbins, that *teraphim* is a word sometimes applied to magical preparations, involving the most cruel rites, and supposed to possess oracular powers. The *talismans* of the East were metal figures, formed under the aspects of certain planets, and supposed to possess great efficacy in active and protecting qualities and virtues. It is evident, that in families in which we should have expected greater purity, we find a strange propensity to idolatry—even in that of Jacob, who commanded his household to deliver to him their *idols*, previous to his going to Bethel to worship, and he buried them under an oak. Various conjectures have been formed respecting a word (תַּרְפִּים) which in various parts of the Scriptures signifies simply *an image* of any kind.

The other circumstance which the inspired penman has perpetuated, presents a still more disgraceful picture of the times, and was more extensively disastrous to the tribes. A Levite of Mount Ephraim was returning home with a concubine who had eloped from him, and lodged for the night with a brother Ephraimite at Gibeah, a town belonging to the tribe of Benjamin; when the inhabitants of the place surrounded the hospitable abode, and demanded the stranger for the gratification of their brutal lusts. In vain, like just Lot, did the master of the house expostulate with these wretches; no method of appeasing them could be found except that of delivering up the concubine of his guest, who remained with them until morning; when she died at the door from the cruelty of their treatment. The Levite, with the coolness of determined vengeance predominating in his mind, took the body home, divided it into twelve pieces, and sent one to each of the tribes, with an appeal against the outrage he had suffered. A general assembly of the Israelites was called in consequence at Mizpeh, amongst whom appeared an army of 400,000 men. Here they examined into the case of the indignant Levite more fully, and agreeing that nothing so disgraceful had ever occurred amongst them since they had been formed into a nation, the whole assembly resolved that they would not return unto their homes until the perpetrators of this abominable deed were brought to punishment. Messengers were despatched, making instant requisition for them of the princes of the tribe of Benjamin; who, instead of uniting in

Outrage at
Gibeah.

A.M. 2599 detestation of the crime, armed themselves in defence of the criminals to the number of 20,000 chosen men. The divine approbation seems to have sanctioned the sense of justice which now appeared to fill the bosom of the tribes; but as it existed very feebly there, and in union with vindictive and oppressive dispositions, God's interposition for them was but partial and temporary. They were instructed by an oracular communication to march as heretofore under the direction of the tribe of Judah; they penetrated quickly to the town of Gibeah, and though twice repulsed with considerable loss, they obtained (partly by stratagem) a final and most decisive victory over the Benjamites, who were all put to the sword except about 600 men. These fled into the mountains of the neighbourhood, while the fury of the other tribes urged them to the utter destruction of the cities and villages, and even the wives and children of their devoted brethren. Of this excessive vengeance, however, they soon saw reason to repent. The threatened extinction of a tribe from Israel, by its own sin or their own arbitrary measures in punishing it, was an unparalleled calamity, and the tribes again met in council, over the consequences. The 600 men who fled into the rocks of Rimmon, constituted the whole remaining strength of the tribe of Benjamin; and at the beginning of the war, the other tribes had vowed to give no Benjamite a wife from amongst them. They now therefore devised two most strange and unjustifiable expedients to obviate the effects of this rash vow. Finding that the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, (a portion of the tribe of Manasseh,) had not repaired to the general assembly at Mizpeh, and recollecting an awful oath they then had made respecting all who did not come, they issued an edict for the destruction of that place, with the exception of the unmarried women, whom they assigned to the Benjamites. They also encouraged them to take advantage of the annual feast unto God in Shiloh, by seizing for wives the young women who repaired thither. The fugitives availed themselves of these expedients, and the tribe, though it always remained a small one, gradually recovered from these severe disasters.

Othniel. The valour of OTHNIEL, who seems to have been born to sustain the honours of Caleb's family, had shortly after these transactions, a noble field for its display. The tribes of Israel by their impiety and pusillanimity, after the death of his father-in-law, had been subjected to the dominion of Cushan-Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, for upwards of eight years; when Othniel found means to raise an army against the oppressor; and so unwearied and successful were his exertions, that he established a permanent deliverance for the Israelites, and judged them in peace forty years. Their captain in the season of difficulty and danger, and guided generally in his steps by the immediate dictation of the Spirit of God, this important person would naturally obtain that ascendancy in the national councils which the proper improvement of his own victories

might require, and which the prevention of future subjugation would appear to make essential to the public safety. Ever in danger from their own propensities to rebellion against God, and from the watchful ambition of the neighbouring states and princes, the tribes required a description of governors to be thus especially raised up for them by their Almighty King, as their zealous magistrates in peace, to watch over and extirpate the seeds of all their calamities in their vices and idolatries; and to lead them out in the divine strength to war. A series of such deliverers, now called JUDGES, and generally men of exemplary piety and virtue, began in the person of Othniel, was continued at intervals, and according to the public exigency, for the space of three hundred years, and ended in that of SAMUEL.

On the death of their first distinguished leader of this series, the Israelites fell under the yoke of the Moabitish princes for eighteen years, and appear to have been in the habit of acknowledging their sovereignty by an annual tribute. EHUD, a Benjamite, who became their second judge, was deputed to carry this token of submission, at the end of that period, to Eglon, the king of Moab, whom he privately stabbed on the occasion, and roused the Israelites in the adjacent provinces to immediate revolt. He seized the passes of the Jordan, and obtained a complete victory over the Moabitish forces, which established the eastern part of Canaan in a peace of eighty years. Disconnected from those considerations which must always be preserved in recollection while reading the history of these and similar transactions, the conduct of Ehud can only be viewed with abhorrence; but if he acted under a commission from heaven, it admits of that vindication which we have already suggested with regard to the general conquest of Canaan.

To Ehud succeeded SHAMGAR, the son of Anath, but of what tribe is uncertain. As the Philistines infested the western coasts by their perpetual incursions, he was raised up to repel their attacks, and keep them in constant check. It is recorded, that he slew six hundred of them with an ox-goad, or, as the Vulgate and the Septuagint render it, "a plough-share;" which, whether it were accomplished on one occasion, or in the course of several irruptions, was sufficient to advance him to the distinction of a deliverer of Israel. The insignificance of his weapon proves that he must have possessed extraordinary dexterity and zeal, combined with incessant vigilance.

After the decease of Ehud, the Israelites again departed from God; and their disobedience and misconduct compelled their protector to subject them to similar discipline with that which had previously restored them to allegiance. Although the city of Hazor had been, at a former period, utterly consumed by Joshua, the Canaanites, it seems, availing themselves of the unsettled state of the country, had repaired thither and rebuilt it. Here Jabin, who

A.M. 2688. assumed the more general designation of king of Canaan, had fixed
 B.C. 1316. his residence, and oppressed the people of Israel, who are described
 as "sold into his hand," during twenty years, *i.e.* from B.C. 1316
 to B.C. 1296. He commanded a mighty armament, supported by
 nine hundred chariots of iron, which had diffused such consternation
 abroad, that many of the tribes were in a state of despair, and
 others were on the point of emigrating into distant countries. The
 Greeks were accustomed to fight in chariots, as we learn from
 Homer, and others. They were first adopted, probably, for the pur-
 pose of elevating the warrior, and thus enabling him to see the field
 and direct his course whither it might be most necessary, as well as
 for giving him an advantage in taking a surer aim with the bow,
 the sword, or the javelin; and they are especially adapted *for speed*,
 either for succour or flight. Those of the king of Canaan, under
 Sisera. the command of Sisera, appear to have been constructed *for strength*,
 either to resist attack, or to break the ranks of opposing warriors.
 Thus the war-chariots of the ancient Britons were armed with
 scythes and other deadly instruments, turning with the wheels of the
 carriage, and driven with great fury; wherever they were impelled,
 such machines would become almost irresistible, mowing down
 whole files of men, and producing the most terrible slaughter.

Trade now perished, for no caravans dared to occupy the public
 roads, which were infested by banditti; the course of justice was
 miserably impeded in consequence of the difficulty of communication
 between the towns and districts; and the agricultural interests of
 the country were sacrificed to those apprehensions which were
 too justly entertained of the marauding enemy who pressed to the
 very gates of the fortified places. In this critical emergency,
 Deborah. DEBORAH, a prophetess, was also a judge and ruler of several, if not
 A.M. 2708. of all the tribes of Israel. She is represented, in conformity with the
 B.C. 1296. simplicity of the times, as sitting under a palm-tree, between Rama
 and Bethel, in Mount Ephraim, to discharge the important duties of
 her station. As the supreme magistrate, she sent an authoritative
 Barak. message to Barak, the son of Abinoam, who resided in Kedesh-
 Naphtali, to collect forces from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali
 to the amount of ten thousand men, and repair immediately to
 Mount Tabor, assuring him of complete success in an expedition
 against the army of Canaan, under Sisera. This disclosure of the
 event, with which Deborah was of course acquainted by an imme-
 diate inspiration, was intended to dissipate those feelings of despon-
 dency, which had so long prevailed even in the pious part of the
 Israelitish community. Barak at first started an objection, amount-
 ing to a positive refusal to go, unless accompanied by the prophetess
 herself, which ought perhaps rather to be imputed to that modesty
 which is characteristic of eminent men, than to any disinclination to
 engage in the service of his country, or any feelings of jealousy
 against its present ruler. Deborah instantly replied in terms indi-

cative of the heroism and energy of her mind, "I will surely go with thee:" and the forces of Israel were mustered under their joint inspection, to attempt the honourable service of breaking those fetters of bondage, in which their country had been so long confined. Sisera receiving intelligence of this arrangement, encamped with his nine hundred iron chariots, between Harosheth and the river Kishon. The numerical superiority of the enemy might well have excited a painful apprehension of the issue, had not full confidence in God inspired both the prophetess and her general with a courage suited to the occasion. Deborah seized the important moment, and urged Barak to put his chosen band of intrepid warriors in motion. They descended upon the foe like a thunderbolt of providence, and discomfited the three hundred thousand foot and ten thousand horse (such is the estimate of Josephus) which stretched along the circumjacent valley of Mount Tabor. So complete was the victory, that the Canaanitish general being reduced to the utmost extremity, alighted from his chariot, and, defeated, dispirited, and alone, fled to the tent of a Kenite family in the neighbourhood, with which he was acquainted. Here he was welcomed by Jael, the wife of Heber, who appeared to pay him every attention that a sympathizing hospitality demanded; and whom he implored to guard his slumbers at the door of the tent. He felt himself additionally secure, perhaps, from the custom of the country, which interdicted all strangers from entering the women's apartments. But no sooner was he in a sound sleep, than she seized upon a long tent-nail and a hammer, and softly approaching the couch of the fugitive, she struck the nail through his head and transfixed him to the ground. In this condition she presented him to the Hebrew general, with an exultation that is more than justified by the extraordinary eulogium pronounced upon the action in the song composed upon the occasion of this victory, by the prophetess who planned and accomplished it. The pursuit continued the whole of the day, and the river Kishon swelling to an unusual height, and overflowing its banks, swept away thousands; so that the very elements seemed ready to assist in promoting the Israelitish cause.

Jael.

Death of
Sisera.

The north of Canaan was now emancipated from slavery for forty years, in which interval this perverse people returned to their ancient course of rebellion, and again provoked their supreme ruler to chastise them. During this period, we read of another messenger of vengeance. They were exposed to so distressing a famine, that multitudes were necessitated to remove from their country in quest of a foreign settlement, and among these Elimelech, a Bethlehemite, with his wife Naomi, and his two sons, who afterwards married two Moabitish women, Orpah and Ruth. Upon the decease of their husbands, Naomi, who was now a widow, returned to her home. She was accompanied by Ruth, Orpah having declined the journey after commencing it. The mother-in-law at length con-

Naomi and
Ruth.

A.M. 2708. trives an advantageous marriage of her daughter to Boaz, by whom
 B.C. 1296. she had Obed, the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David, through which line the Saviour of the world descended. The beautiful episode containing this story, has been thought worthy to form a distinct book of the Sacred Canon.

A.M. 2748. In consequence of the new departure of the children of Israel
 B.C. 1256. from God, the Midianites, in conjunction with the Amalekites, and other eastern nations, (probably the Ammonites and Moabites,) were permitted to oppress them for seven years, driving them into the secret recesses of the mountains, and into the fortified places. It was in vain that they attempted to cultivate the fields, for the enemy rushed in upon them to gather the ripening harvest, covering the whole land like grasshoppers for multitude, and sweeping away every description of cattle. In this state of extreme impoverishment, they presented their earnest supplications to Him whose ears were never shut against them, and whose strong arm never refused to undertake their defence. A prophet was despatched to reprove them, but at the same time an angelic messenger arrived to provide for their deliverance. GIDEON, the son of Joash, the Abiezrite,

Gideon.
 A.M. 2755. was threshing wheat by the wine press for the purpose of concealing
 B.C. 1249. it from the Midianites, at the place of his residence, Ophrah, in the half tribe of Manasseh. The angel sat down under an oak, and in a familiar conversation intimated that the Lord had chosen him to the important service which the present exigencies of the Israelitish state demanded. Gideon expressed in reply, great despondency at the posture of public affairs, intimating that he was convinced they were abandoned to the merciless fury of their enemies, and that the age of miraculous interferences was past. The angel then gave him a solemn commission, accompanied with a promise of success; upon which a new difficulty arose: the good man considered himself perfectly disqualified for such an undertaking, and at the same time of too mean an extraction to be employed in so honourable a service. To this the only answer was, a peremptory command to undertake their deliverance, and an encouraging promise of divine support. Gideon expressed his wish to perform the usual rites of hospitality, by spreading an entertainment before the stranger, to which he signified his assent. A kid was accordingly prepared with unleavened cakes, but the angel commanded him to place them upon a neighbouring rock, and pour out the broth: as soon as this was done, the celestial visitant touched the provisions with the end of a staff that was in his hand, and there arose fire out of the rock, which consumed it. The immediate disappearance of the instrument of this miracle, convinced the astonished Israelite of the true nature and design of this manifestation; and upon being induced to dismiss his apprehensions, by a voice from heaven, he built an altar to the Lord upon the spot, demolishing the altar and the grove of Baal previously erected there, and offering sacrifices to the true God.

The inhabitants of the city were prodigiously exasperated at this proceeding, and required Joash to revenge the insult to their deity, upon his son. He, however, very properly suggested, that they had no need to interfere, for it belonged to Baal to maintain his own authority; which seems to have pacified these idolaters, and gave occasion to the new name of *Jerub-Baal* being conferred upon Gideon, which signifies "the opposer of Baal."

In the meantime the Midianites, and their allies from the East, assembled their forces, and encamped in the valley of Jezreel, intelligence of which no sooner reached Gideon, than he was instigated by a divine impulse, to summon by trumpet his own family and neighbourhood, and to despatch messengers to the tribes of Manasseh, Ashur, Zebulun, and Naphtali, to unite in the common cause, and disengage themselves by one noble effort from their disgraceful servitude. With this they complied, and his army soon amounted to thirty-two thousand men, which, though very considerable under the circumstances, was disproportionate to the numbers of the enemy, who opposed him with a hundred and thirty-five thousand. Previously to the anticipated conflict, the Jewish leader solicited a divine manifestation to confirm his hopes, and inspire his soldiers. He placed a fleece of wool on the ground, which he requested might be wet with the dew of heaven, while the surrounding surface remained dry, and the next night reversed it, entreating that the fleece might be dry, while the ground was moist with dew. In both cases he was gratified, and all his apprehensions respecting the cessation of miracles removed.

This, however, was only the prelude to still greater interpositions. Gideon was informed by a divine intimation, that the army was too numerous; for during the Theocracy, it was constantly made evident, that though an arm of flesh wielded the sword of war, success proceeded solely from the Omnipotent God; and he was required to issue a proclamation, that whoever was apprehensive of the result of the pending conflict, was at liberty to leave the camp, which occasioned the departure of two-and-twenty thousand. But as ten thousand still remained, and were still deemed too numerous, Gideon was ordered to take the soldiers to a certain water to drink, where he should decide by a certain intelligible signal upon the men who were to engage in the battle. Every one that lapped up the water with his tongue like a dog, was to be placed apart from the others who laid down to drink, the former of whom, amounting only to three hundred, were ultimately appointed to the arduous service. These three hundred chosen men were divided into three companies, with a trumpet in every man's hand, and a lamp in an empty pitcher. While this arrangement was making, Gideon, by divine direction, took his servant, and went down to the Midianitish camp, where he overheard a conversation between two soldiers, in which one was relating to the other a dream, which the

A.M. 2755.
B.C. 1249.

His
conduct.

A.M. 2755. latter interpreted as significant of the complete overthrow of their
 B.C. 1249. army. Returning to the camp, the general drew out his men, and
 advanced upon the Midianites at the commencement of the middle
 watch of the night; when suddenly breaking their pitchers, and
 sounding their trumpets, they exclaimed, "The sword of the Lord,
 and of Gideon!" This unusual sound and appearance at the dead
 of night, spread instant consternation throughout the Midianitish
 camp; every one smote his fellow, incapable of distinguishing each
 other in the darkness, and impelled to mutual slaughter by a spirit
 of infatuation from the Lord; and the whole host fled in different
 directions with the utmost precipitation. While Gideon warmly
 pursued them, he despatched messengers into Mount Ephraim, and
 the vicinity, requiring the adoption of measures to secure without
 delay the passes of the river Jordan, to intercept the enemy's
 retreat. Two Midianitish princes, Oreb and Zeeb, soon fell into
 the hands of their pursuers, and were immediately decapitated.

Destruction
 of the
 Midianites.

Gideon, with his three hundred men, having crossed Jordan,
 "faint, yet pursuing," applied to the towns of Succoth and Penuel
 for a supply of provisions; but meeting with a refusal, he went
 forward, leaving only a threat of exercising upon them an exemplary
 retaliation at his return. The two kings of Midian, Zebah and
 Zalmunna, being at Karkor, with fifteen thousand of their own
 troops, and as many of their confederates as had survived this
 disastrous flight, the Israelitish hero suddenly attacked and dis-
 persed them, taking captive the kings. He hastened back in
 triumph to the two cities that had refused him provisions, and
 ridiculed his inferiority of force; the princes of Succoth he tore in
 pieces with thorns and briars; the inhabitants of Penuel he slew,
 and demolished their fortifications. As Zebah and Zalmunna had
 slain his brethren at Tabor, Gideon desired his son Jether to fall
 upon them; but his youthful timidity left the hero to execute his
 vengeance with his own hands. These instances of zeal induced
 the people to solicit his acceptance of the supreme authority, pro-
 posing to secure the succession to his posterity; his impression,
 however, of the true nature of that government under which they
 lived, and the guilt of usurping the divine dominion, led him at
 once to decline their offer, and to satisfy himself with merely taking
 the golden ear-rings, with the other ornaments and apparel of the
 Midianitish sovereigns, and the chains with which their superstition,
 no less than their vanity, invested the necks of their camels. Of
 these materials, he formed an ephod, which he placed as a memorial
 of his successes in the city of Ophrah; but it afterwards proved
 a snare to his family, and to the tribes, who perverted it to idola-
 trous purposes. Gideon had many wives, by whom he had seventy
 sons, and one named Abimelech, by a concubine at Shechem. He
 had given so effectual a blow to the enemies of his country, that it
 enjoyed forty years of tranquillity during his administration, and he

Abimelech.

expired at Ophrah at an advanced age. But no sooner had they closed his sepulchre, than the Israelites revolted from God, addicted themselves to the worship of Baalberith, and superadded to their other impieties the basest ingratitude towards the family of their late deliverer.

At length Abimelech, full of ambitious projects, repaired to Shechem, where he obtained the interest of his family connections to support his claims to royalty, and after putting an effectual end to the rivalry of his seventy brethren at Ophrah, by murdering them, with the single exception of Jotham, who contrived to escape, the fratricide returned to receive the dignity of king from a people who ought rather to have promoted him to a scaffold. As soon as Jotham was informed of this proceeding, he hastened to the top of Mount Gerizim, whence he overlooked Shechem, and addressed the inhabitants in a parable, descriptive of the great superiority of the modest Gideon above the vain aspirant whom their votes had elevated to royal power, comparing the one to a bramble, and the other to the olive-tree. The parable of Jotham, the most ancient in the world, is also one of the greatest beauty. Its force, point, simplicity, adaptation to the feelings of the speaker, and the circumstances which had overwhelmed him with indignation, impart to it the most touching pathos. He glances at the services rendered by his father to an ungrateful people—the humility which had characterized him in his glorious career—the mean birth, the cruel qualities, and the boundless ambition of Abimelech—and concludes with a burst of indignant passion, calculated to move the most insensible heart. Antiquity, afterwards so fruitful in parables, can produce few things that equal, and none that surpass, this first specimen of figurative reproof and instruction.

Jotham's remonstrance, however, does not seem at the time to have produced any considerable effect; but at the expiration of three years, the sin of Abimelech began to find its punishment; his subjects became universally dissatisfied, and even formed a plan of assassination. One Gaal, the son of Ebed, at this crisis insinuated himself into their confidence, assumed a temporary government, protected their agricultural labours, and promoted by his example, that spirit of dissipation which accords with an unsettled and factious state of public affairs. In the absence of Abimelech, Zebul, who acted for him, communicated all that passed; the threats of Gaal and his companions, and the measures which they had already adopted, by fortifying the city, to exclude him for ever from the sovereignty. Abimelech hastened by forced marches all night, and invested the city in four companies. Gaal went out to meet him, but was soon defeated. The next day the attack was renewed: Zebul procured the expulsion of Gaal; Abimelech pressed into the gates, carried the place, and utterly destroyed it: the inhabitants perished miserably; a thousand of them were burned by the conqueror and his associates,

A.M. 2795.
B.C. 1209.

Abimelech
made king.

Jotham's
parable.

A.M. 2798. in a fort belonging to the temple of their god, whither they had fled
 B.C. 1206. for refuge. The neighbouring town of Thebez having united in the revolt, Abimelech immediately assaulted and took it, but the inhabitants endeavoured to secure themselves in a tower. He attempted to set this also on fire; but a woman cast a piece of millstone upon the head of Abimelech, which fractured his skull, so that he had only time to desire his armour-bearer to despatch him, that he might be saved from the dishonour of so ignominious a death. The Israelites instantly dispersed, and the civil commotion subsided.

Tola, Jair, &c.
 A.M. 2821. TOLA, the son of Puah, of the tribe of Issachar, next succeeded
 B.C. 1183. to the government, which he held with seeming credit to himself during three-and-twenty years. After him JAIR, a Gileadite, judged Israel two-and-twenty years. He was intent upon the aggrandisement of his own family, and suffered the people to relapse into so corrupt a state, that there was not an idol of any neighbouring nation which they did not worship: in consequence of which they were delivered up by providence to the power of the Philistines and the Ammonites.

Jephthah.
 A.M. 2843. Punishment, as on former occasions of a similar kind, restored
 B.C. 1161. them to their senses; and becoming deeply humbled for their transgressions, a new deliverer was raised up in the person of JEPHTHAH. He was the son of Gilead, by a concubine: and when his father was dead, the sons of his wife expelled him from their society, on the ground of his illegitimate birth, which disqualified him for a common inheritance. He accordingly took up his residence in the land of Tob, a place nowhere else mentioned, but probably situated near Gilead, at the entrance of Arabia Deserta. In process of time the Ammonites sought an occasion of war, and the Gileadites sent their chiefs to solicit Jephthah to head their forces. He at first reproached them for their past disrespectful treatment; but at length agreed to accept the command, upon condition of their engaging to confer the government upon him, in case of success. His first measure was to send an embassy to the king of Ammon, to demand an explanation of the cause of his hostility; to which an answer was returned, intimating his title to a land of which he had been unjustly deprived during the journey of the Israelites from Egypt: to which Jephthah replied, that the Amorites, who were the original proprietors of the country, had been dispossessed by the successful arms of his ancestors, in consequence of their refusal to allow the Israelites to pass through it; and that the right to the continued possession of what conquest had conferred upon them, and a conquest obtained under the special direction of heaven, had never been disputed, till his unwarrantable invasion, for the period of three hundred years. This negotiation was, however, closed by the determination of the king of Ammon at all events to prosecute the war. Jephthah, therefore, immediately made the necessary arrangements, under the direction of a supernatural influence; and, according to the religious

custom of the times, pledged himself in a vow to God, that if he should be favoured with success, whatever came forth of the doors of his house to meet him upon his return, should be devoted to the Lord as a burnt-offering. His most sanguine expectations were speedily accomplished, in a complete victory over the enemy, with a general slaughter. Upon his return to his house at Mizpeh, to his inexpressible sorrow, his daughter, an only child, came out to meet him with those congratulations which from the nature of his vow must have awakened the deepest anguish; but whether to fulfil it he really sacrificed her, is an historical question, that has occasioned many and vehement disputations.¹

A.M. 2843.
B.C. 1161.
Jephthah's
rash vow.

After these transactions, a disturbance of a different nature, and quite unexpected, arose from the resentful feelings of the Ephraimites, and involved Jephthah in great embarrassment. They fancied themselves neglected in the summons which had been issued to unite against the late invaders of the country, and threatened to set his house on fire to revenge the insult. They had expressed a similar jealousy on a former occasion, and had been pacified; but now they were so perverse that Jephthah found it necessary to resort to arms; and, having conquered them in battle, he took possession of the passes of Jordan, whither if any one came, and they discovered him to be an Ephraimite, which was ascertained by his pronunciation of the word *Shibboleth*, he was slain. On this fatal day forty-two thousand perished. Thus, after an honourable administration of public affairs for six years, Jephthah died, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

A.M. 2861.
B.C. 1143.

Of his next three successors, IBZAN of Bethlehem, who judged Israel seven years, ELON, a Zebulunite, who held the government ten years, and ABDON, the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, who ruled eight years, nothing remarkable is recorded, excepting that the first and the last had numerous families.

A.M. 2867.
B.C. 1137.

Ibzan, Elon
and Abdon.

It is again said of the Israelites, that they "did evil in the sight of the Lord;" and in consequence of this defection, they were

¹ Although it is not possible here to recapitulate the various arguments adduced by opposite writers on this great question, we acknowledge ourselves disposed to submit to the judgment of our readers as our opinion, upon the whole, that she was *not* sacrificed, but consecrated. 1. Because such an offering would have been impious; human sacrifices being held up always in the Scriptures as most abhorrent to God. 2. Because a provision was made in the Jewish law for the redemption of *that* which was not suitable for a burnt-offering, at a price expressly stipulated in the law. 3. Because the original text does not require any such conclusion; the Hebrew particle *vau* signifying *or*, as well as *and*: Jephthah's vow will then read, "it shall surely be the Lord's; *or*, I will offer it up for a

burnt-offering;" *i.e.* supposing it to be a victim fit for sacrifice, otherwise it shall be dedicated by consecration. Nor does the story affirm the sacrifice, every subsequent part of it stating only that he did "according to his vow." 4. Because her desire to bewail her virginity, and the visits of the daughters of Israel annually, appear best to accord with this representation—the same word, which is rendered *to lament her*, being capable of the translation *to mourn with her*. The Fathers, indeed, take the other side of the question. There can be no doubt that the story of the sacrifice of *Iphigenia* originated here; and it is remarkable, that several of the heathen writers who relate it, represent the goddess Diana (the patroness of virginity) as interposing and preventing the execution of so horrid a purpose.

A.M. 2892. delivered up to the oppression of the Philistines forty years; for
 B.C. 1112. although these enemies were very inconsiderable in point of numbers, in comparison with the Hebrew nation, having only five cities of any magnitude, yet were they the appointed scourge of the rebellious people of God, who determined to display his interposing authority and providence, by the feebleness of the human agent employed to execute his purposes of punishment, as well as by the grandeur of his miraculous manifestations in dispensing victory, to Israel. Once more a person of a singular character was raised up to effect a new deliverance. The circumstances of his birth, the course of his life, and the manner of his death, were all extraordinary. **SAMSON** was the son of Manoah, a Danite, whose wife was assured by a celestial visitant, that the barrenness which had so long occasioned her very painful anxieties, should be removed; and as it was the divine intention to bestow a child upon them, he gave directions respecting her own mode of living, which was to be abstemious, and the consecration of her future son as a *Nazarite* from the womb; a term applied to those who were separated, either voluntarily or by their parents, to a life of mortification and hardship, with a view to accomplish some important design. She
 A.M. 2863. hastened to communicate the pleasing intelligence to her husband,
 B.C. 1141. who entreated God to permit the return of the messenger, whom he supposed to be an ordinary prophet; but his second visit was to his wife, in the solitude of the field. She immediately went in search of Manoah, to whom the same injunctions were repeated with those which had been previously given to his partner; after which the truth of the prediction, and the real character of the stranger, were attested by a miraculous disappearance in the flame of a meat-offering.

Samson.

His first exploits.

Samson, the son of this pious pair, gave frequent indications of his martial spirit in his youth, and is expressly said to have been blessed by the Lord, and at times moved by his Spirit. (Judges xiii. 24, 25.) At a maturer age he fell in love with a Philistine woman at Timnath, from a connection with whom his parents in vain endeavoured to dissuade him, ignorant at the time that this was a secret arrangement of Providence to accomplish important purposes. Their objections, however, soon yielded to parental fondness, and they accompanied him to Timnath, in order to negotiate the projected union. On the journey he had an opportunity of displaying his strength and heroism, by destroying a lion; though it was done in some bye-path into which he had turned, and for the present he concealed the exploit from his parents. Upon his return some time afterwards to consummate the marriage, he found a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion; for though, as naturalists have observed, these insects are averse to flesh, and to any offensive smell, it is easy to believe that in so sultry a climate the moisture was quickly exhaled from the carcass, leaving nothing but a dry skeleton,

on which the bees settled. He took the honey, and shared it with his father and mother, without informing them how he had obtained it. A few days afterwards, at the wedding-feast at Timnath, where thirty youths had been invited to do him honour, he proposed a riddle in these words, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," which they could only explain, after seven days of vain conjecture, by forcibly obtaining the secret from the bride. He had of course to pay the forfeit, which he had himself appointed, of thirty sheets and thirty suits of clothes; but to procure them he repaired to Askelon, where he slew thirty men; an action which cannot be even plausibly defended, excepting on the ground of a divine impulse prompting him to hostilities against the Philistines, and thus assiduously maintaining the prerogatives of the Theocracy. The treachery of his wife, however, induced him to leave her, though without any formal divorce. Soon afterwards he took a kid as a present, and went to seek a reconciliation with his wife; but being denied admittance to her chamber by her father, who informed him that she had been given to one of his companions during his absence, he sternly refused the offer of her fairer sister, and prepared to resent the injury upon the Philistines, whom he regarded as the secret contrivers of his misfortune. Having procured about three hundred foxes, or jackals, he fastened them tail to tail in couples, with a lighted firebrand between, and turned them into the corn-fields, which they set on fire, with the vines and olive-trees. This singular act of Samson will remind the classical reader of a feast observed by the Romans, and mentioned by Ovid, to which it would be difficult to assign any other origin. It was held in April, the time of the Jewish harvest; and one ceremony was, to let loose foxes with torches tied to their tails.

Destruction
of the corn
of the
Philistines.

Cur igitur missæ vinctis ardentia tædis
Terga ferant vulpes, caussa docenda mihi.

Ovid. Fast. Lib. IV. L. 681.

As soon as the Philistines discovered the author of this mischief, they burned his father-in-law and wife in the house, which only provoked him to fresh and eager resentment. Great numbers of them were slain by his hand, when he retreated to the rock Etam, in the tribe of Judah, and took up his residence on its summit; but the Philistines being determined to avenge themselves, collected a considerable force, and demanded of the people that they should deliver up Samson. Willing to comply, probably from an apprehension of the consequences of a refusal, they sent three thousand men, first to expostulate, and then to seize upon him. He readily yielded himself up, on condition that they should not personally interfere in the present quarrel; accordingly he was bound with two new cords, and taken to the Philistine encampment. They began to exult; when a divine impulse invigorated his nerves, and snapping the cords asunder, he snatched up the jaw-bone of an ass, and levelled a

A.M. 2863. thousand men with the dust. His exhausted spirits were recruited after
B.C. 1141. the action by a miraculous supply of water in answer to his prayer.

A.M. 2884. After a repulse so dispiriting to the enemy, the Israelitish hero
B.C. 1120. did not scruple to venture into Gaza, one of their cities, and lodge in a house of public entertainment. A guard was immediately placed round the house and at the city gates to prevent his escape; but he rose at midnight and carried off the gates, posts, bars, and chains, to the top of a hill, near or in sight of Hebron: the distance between the two places was no less than twenty miles. The guards, who did not interrupt him, were probably paralyzed with astonishment at this extraordinary, and, to every appearance, superhuman action.

Carries
away the
gates of
Gaza.

The next adventure exhibits Samson in a very unfavourable light. He attached himself to a woman, name Delilah, who lived in the vale of Sorek, a place celebrated for its choice wines, and in the immediate vicinity of Eshcol, whence the Israelitish spies formerly brought the luxuriant sample of grapes. Some of the Fathers maintain that this was a legal marriage, but with too little probability; no allusion being made in Scripture history to any such contract, and there being nothing in the whole conduct of either to justify any other conclusion, than that she was a mercenary prostitute, and he her infatuated captive. The five Philistine princes were not a little gratified to hear of this amour, expecting that by dextrous management they might render it subservient to their hostility against Samson. They immediately offered the woman a large bribe of eleven hundred pieces of silver each, or five thousand five hundred shekels in the whole, upon condition of her ascertaining from him the source of his extraordinary strength, and how it might be counter-vented. He at first amused her with the assurance that if he were bound with seven green *withs*, (probably the flexible branches of vines, which are very tough,) he should become as weak as another man. This experiment was soon tried; but the Philistines found themselves deceived, for he broke them as soon as he was attacked. Next, pretending that new ropes which had never been used would fully accomplish the purpose of enfeebling him, he suffered himself to be bound; but when they would have seized him, he snapped them as before. A third time he deceived Delilah and his enemies, by directing her to weave the seven locks of his hair, with the web, into tresses; but he awoke out of sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam and web, or the whole machinery of the loom.

Fatal amour.

At length, by incessant importunity, this crafty woman obtained the important secret that his strength lay in the preservation of his hair.² He stated to her that, having been a Nazarite from his

² ——— Alcatheo, quam Nisus habet; cui splendidus ostro
Inter honoratos medio de vertice canos
Crinis inhærebat, magni fiducia regni.
——— Thalamos taciturna paternos
Intrat; et (heu facinus!) fatali nata parentem
Crine suum spoliât.

Ovid. Metam. Lib. VIII. L. 8—10 et 84—86.

conception, no razor had touched his head; but that if deprived of A.M. 2884.
 this ornament and glory, which was also the sign of his obedience B.C. 1120.
 to the laws of Nazariteship, upon which divine aid depended, he
 should certainly be enfeebled. Upon this she despatched a message
 in all haste to the lords of the Philistines, who deposited in her
 hand the price of her treachery; and when she had cut off his hair
 as he lay asleep upon her lap, the Philistines took him, put out his
 eyes, bound him with fetters of brass, and, having carried him to Samson is
 taken by the
 Philistines.
 Gaza, compelled him to do the work of a slave in a prison. In this
 ignominious condition he continued for some time, till on a certain
 occasion the Philistines assembled in great multitudes to offer a
 sacrifice and keep a feast in honour of Dagon, their god, to whom
 they attributed their success in securing the detested Israelite. In
 the midst of the festivity, and with a view to enhance its pleasures,
 they thought of sending for Samson, that they might indulge the
 dastard spirit of ridicule over a humbled enemy. But their sport
 was soon terminated by an unexpected calamity; for having requested
 the lad that led him about, to allow him a little respite by reclining
 against one of the two pillars which supported the building, Samson
 uttered a fervent petition to heaven for strength to be avenged on
 the Philistines, and grasping firmly both the pillars, the one with
 his right hand, and the other with his left, he pulled them from
 their positions, and buried himself with three thousand persons,
 including the Philistine princes, in one mighty ruin. Thus ended
 the exploits of twenty years. It is not easy to determine what was
 the shape of the building in which the lords of the Philistines, and
 these immense multitudes of spectators were assembled, or to what
 purposes it was usually devoted. But it is evident that ancient
 structures frequently depended much, or wholly, upon a single
 pillar or stone; the whole strength of this building, for instance,
 rested upon the two pillars supporting the roof. A similar stress
 must be supposed, in other cases, upon the corner-stone (like the
 key-stone of the arch) to which such frequent allusion is made in
 the Scriptures; it is said that a theatre of Rome, capable of holding
 many thousands of spectators, was so constructed as to depend upon
 a single pivot; and hence Cato expressed his astonishment at the
 folly and rashness of the Roman people, who would trust themselves
 in a building, wherein, if a single hinge gave way, more lives would
 be lost than were sacrificed in the battle of Cannæ. His relations
 now fetched home Samson's remains, which were yielded without
 hesitation in the universal panic, to give them an honourable inter-
 ment in his father's sepulchre.

During the entire life of Samson, and after his death, the
 Israelites were in a state of general subjection to their enemies; and
 in what sense Samson is denominated a *judge* is not very obvious:
 not certainly as a civil magistrate, but probably as exercising a
 defensive power in behalf of the Israelites, against the exactions

A.M. 2884. and insolence of their oppressors. As from the very nature of their
 B.C. 1120. office, the judges were not so much regular governors, as extraor-
 dinary protectors raised up and invested with a divine commission,
 for the purposes of occasional interference to effect reformation, or
 E.H. to afford a defence, we are not to be surprised that ELI, who is
 usually ranked in the order of succession next to Samson, should,
 however, be rather considered as supreme in the state during the
 period in which the latter performed his exploits. But although
 for forty years he united in himself the two principal civil and
 ecclesiastical functions, and though in some respects he was highly
 estimable, his history, as given in Scripture, consists only of a few
 fragments, interspersed through the more important life of his
 successor, SAMUEL; and in a similar manner we shall interweave it
 in our narrative, rather than aim to give it a very distinct prominence.

Hannah and
 Elkanah.

It was at the time when Eli was presiding as high priest at
 Shiloh, that Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, a Levite, and an
 inhabitant of Ramah, having gone to the usual sacrificial festival
 at Shiloh, availed herself of an opportunity of "pouring out her
 soul before God" at the tabernacle; requesting the removal of the
 reproach which she daily suffered from Peninnah, her copartner in
 the embraces, though far her inferior in the affections of Elkanah,
 by the bestowal of a son. The fervent, yet silent manner of her
 appeal, induced Eli to mistake her emotions for intoxication, with
 which he most precipitately accused her; but upon the circumstance
 being explained, he as readily retracted, and changed the language
 of uncharitableness into that of benediction. The acceptance of
 A.M. 2833. Hannah's prayer was at length corroborated in the birth of a child,
 B.C. 1171. whom her piety and gratitude concurred to name SAMUEL, that is,
 Samuel. "asked of God." Having been devoted as a Nazarite from his
 infancy, he was no sooner weaned, than his parents presented him
 to Eli for the service of the tabernacle, by whom he was invested
 with the distinguishing ephod.

The extraordinary character of Samuel soon began to be developed,
 in a commission which he received immediately from Heaven, to
 denounce its displeasure against Eli, for his criminal remissness
 with regard to his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, whose libertine
 baseness was scarcely reprov'd, and not at all restrained by parental
 authority. The spirit of the aged priest upon the occasion, demands
 notice, and deserves imitation; "It is the Lord," he exclaimed,
 "let him do what seemeth him good." The appearance of a
 prophet like Samuel in this period of suspended revelations, awaken-
 ing in the bosoms of the almost desponding Israelites the liveliest
 anticipations, they immediately adopted measures to disenthral
 themselves from Philistine subjugation; but they were defeated
 with the loss of four thousand men. As they imputed this disaster
 to the absence of the ark, it was fetched into the camp amidst
 great exultations, but a second overthrow involved the loss of thirty

thousand foot, (among whom were Hophni and Phinehas,) and above all of the ark, which the enemy captured; intelligence of which latter calamity being suddenly communicated to Eli, he fell backwards "and his neck brake, and he died." The Philistines had but little cause to triumph in the captivity of the ark. This sacred possession was carried into the temple of Dagon, to whom they ascribed their victory; and the priests, upon entering the national shrine, the next morning, found their god fallen to the ground before the ark. Imputing this circumstance to accident, they again set up the statue. The following day, the image was discovered again fallen, and the head and hands broken upon the threshold of his own temple, so as to leave the trunk only remaining. The people themselves were smitten with grievous bodily diseases, which pursued them from city to city, wherever they transported the ark, until they restored it, with commemorative offerings, to the Israelites. Dagon is described by the sacred historian as being human in the upper part of his figure: in the lower, he is supposed, upon authorities too numerous to cite, to have been in the shape of a fish.

A.M. 2833.

B.C. 1171.

The captivity of the ark, and the consequent suspension of the public services at Shiloh, tended to the increasing debasement and degeneration of the people, which only stimulated our eminent prophet and ruler to exert his energies to accomplish a general reformation, by whose means an assembly was at length convened at Mizpeh, for the purpose of publicly renouncing their sins, and returning to God by fasting, humiliation, sacrifice, and prayer. This solemnity excited the apprehensions of their enemies, who accordingly determined upon frustrating their plans, by coming suddenly upon them; but as their repentance was sincere, and their consequent reconciliation to offended goodness immediate, the Supreme Being declared himself in their favour after Samuel's sacrifice and intercession; the Philistines were panic-struck by a tremendous thunder-storm, and by their flight and dispersion enabled the pursuing Israelites ultimately to dictate terms of peace: in commemoration of which deliverance, Samuel erected a monumental memorial, which he called *Ebenezer*, or "the stone of help."

A.M. 2863.

B.C. 1141.

Samuel
resorted to
as a
prophet.

While victory had now rendered the Israelites secure from external attacks, the proper administration of justice, by their illustrious governor, conferred upon them internal prosperity and happiness. Samuel exercised his judicial authority with evident advantage to all classes of the community, and by annual circuits took upon himself the inspection and regulation of civil affairs. He moreover erected a public altar of worship, as the best substitution for the deserted ordinances of Shiloh; and to him have been ascribed those institutions which were called the *schools of the prophets*, of which we cannot at this distance of time collect any very exact information. They appear to have been originally

The schools
of the
prophets.

- A.M. 2863. established in the cities of the Levites, which were diffused through
 B.C. 1141. the different tribes for the sake of facilitating the plan of general instruction. In these seminaries the prophets devoted themselves to the study of the law, were taught the art of psalmody, and awaited the call into public life under the superintendence of one of the same class, venerable for wisdom or years. Age, however, relaxed the vigour of his administration; and Samuel, in consequence of appointing his two sons, Joel and Abiah, to execute his office, soon found, by the complaints of the elders, that he had devolved
 A.M. 2884. it into unworthy hands. He was in consequence solicited to appoint
 B.C. 1120. a king over them, that they might enjoy a similar form of government to that of other nations. This was no doubt as offensive a request to Samuel, as it was an impious and ungrateful one toward their supreme Lord and benefactor. He at once, therefore, applied to God, in the exigency, who directed him to comply with their desires, after a solemn protest against their proceedings.
- A.M. 2909. The introduction of SAUL, the son of Kish, to Samuel, and the
 B.C. 1095. several circumstances which attended his election to royalty, furnish remarkable illustrations of the ever active agency of providence; controlling every seeming casualty, and subordinating to its plans the most trifling coincidences. Saul and his servant were despatched in pursuit of his father's asses, which had strayed from home; and having arrived at Ramah, at the instigation of the latter, Samuel was inquired after for information respecting them. The prophet had been already prepared for the visit, and instructed how to act, by a divine intimation. Treating him accordingly with marked distinction and respect, he first held a conference with Saul in the evening, probably to explain the secret designs of providence, and in the ensuing morning, after sending the servant to a proper distance, proceeded to anoint him the future king of Israel, giving him prophetic information of some other events in which he would be personally interested. This appointment, it must be remarked, was now only a private transaction; but calculated to satisfy him with regard to the divine decision of the lot by which he was subsequently chosen at Mizpeh. To that place, whither the ark was conducted, Samuel convened the people; and when the lot was cast, which successively pointed to the tribe of Benjamin, the family of Matri, and the person of Saul, his majestic appearance so well seconded the recommendatory speech of Samuel, that he at once gained, with few exceptions, the universal attachment. He very soon signalized himself by rendering prompt and effectual succour to the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, who were besieged by the Ammonites, and on the very point of a surrender; a victory which, by enhancing his fame, gave him a triumph over his secret enemies. A general meeting was accordingly called by Samuel, at Gilgal, where the election of Saul was confirmed, with the accompaniment of public sacrifices and rejoicings. Having now wholly to resign the government into the

Chosen by
lot.

hands of the person he had himself anointed for the office, Samuel concluded his more public life by an oration, truly characteristic of his integrity of principle and his piety of mind. He challenged the people to produce any instances of peculation or inequity during his administration; recapitulated some of the facts of their past history, which were illustrative of the consequences of disobedience, and intimated the impropriety of their conduct in desiring a king; appealing to a miraculous attestation of the displeasure of God, by calling for a thunder-storm in that season of wheat-harvest, when it was so unusual; suggesting at the same time the goodness of God in determining not to forsake them if they did not finally renounce his authority.

A.M. 2909.
B.C. 1095.
Samuel
resigns the
government
and asserts
his integrity.

In the second year of Saul's reign, hostilities were renewed against the Philistines. The king having repaired to Gilgal, waited with impatience for Samuel to assist in presenting burnt-offerings, till at length, on the seventh day, the services were ordered to proceed before his arrival; which occasioned a severe rebuke from the prophet, and an assurance that his precipitation would ultimately prove subversive of his dominion. Shortly after this, another instance of Saul's disobedience occurred; he was commanded by God through Samuel, to destroy utterly the nation of the Amalekites, but under the pretence of offering sacrifice he spared the most valuable portion of the spoil, together with Agag, their king. This produced a severe remonstrance from Samuel, who turned abruptly away from his excuses; and when Saul seized his garment, which rent in his hands, Samuel took occasion to declare, that the Lord had rent the kingdom of Israel from him, and had bestowed it upon another. The king's urgent solicitations, however, induced at length a compliance with his wish that Samuel would join him in a public act of worship; after which, the prophet slew Agag, and departed to Ramah, never more to hold any personal communication with Saul.

A.M. 2911.
B.C. 1093.

Rebuked
Saul.

Quits him
finally.

Still, however, he retained an affection for the king, and long, and deeply lamented his misconduct; till he was roused from unavailing grief by a message from heaven, desiring him to go to Bethlehem, and bestow the royal unction upon DAVID his distinguished successor, to whom we devote a subsequent article.

A.M. 2941.
B.C. 1063.

After the lapse of a few years from this period, in which David was encountering the relentless malignity of Saul, we find Samuel still at Ramah, and accompanying David to Naioth, a school of the prophets, as a temporary asylum, where the Scripture narrative of his life closes.

A.M. 2942.
B.C. 1062.

Samuel died about four years before Saul, upwards of ninety years of age, and in the year of the world 2944, deeply lamented by the whole nation. His remains were interred at Ramah, the place of his usual residence; but afterwards they are said to have been removed to Constantinople, in the reign of the emperor Arcadius. Jerome states that they were conveyed in a golden vessel, wrapped up in silk.

A.M. 2944.
B.C. 1060.
Dies.

A.M. 2944. Samuel was a character unquestionably of the very first class; of
B.C. 1060. irreproachable integrity, undaunted fortitude, unabating zeal, unaffected and unblemished piety; sincere as a friend, gentle as a man, virtuous as a judge, and holy as a prophet. In the Chronicles, he is stated to have assisted in distributing the Levites appointed by David for the temple service, and as having enriched the tabernacle by spoils taken from the enemies of Israel. He is said also to have written the history of David, in conjunction with the prophets Nathan and Gad, which, of course, can be understood only of his early transactions. The first twenty chapters of the first book that appears under his name, are with the utmost probability ascribed to him by the Talmudists; and he was the first in the unbroken chain of prophets, that extended to the days of Malachi, and that "foretold," according to the testimony of St. Peter, "of" the final establishment and triumphs of Christianity.

Acts iii. 24.

CHAPTER VII.

DAVID.

BORN, A.M. 2919 ; B.C. 1085.—DIED, A.M. 2989 ; B.C. 1015.

DAVID, the prince and poet of the Jews, during one of the most prominent and most glorious periods of their history, was the first of the Jewish kings, who fully united the choice of God and man in his claims to the throne ; and is the first monarch of antiquity of whose reign we possess any authentic details. He is introduced to us, by the Scripture narrative, in his youth, as early as any indications of his future greatness can well be supposed to have appeared, and he remains with us to his latest age. Perhaps he is *that* monarch in the history of the world of whose public and private character we possess the most complete and finished portrait.

The pretensions which have been urged by almost every nation of the globe to the honour of having once been divinely governed, were more than realized in the history of the ancient Israelites. The God of all the earth assumed the immediate direction of their affairs for several centuries, was consulted by their chiefs upon every important occasion, and suffered nothing of public consequence to be transacted without his direct commission. But when their capricious and idolatrous dispositions had broken down all the great moral distinctions between the surrounding nations and themselves, they felt *that* to be a restriction which God meant for a privilege : and as the chief design in the introduction of the THEOCRACY, that of a long-continued recognition of the *Unity of God* in their early history, had been accomplished, God granted them, in the first instance, a monarch of their own character, in the person of SAUL ; and finally overruled and settled the change of their government, in subservience to his own purposes, under the administration of DAVID.

SECTION I.—EARLY PROSPERITY OF DAVID.

This prince was born in the year of the world 2919, at the close of 406 years after the Exodus of his countrymen from Egypt ; he was the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the immediate offspring of the interesting Ruth. Of his earliest days we have no distinct account ; but at the period of his first introduction into public life, and while very young, we have a remarkable character of him, from the court of his rival Saul, “ as a mighty valiant man, a man of war,

His birth
and family.

1 Sam. xvi.
18.

A.M. 2941. prudent in matters," and of an eminently pious disposition. He
 B.C. 1063. was "comely in his person" too, we learn from the same authority,
 and accomplished in his manners. The interesting scene in which
 we first meet with him at Bethlehem, though singularly contrasted
 with the character thus given of him, is no more a necessary contra-
 diction to it than Samuel's continued grief at the rejection of King
 Saul was a proof of his indulging any sense of injustice in that
 measure. For when David must have attained to about the 22d
 year of his age, this venerable prophet was directed to go to
 Bethlehem, where Jesse and his family resided; amongst whom, he
 was informed, God would intimate to him His choice of a future
 king; an errand toward which Samuel manifested unusual reluctance.
 As an appropriate introduction to his commission, and an effectual
 security against his fears of Saul's interference, he was, therefore,
 commanded to call the town to a sacrifice, and especially to invite
 David's father and his brethren. Some have considered this circum-
 stance as encouraging a MERE pretence of divine worship to accom-
 plish ulterior and inconsistent views; or, at the least, to allow such
 a pretence as a cover for other and distinct objects. We presume
 that it is not fairly susceptible of either construction. That Samuel
 might not have received it as a part of his commission to call the
 family and neighbourhood to so suitable a service prior to the actual
 anointing of GOD's future servant, had he expressed *no* unwilling-
 ness towards that commission, is by no means to be gathered from
 the Scripture account; nor that, admitting it to be an expedient for
 his unwillingness, it was in any way inconsistent with one of the
 most eminent peculiarities of the Jewish church, reconciliation to
 God's will by sacrifice; while in the occurrences, as they actually
 stand narrated, an union of great interest and solemnity will be
 excited in every well-ordered mind. Jesse's sons passed in succes-
 sion before Samuel. When he saw the eldest, a man of fine personal
 appearance, impressed forcibly, it is probable, with his similarity in
 this respect to Saul, "Surely," said he, silently, "the Lord's
 anointed is before him." A disclaimer of this construction, invaluable
 as a general principle of the ways of God, was immediately given—
 "Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature,
 because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth;
 for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh
 at the heart." A like intimation was afforded respecting all the
 other sons present—"Neither hath the Lord chosen this." Samuel,
 who appears to have been brought into the house of this remarkable
 family, after the worship, and just prior to this scene, was now
 somewhat perplexed; until finding, on inquiry, that the youngest
 son of all was with the sheep in the field, he requested him to be
 sent for, and DAVID appeared. "He was ruddy, and of a beautiful
 countenance," says the inspired penman, which would evidently
 imply, in connection with the preceding narrative, that he possessed

Samuel's
 journey to
 Bethlehem.

the rare junction of personal and mental excellence, for which the prophet had looked in vain in his predecessor Saul. "Arise, anoint him," said the Divine impulse now; "for THIS is he." Then, in the presence of all his relations, Samuel poured the anointing oil on David's head; the last public act of that prophet's life—and hastened home to his house at Ramah.

To what extent either David or his family were apprized by Samuel of the meaning of this ceremony, it might be difficult to ascertain. Beyond the limits of the household, the event itself was not known, as the Scripture narrative would seem to intimate; and Josephus states, that the flattering secret connected with it was whispered only to David and to Jesse, while some writers¹ have conjectured that as it was usual to anoint men to the office of prophet, as well as to the regal dignity, Samuel might possibly leave the family to conjecture that the former was the designation of David. Certain it is that no immediate change of condition followed this circumstance. Though the dynasty of the most distinguished throne on earth was thus silently changed, and a peculiar blessing from God immediately followed this consecration; (as a peculiar providence doubtless watched over the steps of David,) he returned to the same honourable but unpretending obscurity in which his character had hitherto been formed; and his mercies and his merits, like the subterraneous courses of some of the noblest rivers, were destined to find their way to public notice through obstructed and unexpected channels.

Shortly after these interesting occurrences, a mysterious illness of the reigning monarch, Saul, induced the specious proposition from one of his courtiers, of sending for some skilful player on the harp to alleviate his depression. With this proposal he gave the early character of David, to which we have before alluded, and which instantly caused him to be summoned to the court. This is not the place to discuss the nature of the royal malady, nor the force of the contrast under which it is placed with the rising dispositions of David. Neither ancient nor modern times are without instances of a nervous temperament that would correspond with many indications of this disease, nor of the cheering triumphs of a growing piety that could always accomplish wonders with the harp of David. Guilt and irreligion, too, with their usual associates, perverseness, discontent, jealousy, and cruelty, have in all ages produced similar effects: Charles IX. of France, according to the testimony of Thuanus, had his symphony of singing boys to compose him to sleep after the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day; to say nothing of the awful and incontrovertible *connection* of man with the world of spirits.² David

¹ The authors of the Universal History, Vol. II. p. 376. Note D, &c.

² Josephus describes these paroxysms as "some strange and demoniacal disorders, which brought him such suffocations as were ready to choke him;" and

calls David "the only physician against the trouble he had from the demons, whensoever it was that his passion came upon him, and this by *reciting of hymns*, and playing upon the harp, and bringing Saul to his right mind again." Joseph.

A.M. 2941.
B.C. 1063.
Anoints
David.

1 Sam. xvi.
14.

David
summoned
to the court
of Saul.

1 Sam. xvi.
14.

A.M. 2941. fully answered the description of his courtly friend ;—he was at once
 B.C. 1063. the poet and the musician, designed for such a scene ; and soon attracted
 His musical talents. to himself the notice and distinguished favour of Saul, who “loved him greatly,” made him his armour-bearer, or one of his body-guards ; and expressed a wish to his father Jesse that he should remain about his person until his disorder was completely removed. After this event, which does not appear to have embraced any considerable period of time, we find David, whether from the capriciousness of royal favour, or the entreaties of the parent, who now “went amongst men for an old man,” returning to the care of his father’s flock ; again, and finally, to be called forth to very different scenes.

The Philistines, the ancient enemies of Israel, having recovered from a late signal defeat by the hand of Jonathan, and encouraged probably by the rumours of Saul’s incapacity to oppose them, had advanced to the neighbourhood of Shochoh, in the tribe of Judah ; and on the appearance of the Israelitish army, under that monarch, finally encamped on the side of a hill in Ephes-dammim, between Shochoh and Azekah. To the adjacent valley of Elah, Saul had summoned all the strength of the tribes, and three of the brethren of David were included in this army. On the part of the enemy appeared a man of extraordinary stature and strength, Goliath of Gath, proposing to decide by single combat the whole fate of the war. His accoutrements were more than any other man could have sustained, and Josephus represents him as followed “by many,” for the purpose of bringing them into the field. The honourable distinction of an armour-bearer carrying his shield, indicated perhaps both his illustrious birth,³ and the importance which the Philistines attached to his services ; while his daily appearance between the two armies, renewing his defiance of the Israelites, filled the latter with overwhelming dismay. Goliath had repeated his vaunts for the fortieth time, and the forces of Saul were pouring forth from their trenches to a desperate struggle, when David approached the confines of the camp, on an errand of kindness from Jesse to his sons ; and, in the midst of their conference, overheard the challenge. The Israelites fell back, but the courage and piety of David were equally roused to inquire into the nature of this champion’s offer, the manner in which it was regarded by the king, and the unaccountable forgetfulness of his

Goliath.

Dismay
of the
Israelites.

Antiq. L. VI. C. 8. λέγων τε τας ὕμνους και ψαλλων εν τη κιθαρα. Critics are very much at variance as to the true nature of the malady ; that it was some species of *madness*, however produced, is the only point that has been generally conceded. The rest of the question seems fairly to belong to the general controversy on the Dæmonology of the ancients, upon which the reader may consult CAMPBELL *on the Gospels*, *Preliminary Dissertation* ; the various works of FARMER on this subject ; JORTIN *on Ecclesiastical History* ; FELL’S *Essay on Demoniacs*, &c. “All authors,”

as Patrick says, “are full of the powers of music, both to stir up passions and to allay them.”

³ Thus Alexander, according to Arrian, had the shield taken out of the temple of Trojan Pallas, to be borne before him in all his battles. Some writers have assigned to Goliath two shields, the one to be carried before him for state, the other for actual use. Patrick, after Fortunatus Scacchus, suggests that the *weight* of his coat of mail, “five thousand shekels of brass,” might relate, after all, to its value rather than its bulk.

countrymen, that theirs were the armies of the living God. Replying mildly to the supercilious interrogatories of his brother Eliab, "Why camest thou down hither, and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?" (which these active inquiries had excited;) he hesitated not to offer himself in the presence of the king as the antagonist of the gigantic enemy. Saul was as surprised as his brethren had been displeased, but David was cool and determined: he assigned, with equal boldness and simplicity, his past success in the most unequal conflicts, as the ground of his present confidence, and inspired the faint heart of Saul with such emotions of exalted trust in God, that after some slight expostulation with him respecting his youth, and his ignorance of the art of war, he could conclude the conference with no other reply, than "*Go! and Jehovah be with thee.*" The personal armour of the king was now offered to David; but having equipped himself with it, and girded on the sword, the youthful hero was encumbered, and with modest firmness declined to use them. He selected from the valley five smooth stones, which he carried in his shepherd's bag, or scrip; and with his staff and sling alone in his hand, advanced to meet Goliath. Their first salutation, and the short conference that ensued, were, perhaps, as memorable as the result. Understanding, by this time, that some Israelitish champion was preparing to come forth, Goliath advanced in all the pomp and circumstance of war; and having assured himself that David was his real opponent, "disdained him," we are told, with the most indignant contempt. In ridicule of his shepherd-like appointments, he asks, "Am I *a dog*, that thou comest to me with staves?" and having cursed him by all the gods of his country, vows to give him, without effort, to destruction. "Come to me," said he, "and I will give thee to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field." David's reply was full of the dignity, the piety, and the large-hearted views that animated his whole life and character. "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will Jehovah deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the hosts of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that Jehovah saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give it into our hands."⁴ He now instantly placed one of his stones in the sling, and springing forward to meet his gigantic foe, at one

David
proposes to
meet him.

The
encounter.

⁴ It is remarkable that at this moment David had no visible *means* of accomplishing the greater part of this positive declaration. To smite Goliath's head from off him, was not work for a shepherd's weapons, however successful they might be in slaying him, nor to give the car-

cases of an army to the fowls of the air. It implied that clear view of the end, which anticipated the sure possession of all the means. This is also the first instance in antiquity of a public single combat.

A.M. 2941. happy effort, he wounded him mortally in the forehead, and Goliath
 B.C. 1063. fell prostrate on the earth. Advancing with equal spirit up to the
 David kills fallen carcass, David proceeded to the fulfilment of his previous
 Goliath. declaration, by cutting off Goliath's head with his own sword; and
 while he was ushered into the tent of Saul with this memorable
 trophy of his success, the panic-struck armies of the Philistines fled
 on every side before the Israelites. "Where are now," says the
 eloquent bishop Hall, on this encounter, "the two shields of Goliath,
 that they did not bear off this stroke of death? or wherefore serves
 that weaver's beam, but to strike the earth in falling? or that sword,
 but to behead his master? What needed David to load himself with
 an unnecessary weapon? One sword can serve both Goliath and him.
 If Goliath had a man to bear his shield, David had Goliath to bear
 his sword, wherewith that proud blasphemous head is severed from
 his shoulders. Nothing more honours God, than the turning of
 wicked men's forces against themselves. There are none of his
 enemies but carry with them their own destruction. Thus didst
 thou, O Son of David, foil Satan with his own weapon; *that* whereby
 he meant destruction to thee and us, vanquished him through thy
 mighty power, and raised thee to that glorious triumph and super-
 exaltation, wherein thou art, wherein we shall be with thee."

Bishop
 Hall's
 reflections.

Apparent
 differences
 in the
 accounts of
 David,

Some slight incongruity has been conceived to attach to the Scrip-
 ture narrative of these circumstances. David is treated as a youth,
 a stripling, by Saul and his courtiers, as well as by his gigantic
 opponent, although he had previously been recommended to the court
 under the graver character of "a mighty valiant man; a man of
 war, and prudent in matters." But surely to remove all semblance
 of inconsistency here, it is enough to advert to the most ordinary
 varieties of language in speaking of the same person under different
 points of comparison with others. In the first instance, to inspire
 Saul with confidence in the course he prescribed, the *flexible courtier*
 extols the steadiness and manly accomplishments of David; in this
 last case he stood in contrast with a man to whom Saul was as *little*
 as David was *young*.

Reconciled.

Another circumstance of alleged inconsistency has been remarked
 upon. That Saul should inquire "whose son David was?" on this
 occasion; though he is said to have made him so familiarly his
 attendant, and almost his companion before. To this the reply of
 Houbigant is definitive. "Non inquirere Saulem quis sit David;
 sed cujus filius; quia ejus intererat scire, cujus familiæ esset is
 adolescens, cui filiam suam promiserat se uxorem daturum si vinceret
 Philistæum." "Saul did not inquire who David WAS, but whose
 son; because it was of importance to him to know of what family he
 was, as he had promised to give him his own daughter to wife if he
 should conquer the Philistine."⁵

⁵ We should not omit to notice here, the doubts of Kennicott, followed by Geddes, respecting the authenticity of the verses in 1 Samuel xvii. 11 to 32, nor that Jose-

The splendour of this victory secured to David the decided admiration of the people and of his prince; it involved in its consequences all the leading events of his future life, and, amongst its happiest first-fruits, introduced him to the memorable friendship of Jonathan, Saul's son. He was again welcomed to the court of Saul, and received a permanent appointment in the army. Here his conduct conciliated the affections of all around him: though intrusted with a most important command, he seems to have disdained all sinister views in the exercise of it; his allegiance to Saul was most honourably sustained, and but for the rising envy of that unhappy monarch, might have remained as uninterrupted as it was important. But Saul had long forsaken his own allegiance to the ultimate Governor⁶ and true King of Israel; an allegiance that had been the source of all his personal successes, of Samuel's long and now exhausted affection for him, and of the almost exhausted attachment of his people. As David and the royal retinue were returning from the recent victory, the first indication of this change in their opinions began to appear in the congratulations of the populace. "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," said the women significantly, and in the very ears of Saul. However provoking to the haughty soul of the king, or indecorous towards his station such exclamations might appear, David, it is evident, was an innocent and deserving party on the occasion, but envy, which is never just, did not fail to transfer the envenomed hatred, which it was now necessary to smother, to the person of the youthful hero. "Saul eyed David," says the accurate penman of the Scripture, "from that day forward." The next day, in a paroxysm of his former disease, but sufficiently collected to form the deliberate attempt, he had the baseness to aim a javelin at the deliverer of his kingdom, and probably of his life, and repeated the attempt, but David again escaped; he gradually imbibed a settled fear of the "awful goodness" of David's character, and attributing his own vile dispositions to his rival, removed him to a command at some distance from his person. No decided arrange-

A.M. 2941.
B.C. 1063.

Rise of
Jonathan's
friendship.

Saul's envy.

Attempts to
kill David.

phus wholly omits the conversation between Saul and Abner respecting David, ver. 55-58. A conjecture of Dr. Delaney's is perhaps worth recording too. As "David going and returning from above Saul," would be a literal rendering of the clause in 1 Sam. xvii. 15; as Josephus says that the physician advised him to get a man "to stand over his head," viz. as he lay in bed, to "play," &c.; and as the second message sent by Saul to Jesse, is, "Let David, I pray thee, stand at my face," (to say nothing of the state of his mind,) he could only see David's face fore-shortened, and the harp might wholly hide both his face and person. Delaney thinks his visits to court very temporary at first. The editor of CALMET, 3 v. 4to. Lond. asks, "Was Saul, like insane persons among us, kept private in some

dark apartment? Did David play in a separate apartment, &c.?" "It does not appear that even Jonathan had seen David, at least *familiarly*, before."

⁶ For though the *immediate* interferences of God with the government of the Israelites were now fewer, and the *form* of its administration changed, the piety of David and the despair of Saul both witness that these interferences were regarded as the highest proofs of an intimate connection between God and all their public affairs. "God is departed from me," is the dismal complaint of the latter, "and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams;" while David speaks, in one of his last addresses to the people, of Solomon being advanced to "sit upon the throne of the kingdom of JEHOVAH over Israel."

A M. 2941. ment appears to have been previously made for the fulfilment of his
 B.C. 1063. public promise to give David, as the conqueror of Goliath, his daughter in marriage; but whether that promise specified which to the daughters of Saul was intended, it may be now as difficult of decide as it was then convenient to doubt. The custom of the East at this time, and the general bearing of the Scripture narration, would certainly induce us to suppose that Saul added to his other public crimes and follies, a breach of his public faith in giving, shortly after this time, his *eldest* daughter's hand to a comparative stranger. For "when Merab, Saul's daughter, *should have been given to David*, she was given unto Adriel, the Meholathite, to wife." Michal, her younger sister, however, imbibed a strong personal attachment to David; and the wretched father could even congratulate himself on this circumstance as a means of ensnaring David's life. Many are the steps that occur in the most decided plans of the Divine Governor that bid fair to lead to the happiness of his most rebellious subjects. There had been nothing irreconcilable with the divine decision of transferring the throne of Saul to David (compared especially with similar declarations and their fulfilment,) in the continued relation of sovereign and subject between them, exactly as it now stood during Saul's life—much less in the honourable fulfilment of Saul's own proposal of an alliance with his family; which might have offered an arrangement that would have united the claims of each house. Saul now added an *ex post facto* condition to the marriage of David with his daughter Michal; that he was to bring 100 foreskins of the Philistines, as a dowry to his father-in-law.⁷ Of this, David made no difficulty—"What is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" was his manner of reasoning throughout these trying circumstances; he brought double the exacted dowry "in full tale" to the king, of whom we only read in this most promising circumstance of his life, that he "became David's *enemy* continually."

Saul's faith-
lessness.

David
justified in
attacking
the
Philistines.

Why David's conduct in these expeditions against the Philistines, who were continually watching for opportunities to attack and subjugate his country, should need any more defence than the patriotism of other heroes of antiquity, can only be accounted for on the supposition of his peculiar claims to be the servant of *God* in them, which very supposition answers the chief argument of the objector, and is confirmed by all the facts of the case. "The earth was *filled* with violence"—God had never ceased to indicate his claims to control the evils which he did not originate; and had repeatedly asserted, and confirmed by miracles, his peculiar determination respecting this people and the land they inhabited, of which the Philistines occupied one of the richest districts. The whole history

⁷ According to the custom at that time, and still subsisting in some eastern nations, of the husband bringing a dowry to the wife or her friends. Compare Gen. xxxiv. 12, and Ex. xxii. 16, 17.

of their public conduct towards the Israelites had been marked with treachery, with insult, and with blood; often and long had they debased and disarmed them, when in their power; had outraged the sanctity of the ark, and witnessed many of the direct interferences of God for his people in vain. David appears at this time to have generally headed the military expeditions of Saul against them.

A.M. 2941.
B.C. 1063.
1 Sam. xiii.
19, 21.

As ignorant of the unity of virtuous minds, as he was tormented with the distractions of his own, the growing friendship of David and Jonathan was either wholly unperceived by the king, (though it arose from Jonathan's opportunity of observing the correctness of David's present conduct to Saul,) or he supposed that the commands of a capricious and tyrannical parent were superior to every other law with Jonathan. Certain it is, that about this time, Saul made no secret of his determination, if possible, to take David's life. "The voice of the charmer"⁸ could touch his heart no more, for the voice of nature, and of common gratitude, was stifled within him. He issued an express command to Jonathan, and to his confidential servants, to watch the opportunity of secretly despatching David; and though that true friend and respectful son expostulated with the besotted parent of them both, not altogether in vain; war having ensued between the Philistines and the Israelites, fresh obligations were incurred by Saul, with every act of David's valour; and the hateful burden of gratitude under which he could not learn to feel

Saul's
settled
malignity
towards
David.

A.M. 2942.
B.C. 1062.

1 Sam. xix. 6.

"At once
Indebted and discharged"—

urged him again to throw his javelin at the hero, from which he very narrowly escaped. These spears, which were probably the origin of sceptres, it was a custom of antiquity to have constantly about the person of a monarch, and very frequently in his hand.⁹ Saul now sent openly in pursuit of David, yet retained some compunction at the thought of violating the sleeping couch of his own son-in-law. He directed the messengers to encompass the house, and put him to death in the morning; but the affection of Michal enabled David to elude their vigilance. From an unperceived part of the wall she let him down, and substituted an image covered with a cloth, and adorned with goats' hair, for his person, in the bed. The oriental goat is said to be capable of yielding a shining, silky hair, which might have deceived completely a casual glance on a supposed sick bed, if we understand, as the original phrase will admit us to do, that she used it as an imitation of David's flaxen locks, and *not* for his pillow. The guards too would thus be capable of saying they

Michal's
stratagem.

⁸ Ps. lviii. 5. a passage which might allude to this memorable period of David's life.

⁹ The classical reader will not fail to remember Homer's kings, and their sceptres.

Pausanius says, expressly, that the kings of Argos called their sceptres, spears; and Justin tells us, that in the first ages of the Romans, they had spears as ensigns of royalty, which the Greeks call sceptres.

A.M. 2942. had seen him stretched upon the couch. Saul quickly commanded
 B.C. 1062. them to return, and bring David, sick or in health, to his feet; Michal's expedient was discovered, and the unrelenting tyrant reproached her with sending away "his enemy," and becoming so herself. Other outrages were to complete this monarch's abandoned character. David fled to *Samuel*, at Ramah—to Samuel their common friend, and the upright judge of Israel—could Saul have alleged any just complaint against David. Here he narrated his persecutions and his dangers, which induced Samuel to proceed with him to the neighbouring establishment of some of the prophets at Naioth, where it is probable he frequently resorted to watch over their education, and occasionally conducted their worship. The messengers of Saul having pursued him thither, arrived at the moment of its celebration, and were incapacitated from accomplishing their errand by catching a kind of kindred devotion. Other messengers arrived a second and third time, and suffering David to remain unmolested from the same cause, Saul himself proceeded to the spot, and fell under the power of similar impressions. He cast aside his armour and royal vestments, ("rejecta veste superiore," as Tacitus says of the Germans, when they threw off their upper garments,) and again astonished his subjects by continuing a whole day and night amongst the prophets.

David flees
to Samuel.

Returns to
Jonathan.

David availed himself of this unexpected detention of Saul at Naioth, to rejoin Jonathan at Gibeah, the seat of the royal government, and freely to commune with him on his present situation. Jonathan endeavouring himself, perhaps, to believe in the sincerity of his father's present change, much of whose confidence he still retained, assured him there was no present danger; but promised to ascertain Saul's mind more fully, and devised a method of communicating the result to David. He was to wait at an appointed spot, in the field where they were communing, and Jonathan, after sounding his father's disposition, on his return, proposed to bring his archery and an attendant on the ground the third day, as if for the purpose of shooting arrows at a mark; when, if Saul continued implacable in his enmity to David, he was to call to the lad that the arrows were "*beyond*" him; and David was forthwith to escape. As this may be called the last deliberate interview between these illustrious friends, and as for constancy, disinterestedness, and discretion, their attachment has been rarely if ever equalled, we may be allowed to advert the more freely to so memorable an occurrence in David's life. By a solemn appeal to God, the princely Jonathan declared his present openness and full determination of mind to communicate to David every thing that should concern his future interest; imploring pathetically a final blessing on his friend should Saul's rage render it impossible and unavailing for them to abide together. And now, as if with a presentiment that this might be their last meeting, he opened up a further view of things, which

must have awoke all the powerful feelings of David's soul, and brought every principal circumstance and prospect of his life distinctly before him. "Thou shalt not only while yet I live," said he, "show me the kindness of Jehovah, that I die not;" (it was too much to expect, at this time, that he should refer more explicitly to David's designation to the throne,) "but also, thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; not when Jehovah hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth." To this effect he pressed David twice to swear; and concluded the interview with the memorable and repeated adjuration, "Jehovah be between me and thee for ever." His father was found in the sequel as malignant as David could have anticipated;—disappointed of whom as the object of his rage, he was vile enough to hurl his spear at Jonathan as his supposed protector: the appointed signal of this state of Saul's mind was given: the friends met to weep together, until "David exceeded;" (for the noblest minds, like some of the noblest metals, according to the ancient proverb, can still be melted,) and Jonathan and David parted to renew their former constant intercourse no more.

A.M. 2942.

B.C. 1062.

Memorable
interview of
the friends.

SECTION 2.—DAVID'S EXILE, AND PERSONAL SITUATION, UNTIL HIS FINAL POSSESSION OF THE THRONE OF ALL ISRAEL.

The life of David assumes a singular and instructive division into four very distinct periods:—his *personal prosperity*, succeeded by his *personal trials*, previous to his possession of the throne; and his *public prosperity*, succeeded by his *public trials*, after that memorable event.

Hitherto, though followed all the way by the unnatural, but not surprising, efforts of envy and malignity, his path has been shining, his steps have been just. A shepherd youth, the youngest son of an inconsiderable family, has been expressly designated as God's future king over his people; introduced within the precincts of that very court in which he was afterwards to preside, he has enjoyed an unrestricted personal access to the monarch, but has made no personal efforts after the throne. His accomplishments, and his distinguished valour, have been devoted, on the contrary, to the service and support of its present possessor. He has obtained an alliance with his family, and the closest friendship of the immediate heir to that throne, (while he has excited by the same conduct the vilest passions in the king,) but he has never attempted to invade the filial duty of Jonathan; he has voluntarily disturbed neither the domestic nor the public peace of Saul. But the long period of David's *personal trials* had now commenced; and commentators have ascribed to this part of his life the composition of the seventeenth Psalm. Certainly the devout reader will feel no small pleasure in perusing it in connection with his present circumstances. We shall occasionally venture to give an opinion upon the

Review.

A.M. 2942. probable date of some other of these compositions, as entering
B.C. 1062. strictly into the character of one of the earliest and most eminent
poets of antiquity.

David flees
to the high
priest.

Doeg.

Matt. xii. 4.

Repairs to
Gath.

From the late interview with Jonathan, David hastened to the abode of the high priest Abimelech, or Abiathar, at Nob, a city of the tribe of Benjamin; prevented, it is probable, by his profound respect for the character of Samuel, from again disturbing the repose of his old age. But whether with a deliberate design to quit the kingdom of Saul, at this time, as he shortly afterwards did; or whether the unwelcome presence of the wily Edomite, Doeg, whom he accidentally found here, induced him to resolve on this step as a further measure for his safety, does not appear. Perhaps that circumstance, however, had some influence in the reply which he gave to the inquiry of Abimelech, why he came unattended? David stated that the king had intrusted him with a confidential business, upon which his servants were to meet him at a further place. He requested of the high priest some loaves of the show bread, in his necessity, (a measure afterwards justified upon this ground by the highest authority,) and any weapons for his personal use, which might be deposited at the sanctuary. The well known sword of Goliath, happening to be the only one, was therefore offered him; and supplied to him originally by God's peculiar providence, he made no hesitation of accepting it, exclaiming, "There is none like that." Whether David may not be justly charged with a criminal violation of truth on this occasion, we are not inclined to dispute. Saul had sent him on no such errand. It was a remarkable beginning of his personal troubles, in any case, and led to other degrading expedients.¹⁰ Let us be allowed to suggest, however, that as David would anticipate Saul's future knowledge of these circumstances, the case does not rest altogether on an effort for self-preservation, but he might suppose that this account of himself would furnish to Abimelech, as it afterwards did, a plausible excuse for assisting him.

David now, for the first time under the influence of "fear," resolved to throw himself on the protection of a stranger; and repaired to the court of Achish, king of Gath. His stay, however, was short, and his measures unworthy of his spirit. Finding that the princes of Gath remembered, with as much hostility as Saul, his popularity in Israel, and the national songs in which he was celebrated, he feigned himself to be deranged, and seemed glad of the expulsion of a madman, as a refuge from worse treatment.

¹⁰ We know of no service that it can yield the cause of truth to observe on such occasions, with some commentators, that Euripides is of opinion, when truth is likely to be attended with great evil, falsehood is pardonable; or, that Cicero says, he is a good man who does all the good he can

to others, and injures no one unless grievously provoked; any more than it would apologize for David's fault to add, that a celebrated moralist of our own country admits of some *fashionable* and some *legal* lies.

We need not occupy our pages with references to similar conduct in the heroes of ancient times, upon less perplexing occasions; but neither Ulysses nor Solon had the same excuse for this unmanly degradation; while Brutus, perhaps, in the opinion of many of our readers might plead a better. On the occasion of his first dangers (which probably led to his personal confinement) at the court of Gath, he penned the fifty-sixth Psalm, and on his escape, the thirty-fourth.

His next retreat was the cave of Adullam, near a city of the same name, in his own tribe. Here his family and friends quickly joined him, with many others that were discontented or in difficulties; amongst whom were Joab, Abishai, and Benaiah; and those eleven distinguished Gadites who are described in the final register of his captains as "men of might and war, fit for the battle; that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were swift as the roes upon the mountains." After these came an unexpected reinforcement from the mixed tribes of Benjamin and Judah, under the direction of Amasa. David, justly cautious of such a considerable number of Saul's tribe, but no longer fearful of committing his cause into the hand of God, met them with a pious frankness. "If," said he, "ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come unto me to betray me unto mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hand, the GOD of our fathers look down thereon and rebuke it." To this address their leader replied with similar candour and devotion, "Thine we are, O David, and on thy side, O son of Jesse. Peace be to thee, and peace to thy helpers. For thy God helpeth thee!" David's forces now amounted to upwards of four hundred men.

Retreats to
Adullam.

His
followers.

¹ Chron. xii.
8.

His first precaution, on finding himself in strength, was to place his father and mother in security—the questionable security of the court of the king of Moab. Perhaps, however, David conceived his own continuance in the neighbourhood as a sufficient guarantee of their safety; while the precarious and comfortless abodes he inhabited, would ill suit the extreme age of his parents. From Adullam he departed, at the command of the prophet Gad, into the forest of Hareth, in the interior of the tribe of Judah; and not far remote from the scenes of his former advancement and retreat, at Gibeah and Ramah, where Saul quickly heard of him. On his expostulating with the neighbouring tribes for their partiality to David, the officious zeal of Doeg now revealed to Saul the succour formerly afforded to David by Abimelech; and that wretched king, after a mockery of expostulation with him, sacrificed nearly the whole of the sacerdotal family to his rage, and destroyed the town of Nob; while David was pressing towards the relief of his country from an invasion of the Philistines. Abiathar, the only surviving male branch of the high-priest's family, escaped to David.

A.M. 2942. The town of Keilah was situated to the south-west of the tribe of
 B.C. 1062. Judah, bordering on the territory of the Philistines, and these mar-
 Relieves auders came up, in repeated incursions, after the time of harvest, to
 Keilah. rob the threshing floors of the Israelites. David, through the
 prophet or the priest who now adorned his camp, inquired the will
 of God respecting the propriety of attacking them; and presents
 the singular instance of a public man, who could only maintain
 himself with difficulty against the tyrannical government of his own
 country, advancing to the attack of her enemies. His men appeared
 sensible of the danger of being thus placed between two inveterate
 foes, but David having ascertained God's will, proceeded without
 hesitation to the battle, and to victory. Danger now arose from a
 third quarter, and the last that could have been expected. Saul
 hearing of David's stay in the town, sent a message to the inhabi-
 tants of Keilah to deliver him up, and, ungrateful as their master,
 they were ready to obey. Assured of this by the divine oracle,
 David fled to Ziph, (his men now amounting to 600,) and successively
 to the wilderness of Maon and Engedi; Saul pursuing him (with a
 slight interruption from the Philistines)¹¹ all the way, and latterly
 with a force of 3000 men. At Ziph, in another of the friendly wilds
 of nature, Jonathan and David met for the last time. The interview
 was short, but full of the greatest consolation to David that any
 creature could have afforded him. The sacred historian says that
 Jonathan "strengthened his hand in God." His friend could now
 speak expressly (if he did not speak prophetically,) not only of
 David's final deliverance from Saul, but of his future possession of
 the throne: "and I," said he, fondly, and with the due mixture of
 what was *human* in his views, "shall be next unto thee, and that
 also Saul my father knoweth." They here again renewed their
 solemn engagements to each other in the name of Jehovah, and
 parted to meet no more.

David's last
 meeting
 with
 Jonathan.

Spare Saul
 at Engedi.

At Engedi was a cave of some considerable extent, in which David
 and some few attendants had secreted themselves, when Saul came
 into it to rest, or for some other temporary purpose.¹² His men now
 urged David by every consideration of justice and propriety, to avail
 himself of this complete committal of their common enemy into his
 hand. David advanced toward the mouth of the cave,—and cut
 away a part of Saul's outer robe, but strictly forbade his men to touch
 the person of the king. When Saul had withdrawn, he presented
 himself with this irresistible proof of his forbearance before the rival
 troops. Addressing Saul with the utmost respect, and appealing to
 God for the pureness of his motives, he again subdued the guilty
 conscience of the king, before the voice of truth and reason; until
 Saul acknowledged, with an ill-founded humiliation, the superiority

¹¹ To the period of this providential diversion of Saul's forces, Patrick, and others, ascribe the composition of the 54th Psalm.

¹² *Επιγόμενος υπο των κατα φυσιν.*—Josephus. *Ut purgaret ventrem.*—Vulgate.

of David's character, and his conviction that he would ultimately possess the throne.¹³ A.M. 2942.
B.C. 1062.

We next find David in the wilderness of Paran, which exhibits one of the most characteristic scenes of his life. Nabal, a rich, but churlish landholder, who had previously been indebted to David's protection for the security of his flocks, was shearing sheep in Carmel; and David sent a respectful request to him to be allowed to participate in his abundance. To this he replied by an insulting taunt, and David advanced at the head of 400 of his men to resent it. But Nabal had a wife of a very opposite character, "a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance," who hearing the account of this refusal, prepared in person to avert the consequences. A.M. 2944.
B.C. 1060.

While her husband was revelling in wine, she met David with a valuable present of provisions, and delicately requesting him to impute the conduct to herself, which she now entreated he would pardon, reminded him that when Jehovah should have destroyed all his enemies, it would be "no grief nor offence of heart" unto him if he should have forborne to shed blood causelessly in such an instance as this. This appeal to all David's best principles was irresistible; he assured her of peace, and even of his gratitude for her interference; and on the death of Nabal, shortly afterwards, made this interesting woman his wife. Some writers affect to consider the conduct and character of David at this juncture, as that of a mere captain of banditti. Many forcible appeals are made to our justice on behalf of the suffering *creditors* of his bands in particular; but not one decided feature of such a character is made to appear. What districts did he ravage but those of the enemies of his country? Whose property did he invade, or whose domestic tranquillity did he disturb? Moreover, did he not place all these debtors in far more promising circumstances than those in which he found them? It is no small credit to his associates to have known and followed such a master. For their use and at an early period of their acquaintance, Delaney thinks he composed the 34th Psalm, and planted the vineyards of Engedi.

Nabal and
Abigail.

Once more Saul is brought in contact with David. The Ziphites giving intelligence of David's retreat in their neighbourhood, Saul pitched in the hills of Hachilah with a considerable force, and lodged personally amongst the baggage. David having intelligence of his exact situation, and attended only by Abishai, ventured promptly, in the dead of night, into the royal tent, and again saw his bitterest foe at his feet, with a spear stuck in the ground at his head. But he again resisted the thought of violating his security, and only took

Saul's life
again
spared.

¹³ We have a Psalm expressly penned by David on this occasion, Psalm cxlii. "But good thoughts," says Dr. Trapp, speaking of Saul's confession, "make but a thoroughfare of wicked hearts; they stay not there, as those that like not

their lodging; their purposes, for want of performance, are but as clouds without rain; or as *Hercules'* club in the tragedy, of a great bulk, but stuffed with moss and rubbish."

- A.M. 2944. away the spear and a cruse of water. The next morning he ascends
 B.C. 1060. the opposite hill, and calling for Abner, Saul's general, in a fine
 vein of satirical reproach relates the fact, and exhibits the proofs.
 This produced a final acknowledgment from Saul that he had sinned,
 "and played the fool exceedingly," and a vow that he would seek
 to injure David no more. How far this promise was observed there
 are no means of directly ascertaining, but David seems to have
 A.M. 2946. apprehended fresh outrages; for we find him a second time in
 B.C. 1058. extreme despondency, and fleeing, as before, to Gath. Here he
 continued for about a year and a-half, during which period he invaded
 several of the minor states, (the old enemies of his country,) in the
 south of Judea, but seems to have taken no part in the public affairs
 of Achish until the memorable and decisive period of a war breaking
 out between the Philistines and Saul.¹⁴

David at
 Ziklag.

- A.M. 2948. The town of Ziklag, near the southern borders of the tribe of
 B.C. 1056. Judah, was assigned to David at this time by the king of Gath, for
 his residence, and remained ever after (with the exception we are
 about to relate) in the possession of the kings of Judah. David had
 requested this place of Achish as likely to be less obnoxious to the
 court, and on being dismissed from the muster of the Philistine army,
 through the jealousy of the princes, he was about to retire again to
 the town, when he found that it had been sacked by the Amalekites.
 David's men now manifested for the first time symptoms of revolt—
 the town had been burnt, their wives and children taken captives,
 and the chieftain and his followers were equally perplexed and
 desponding, "but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God."
 He called for the ephod, and was oracularly assured, through
 Abiathar the priest, that if he instantly pursued the enemy he might
 yet recover all. David needed no other encouragement; he selected
 600 of his best troops for the expedition, and meeting opportunely
 with an Egyptian slave whom the Amalekites had left behind, he
 was enabled to track their route, and came up with them while they
 were in the act of rejoicing over their great spoil. After a well-

¹⁴ We have no *direct* concern in this place with the circumstance of Saul's consultation of the witch of Endor. But as all the other events in the life of that unhappy prince have connected themselves naturally with the life of Samuel or of David, we may be allowed to state our opinion of the *reality* of Samuel's appearance to Saul on that occasion, by an immediate interposition of God, which as much confounded the juggler as the monarch. 1. It was an occasion on which the *dignus vindice nodus* was not wanting. The rebellious king of GOD's rebellious people had assembled one of the largest armies they ever brought into the field, to struggle with a powerful foe for every thing that was still dear to Saul in personal honour and the public safety—Samuel, David and Abiathar were with

him no more. 2. The predictions were *true* that were uttered, and the phraseology was worthy that prophet. It were to give credit to a still greater miracle, first to believe in the power of the witch to raise a specious, and, as has been thought, demoniacal representation of Samuel; and then that this personage was endued with an unquestionable and accurate prescience. 3. And above all, the Scripture terms on this occasion are very explicit; "The woman saw SAMUEL," we are told. "Saul perceived that it was SAMUEL—Samuel himself," as it will very well bear to be rendered. "And SAMUEL said to Saul" all that passed; *naming*, for the first time by divine authority, who should be his successful rival, "DAVID."

fought day he routed the whole force of the enemy, which seems to have been considerable, (as 400 of them still fled homeward,) and according to the prediction, brought back in safety all the families and flocks of his followers. Two hundred of them, however, who were detained by fatigue from following the pursuit, were now unwillingly allowed their share in the booty by the rest, but David took occasion at this time to establish a law, long afterwards observed in the Jewish wars, that all soldiers fairly embarked in a contest should equally divide the spoils. He also distributed large presents on this occasion to various towns which had been friendly to himself and his men.

A.M. 2948.
B.C. 1056.
Conquest of
Amalekite
robbers.

The Philistine army in the interim had marched to Jezreel. The sword which David would not raise against his "master," as he still considered Saul, was committed to less scrupulous hands, and in a general engagement in the plains of Gilboa, to which Saul appears to have brought the whole of his forces, and all the effective male branches of his family, the Israelites were totally defeated; the sons of Saul, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchishua, were slain, and he himself in a close pursuit was mortally wounded. He now called upon his armour-bearer to despatch him, retaining an unavailing aversion to die by the hands of "the uncircumcised," and on his refusal fell, in fact, by his own hand, in falling upon his sword. The Israelites fled in all directions, and ultimately abandoned a large tract of their territory; the Philistines stripped the body of Saul, which they nailed to the wall of Beth-shan, with the remains of his sons, while they deposited his armour in the temple of Ashtaroth; but the brave inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead soon recovered the royal corpses, and buried them with due solemnity in their own neighbourhood.

Saul and his
sons slain.

Upon the generous David, the tidings of this final discomfiture of his greatest personal enemy, operated in a very different manner to what a less noble heart would imagine. He ordered a lying messenger of the news, who assumed to himself the supposed credit of despatching Saul, to be instantly slain; he sent a message of personal thanks to the men of Jabesh-Gilead for their respectful conduct to the late king, and composed a memorable funeral ode on the death of the fallen family, in which it is only difficult to decide, whether the just and generous enemy, or the affectionate friend, shine more conspicuous. It was an occasion to call forth all his soul, and all his soul is in it. The joy and pride of his life were involved in the friendship of the fallen Jonathan; all the trouble and degradation of his past days were terminated in the death of Saul. But both shine "as the beauty of Israel" in his song; both are celebrated as "the mighty fallen!" Our limits will not allow us to transcribe this honourable effusion of pious and dignified grief, upon which all comments are superfluous; but we fear not to refer the reader to the entire composition, as exceeding, under the circumstances, any rival production of antiquity.

David's
beautiful ode
on the
occasion.

A.M. 2949. David's path to the throne was now comparatively smooth and
 B.C. 1055. unoccupied, but he moved not without consulting that divine Director
 who had always been his first resort in distress. He was commanded
 to repair to Hebron, where all the princes of his own tribe and that of
 Benjamin (greatly intermixed with it) met him, and solemnly tendered
 him the crown. A rival, however, appeared in the person of Ish-
 bosheth, a weak surviving prince of Saul's house, whom Abner, his
 uncle, supported, and declared king of all the remaining tribes.
 "There was long war" between the contending claimants, but little
 of active hostility, as it would seem from the sacred narration; the
 only instance of a battle originated in a kind of hostile sport between
 the out-posts of the armies commanded by Joab and Abner. The
 forces of the house of Saul were defeated on this occasion with the loss
 of three hundred and sixty men, while on the side of David but
 nineteen were missing, though Asahel the brother of Joab (through
 his own imprudent temerity) was amongst the slain. During this
 interval the family of David increased considerably, and of his sons,
 Amnon, Chileab, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, and Ithream,
 were given to him in Hebron. The correctness of his administration
 daily increased his power, and his well-known talents for war kept
 all the outward enemies of his people in check. The period
 approached that was to consummate his early anointing, and evident
 designation to the throne of all Israel; his foes were divided amongst
 themselves; and Abner, after seven years of inglorious and unavailing
 opposition, secretly offered to abandon the wretched Ish-bosheth,
 and transfer his influence to David. From this event we date

Elected king
of Judah.

Ish-bosheth
and Abner.

SECTION 3.—THE PERIOD OF DAVID'S PUBLIC PROSPERITY.

A.M. 2951. But that God to whom David resigned every thing, and who in
 B.C. 1053. every thing relating to his advancement, appeared peculiarly to
 evince *his* independence of means, was hastening the catastrophe of
 Saul's house from another quarter. Abner perished by the hand of
 Joab as he was about to bring his various projects to completion.
 Two of the principal officers of Ish-bosheth, under pretence of bring-
 ing or taking out wheat for the household, approached the palace of
 this unhappy prince at noon-day, and finding him asleep on his
 couch, assassinated him, and travelled day and night to bring his
 head to David. Their reception was worthy their deed, and of the
 often-tried magnanimity of the king. "As the Lord liveth," said
 David, solemnly, "who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,
 when one told me, saying, behold Saul is dead, thinking to have
 brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag;
 how much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in
 his bed; shall I not, therefore, require his blood of your hand, and
 take you away from the earth?" He instantly ordered their execu-
 tion, and interred the head of Ish-bosheth in the sepulchre of Abner.

Ish-
bosheth's
death.

Avenged by
David.

The tribes now unanimously invited David to the throne. In

the midst of their past inconstancy to God, and inconsistency with the character of his chosen people, a silent stream of pious and observant individuals still fertilized the moral waste of Israel, and in the present public acknowledgment of David as peculiarly their "bone and flesh," their leader, their shepherd, and their captain, such persons would doubtless remember the ancient promise to all Israel, in the distinguished tribe of Judah, that *there*, at least, a lawgiver and a sceptre should always be found, until SHILOH, his greater son, should gather the nations to his feet. David is recorded to have been at this time in the thirty-eighth year of his age, during seven of which he reigned over the united tribes of Judah and Benjamin, in Hebron.

After three days devoted to gratitude and national festivity,¹⁵ we find David marching forth to war, for the first time since he wore the honours of royalty, against the Jebusites at Jerusalem. This place never before was fully subdued to the Israelitish yoke. Joshua slew its king, and Caleb, a worthy predecessor of David, in the history of the tribe of Judah, had taken the town, but there was a strong fortress, now called ZION, which resisted every attack, and in which the ancient inhabitants seem to have possessed a long and secure retreat. Emboldened by this circumstance, they sent out an insulting message to David, that if he could contrive to take away the blind and the lame out of the fortress, he might, perhaps, prevail against it; but some commentators have understood this to allude to the Israelites having called the idols of the old inhabitants by these opprobrious names. However this may be, the taunt seems peculiarly to have excited David's anger, and he ordered, in consequence, the assault of the place, promising immediate promotion to the first who should succeed in smiting the blind and the lame, thus described. The fort quickly fell, and David is supposed to have celebrated the conquest in the 115th Psalm, part of which (ver. 2 to 8), would strongly confirm the conjectured allusion. David enlarged this fortress considerably, removed the seat of government to Jerusalem, and called this part of it the city of David.

Prosperity now shone upon this illustrious prince, with a steadiness only equalled by his patience in obtaining it. He went on, and grew great, "going and growing," until it was at once the conclusion of truth and modesty, that God had "exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." He formed a friendship of great public benefit to him, with Hiram, the king of Tyre, from whose dominions he imported timber and masonry, and received a considerable accession of artificers in the various public buildings he carried on. To this season of uninterrupted peace, most critics have assigned the filling up of a considerable valley between the fortress of Zion above named, and the hill *Acræ*, on the south of

A.M. 2956.
B.C. 1048.
David king
of all Israel.

Takes the
fort of Zion.

His great
prosperity.

¹⁵ To which occasion Delaney assigns the composition of the 60th Psalm, objecting to its present title.

A.M. 2961. Jerusalem, with streets. "Millo," in which he is said to have
 B.C. 1043. "built round about and inward," is thought to have been the name
 Buildings. of this valley. He erected a sumptuous palace in that quarter of
 the city which was honoured by his name, and increased his family
 by various children; he indulged also in the evils of polygamy, and
 afterwards reaped its bitter fruits.

Perilous war
 with the
 Philistines. A new war, however, upon a most formidable scale, now demanded
 his attention, and for a short time suspended all his improvements.
 The Philistines, confederated, as Josephus states, with the Phœni-
 cians, the Syrians, and several other surrounding nations, appeared
 in great force in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The irruption
 appears to have been sudden and well concerted, for David was
 evidently unprepared for the war; and was compelled to retire to
 his former refuge in the fastnesses of Adullam. In this well known
 retreat, he marshalled his troops with his accustomed prudence and
 piety; and at this time occurred the adventurous journey of his three
 valiant chiefs through the encampments of the Philistines, to fetch
 water for David from the well of Bethlehem, and his memorable
 reply—"Shall I drink the BLOOD of these men that have put their
 lives in jeopardy; my God forbid it me that I should do this thing!"
 and he poured out the water as a libation of thanks to God. But
 his army was now to be prepared and animated to more serious
 strife. The enemy filled the rich valley of Rephaim, on the south-
 west of Jerusalem, about the time of barley harvest, and David
 must have been most anxious to dislodge them. He commends his
 cause to God in the 83d Psalm, and pressed forward so eagerly in
 person to attack the Philistines, that this appears to have been the
 time when he suddenly found himself, with his three chief captains,
 alone in the midst of them; and gathering courage from the danger,
 headed the route described in 2 Sam. xxiii. 10, until, with his brave
 supporters, "his hand was weary, but it still clave to his sword."
 If this adventure shall appear rash, it must be remembered that he
 was stimulated to it by counsel that never misled him, and though
 the victory was but partial, he commemorated the deliverance by sur-
 naming the place *Perazim*, the place of breaches; for God, he said,
 had appeared for him as suddenly and unexpectedly as the breaking
 out of waters. The enemy were soon able, however, to re-occupy
 their former position, and David was directed to a very different kind
 of victory. He was to march round their encampment toward some
 mulberry-trees in the rear, and when he heard (either by means of
 an unusual wind, or some other decisive interposition) a sound as of
 a flying army in the tops of the trees, he was forthwith to commence
 the attack, assured of success. He obeyed the monition, and
 obtained a triumph which compelled the enemy to retreat, and
 ultimately closed the war.

1 Chron. xi.
 15.

The consequences of these repulses of the Philistines are not
 further stated than that they brought him fame and glory in all the

neighbouring nations; but they now left him leisure to prosecute a design, which he appears previously to have meditated, of removing the ark of God to Zion. To assist at this solemnity, he summoned all the Levites, princes, and rulers of his people, from Sihon of Egypt (near the mouth of the Nile) to Hamath northward, at the fountains of the Jordan, a description of his northern and southern frontier, which may give us some conception of the extent of his dominions. At the appointed period, the king himself, attended by 30,000 troops, the high priest and his brethren, and all the magistracy of the land, repaired to a hill near Kirjath-jearim, in the tribe of Judah, and removed the ark from its long abode in the house of Abinadab and his family. According to the best chronologists, it had been deposited here about 90 years.

A.M. 2962.

B.C. 1042.

David attempts to fetch the ark to Zion.

David led the way in the heartfelt melodies of the occasion, and played before the Lord, we are told, "with all Israel, on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals." But the procession was imperfectly arranged, and ended in a fatal error. A new cart, or open carriage of some description, drawn by oxen, had been provided to carry the sacred symbol of God's power and presence. In this perhaps there was intended some confused memorial of the miracle whereby the ark had been brought back in the preceding century from the land of the Philistines, as it is certain, (on the other hand,) in the conductors appointed, Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, there was a strange forgetfulness of the express designation of the Levites only, to the care of every part of the tabernacle. Times of confusion, however, had long been corrupting the public mind; God was now pleased to show that his laws, when forgotten by us, are not necessarily extinct with Him. The oxen arriving near a corn floor at Gath-rimmon, in the tribe of Dan, suddenly grew restive and shook the ark, which Uzzah venturing to touch, in the effort to replace it, to the terror of the people and of David, fell dead upon the spot. Convicted of an error which as yet he could not comprehend, David now wisely delayed the further execution of his design, until he should be able to offer a more acceptable service. He ordered the ark to be deposited in the house of a neighbouring Levite, Obed-edom, and proceeded to Jerusalem disappointed, but still determined to understand the will of God in this affair. No one could better explain than, after a very short interval, he was enabled to do. "The Lord our God made a breach upon us," he says, "for that we sought him not after the due order."

Ill success at first.

Num. i. 51.

Uzzah slain.

Having ascertained what this was correctly, and given the Levites that prominence in his new arrangements which the law of God had so expressly assigned them, within the period of about three months from the first attempt, David once more essayed to bring up this sacred vessel to Jerusalem, and in the animated language of his own poem on that occasion, (the sixty-eighth Psalm,) "The singers" again

Final and joyful removing of the ark.

A.M. 2962. “went before, the players on instruments followed after, among them
B.C. 1042. were the damsels playing with timbrels.” And finding, on advancing a few paces, no further interruption to his progress, he offered oxen and fatlings on the spot, and probably at intervals all the way. David’s animation increasing with his progress and evident acceptance with God, the whole of the interesting composition alluded to was appropriately sung as they approached Jerusalem.—(Delaney has suggested the possible adaptation of the twenty-fourth Psalm as a final chorus at this time, and certainly it is eminently in unison with the occasion.)—David danced in the sacred procession, and gave his soul up to joy, as the ark of God passed to its rest in the hill of Zion, and JEHOVAH in his chosen symbols “ascended on high,” leading these once dishonoured “captives captive!”

One painful interruption of the festival, now instituted, was found in the unaccountable conduct of Michal, his lately restored wife. Seeing David’s almost boundless devotion in the scene just closed, she charged him with an indecorous exposure of his person before the women in the procession; an allegation so unfounded, and arguing a state of mind so averse to David’s conduct on the occasion, and so forgetful of his generosity to her, that David warmly retorted the rebuke, and she was visited with the opprobrium of barrenness for her impiety. He closed this most important of all his triumphs by the composition of a Psalm, given at length in 1 Chron. xvi. and forming part of the 96th and 105th of the canon.

Religious
services set
in order.

David’s
desire to
build a
temple.

David now proceeded to regulate to the best of his discretion, and with the constant aid of God’s appointed ministers, the various religious services connected with the immediate presence of the ark at Jerusalem; but comparing his unparalleled honours and security with all the previous history of his people, his heart gradually overflowed with a desire to consecrate some nobler dwelling than he had yet found to the service of his God. The eighty-fourth Psalm will be found to express great anxiety on this point, though some commentators have ascribed it to scenes of greater distance from God’s worship than David could now complain of. To the general disposition evinced by his deeply-seated desires upon this subject, the prophet Nathan was commissioned to reply with God’s decided approval; but the execution of his wish to consecrate a settled and magnificent TEMPLE to Jehovah, was almost immediately denied to him, and referred to a promised and more peaceful son. Yet for his anxiety to erect a house for God’s worship, he was assured that God would “build *him* an house;” that his mercy should not depart from him, as it had departed from Saul; but that his seed should possess the throne of Israel “for ever.” An eloquent and humble acknowledgment of these distinguished mercies closed the several interviews with the prophet on these occasions, and will be found in 2 Sam. vii. 18—29.

He takes
Gath.

From the Philistines, David shortly after these circumstances took

the important town of Gath and its dependencies, called in one part of the sacred narrative "Metheg-Ammah," or the Bridle of the Angle, because it commanded all the adjacent country of Judea, and had often, indeed, been a bridle on its inhabitants. He next invested and subdued the greater portion of the territory of the Moabites, fulfilling an ancient prediction of a prophet of their own, that "a sceptre should arise out of Israel, and smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth: that Edom also, and Seir, should be a possession, and Israel should do valiantly."

A.M. 2964.
B.C. 1040.

Subdues
Moab.

The Syrians and Edomites then submitted to his arms. Of the former, Hadadezer seems to have been the magnificent ruler, and the Scripture narrative of his subjugation is confirmed by Nicolaus Damascenus, who says, as quoted by Josephus, "that Hadad, who reigned over Damascus and the other parts of Syria, except Phœnicia, made war against David, the king of Judea, and tried his fortune in many battles, but was beaten at last at the Euphrates." It is said, that "David smote Hadadezer as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates," which seems to bear reference to the ancient covenant with Abraham, never fulfilled until this period, "Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." The prisoners and spoil which David took on this occasion were very considerable, "a thousand chariots and seven hundred horsemen," and "twenty thousand footmen;" while the Syrians of Damascus afterwards coming to the succour of Hadad, or Hadadezer, incurred a loss of twenty thousand slain. David destroyed all the chariots, according to an express precept of God, and hamstrung all the horses except a hundred, which were probably reserved, however questionably, for purposes of state. From Hadadezer several shields of solid gold (some have thought from an allusion in the Song of Solomon, chap. iv. 4, as many as a thousand,) were taken and sent to Jerusalem, and from his cities Betah and Berothai, large quantities of brass; "wherewith Solomon," adds the writer of the book of Chronicles, "made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass" for the temple.

The Syrians
submit
Hadadezer.

The tidings of these successes brought David the homage of Toi, king of Hamath, and several valuable presents by the hand of his son. This prince appears to have had the further impulse of having been formerly at war with the defeated Hadadezer. Throughout the land of Edom, almost without a struggle, David planted garrisons, and exacted a regular tribute, dedicating the accumulated spoil of all those various nations, (except what was currently required for the exigencies of the state,) to his cherished plan of a magnificent temple to Jehovah, and generally to his future service.

The
Edomites.

David now inquired diligently for any of the surviving family of Saul, that toward them he might fulfil his well-remembered vows to his early friend Jonathan, and finding that a son of his friend was living, named Mephibosheth, (a cripple in both his feet,) imme-

Mephibo-
sheth.

A.M. 2964. diately sent for him to court. He restored to him and his family
 B.C. 1040. all the land which was the private property of Saul, appointed the
 servant who had acquainted him with Mephibosheth's circumstances,
 steward of the estates, and welcomed that afflicted and grateful
 prince himself to his own daily table.

David
 insulted by
 Hanun.

The king of the Ammonites, a friend of David's, died a short
 time after this occurrence, and David sent ambassadors to con-
 gratulate his son Hanun, on his succession to the throne. The
 young prince had the folly to affect to consider them as spies, and
 cut off a considerable part of their clothes and beards, and sent
 them back in this state to David, who felt justly indignant. Aware

A.M. 2967.
 B.C. 1037.

A new
 coalition
 against him.

of the probability of this, and perhaps eager to try his strength
 with this renowned conqueror, Hanun engaged the Syrians of
 Rehob and of Zoba, to the amount of 20,000 men, the king of
 Maacah with 1000, and the king of Ishtob with 12,000 men,
 amongst whom were included 32,000 chariots, to come to his
 assistance. Against this formidable host David saw it necessary
 to arouse his strength, and sent out a well appointed army, under
 Joab and Abishai. Joab selected his best troops to engage with
 the Syrians in person, intrusting the command of the rest, and the
 attack of the Ammonites and other nations, to Abishai; the battle

Defeats the
 confederacy.

once more declared itself for Israel, and all the confederates fled.
 After this, they made head again at Helam, but David now joined
 the war, and in a second signal defeat, seven hundred chariots and
 forty thousand horsemen were routed and fell, with Shobach the
 Syrian commander-in-chief. "So the Syrians," we are told,
 "feared to help the children of Ammon any more," and the latter
 were besieged in their capital city, Rabbah.

A.M. 2969.
 B.C. 1035.

A circumstance occurred at this time, in the life of David, upon
 which the malignity both of ancient and modern infidels has fastened
 with characteristic ardour. The facts of the case admit neither of
 colouring nor of apology. They charge upon David, certainly, some
 of the blackest of human crimes; for which, however, it is but just
 to add, that they exhibit also unaffected repentance and condign
 punishment. We shall endeavour to place these facts before the
 reader with the faithfulness and simplicity of the sacred historian.

David's
 awful fall.

This highly-favoured monarch was enjoying at Jerusalem that
 repose, during the season of war, to which his whole life had been
 hitherto a stranger, when, walking in the evening on the roof of his
 palace, after refreshing himself, according to the custom of the East,
 with a short sleep in the afternoon, the sight of a woman, exceed-
 ingly beautiful, attracted his attention, and hurried him away from
 the path of rectitude. She was bathing in a neighbouring house or
 garden. A kind of merciful check to his rising passion appears to
 have been afforded by some honest courtier, in the answer which
 met David's first inquiries after this unhappy female. "Is not this

Bathsheba.

Bathsheba, the daughter of *Eliam*, the wife of *Uriah* the Hittite?"

But in vain! In the wife of a valiant “pillar of his state,” and a convert probably to his religion; in the daughter of another of his most distinguished commanders; and the grand-daughter of his chief counsellor, he saw no insuperable obstacle to the gratification of his lust, which he instantly indulged. The sudden pregnancy of Bathsheba now induced him to send to the army for her husband, under the pretext of receiving information of the war, but in reality to conceal, if possible, the violation of his bed.

Uriah came, but could not be induced to visit his wife. He constantly slept amongst the guards at the palace, and David, finding it impossible by any artifice to transfer to the living husband the fruit of his perfidy, rushed into the “blood-guiltiness” of ordering his death. “Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die,” were the words of his own death-warrant, with which this ill-fated warrior was sent back to his general. The cruel mandate was but too readily obeyed; Uriah’s life was taken, with that of several of his brave companions, in an hopeless attack upon the besieged Ammonites; and Joab quickly despatched the tidings of his death to Jerusalem. The guilty monarch, with apparent impunity, made Bathsheba immediately his wife.

David orders
the death of
Uriah.

A child was born from this adulterous connection, before the message of God’s wrath was sent to David. Perhaps he was mingling good and evil in rejoicing at its birth, when the prophet appeared, denouncing the evil of his conduct and the child’s death! Under the parable of a rich man who had spared his own flocks and herds, and seized the only and favourite lamb of his poor neighbour to entertain a guest, he excited a warm and even angry sense of justice in the king, who instantly pronounced the rich man’s death, though the law of Moses (still the criminal code of the state,) did not demand so severe a retribution. “He shall surely die,” said David, with an oath, “and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because HE HAD NO PITY.” With prophetic boldness Nathan answered, “THOU ART THE MAN!” and then proceeded to charge the monarch with his unaccountable ingratitude to God, and baseness to Uriah, in these complicated and disgraceful transactions. He threatens him, in conclusion, with those divine chastisements in the present life, and that immediate interposition of the Just Governor of all, to punish his sins after their own kind, for which these early ages of the world were distinguished. As he had slain Uriah with the sword, and desolated his family hopelessly, the sword was not to depart from his house for ever; and however secretly he had violated the honour of another, his own wives, the prophet declared, should be polluted in the face of the sun.

A child born
from the
adultery.

A.M. 2970.
B.C. 1034.

Nathan’s
parable.

Divine
threaten-
ings.

The memorable union of persuasiveness and power in this message of Nathan quickly found its way to the monarch’s heart. “I have

David’s
confession.

A.M. 2970. sinned against the Lord," said David, frankly, and with such undis-
 B.C. 1034. sembled penitence, that the prophet immediately assures him of an
 alleviation in his punishment and the pardon of his guilt. The
 penalty of *death*, which he had pronounced upon the cruel robber of
 another's property, (though expressly prescribed by the law of Moses
 for *adultery*,) was graciously remitted by God, who assured him,
 however, that the fruit of his illicit intercourse was doomed to die;
 a sentence of which David afterwards, by fervent prayer and
 entreaty, endeavoured to obtain a repeal in vain.

Death of the
 child.

Remarks.

While it would be idle to deny, in reply to the observations of
 infidelity on these painful facts, that the Scriptures both of the Old
 and New Testament exhibit David as a distinguished servant of God,
 and on the whole, as good a man, as he was a brave and great one,
 it is wholly contrary to every other instance of estimating human
 character, to pronounce upon that of David from this single, though
 most disgraceful circumstance. It proves him but man in his present
 awfully degenerated state, while the whole tenor of his life beside
 will be found to exhibit a singular and most satisfactory freedom
 from the usual vices of his station and opportunities—the very vices
 here exhibited. Though he was extensively engaged in war, his
general character is not that of a cruel man, nor do we find any
 other instance of his violating the bonds, or even the courtesies of
 social life; not, though he was for so many years treated as a kind
 of outcast himself, and possessed of abundant means. The business,
 on the whole, must be considered either in its relation to the char-
 acter of the criminal, or to the moral government of God. With
 respect to its connection with the general character of David, the
 friends of inspiration are entitled to insist upon it being considered
 an awful and most surprising exception to the general tenor of his
 life. They are entitled to add, that while they reprobate the whole
 affair as abominably gross and unjustifiable iniquity, it exhibits
 almost unparalleled repentance; perhaps taken in connection with
 those penitential Psalms that immediately arose out of these circum-
 stances, *the most* striking and most dolorous breathings of repentance,
 in the whole history of human crimes. As with regard to its con-
 nection with the divine government, it will be found, we would
 submit, THAT CRIME which was punished in the *person* of the trans-
 gressor with the greatest *severity* of any sin on record.¹⁶

Ps. li. lxi.
 &c.

David now felt it a duty to administer all possible consolation
 (mingled doubtless with the affectionate faithfulness to which he
 owed so much) to Bathsheba; of whom, as if to seal his forgiveness,

¹⁶ The defilement of an affectionate
 daughter and sister by her own brother;
 the death of four sons, three of them
 before his own eyes, and one by the hand
 of his brother; Absalom's unnatural
 rebellion, which brought his father al-
 most to the brink of ruin; the prostitu-

tion of ten of his wives before all Israel;
 to say nothing of the visitations of divine
 wrath upon his remotest posterity, (with
 which he was expressly made acquainted
 as a punishment,) form the tremendous
 catalogue of sufferings which attended
 upon this crime.

and mark God's altered view of the sinner, though he long suffered for his sin, Solomon, the promised son of peace, was born shortly afterwards, and pronounced, by an express prophetic message, the Beloved of the Lord. A.M. 2970.
B.C. 1034.

With heavy recollections of the past, however, David must have gone down to close the siege of Rabbah;—Joab having informed him that he was upon the point of taking the town; and, with the generosity of a brave spirit, (never to be denied this general in all his acts of public warfare,) having requested David to come and reap the honours of the war. Rabbah is mentioned by Polybius (Hist. Lib. V.) as advantageously situated on the top of several small eminences. When Antiochus took it, it was again a considerable city, and was, at this time, the capital of a large surrounding district in Arabia Felix, watered by the river Jabbok. The king David formally deposed from a station he had filled most unworthily, and probably placed Shobi, another son of his friend Nahash, of whom we shortly afterwards read in this neighbourhood,¹⁷ as viceroy over the place. The inhabitants of the town he brought forth, and “put them to the saw, to iron mines, and to iron axes, and transported them to the brick kilns,” or “to the brick frame and hod.” In other words, he reduced them to slavery, and put them to the most servile employments of sawing, making iron harrows, working in the mines, &c. useful employments, as a substitute for the trade of war and private plunder. So, at some length, the learned Chandler proposes to render this account of David's present conduct, and to his *Life of David*, Vol. II. p. 227—233, we refer the reader for some able criticism on these phrases. Takes
Rabbah.

SECTION 4.—THE PERIOD OF DAVID'S PUBLIC TRIALS,

Now commenced, and though these principally arose from domestic circumstances, and were inflicted for the greater part by his own children, they place both his crown and character in a series of awful straits and storms which lasted to the very close of his reign. A.M. 2972.
B.C. 1032.

About two years after the king's return from Rabbah to Jerusalem, Amnon, his son by Ahinoam, a Jezreelitess, conceived an incestuous passion for his sister Tamar, and feigning illness basely to avail himself of her affectionate attentions, violated her person and suddenly dismissed her from his house. Attired as she was, in a dress peculiar to her station, and which, from the secluded habits of females of rank and character, in the East, might subject the last feelings of her outraged virtue to the worst of reproaches, she seems to have felt most keenly this final insult, and goaded to the quick, fled to the house of her brother Absalom. David's apathy or Amnon's
outrage.

¹⁷ And who brought David very large supplies of provision on his flight from Absalom, 2 Sam. xvii. 27, a proof that he did not at this time depopulate the dis-

trict in the extensive way, a literal construction of the sacred narrative (2 Sam. xii. 31) would seem to import.

A.M. 2972. irresolution on hearing of this transaction, is almost unaccountable ;
 B.C. 1032. certainly it paved the way to future extended mischiefs in his house.

We are told he was "very wroth," and some writers have imagined that he was deterred from pronouncing judgment by there being no law strictly applicable to the offence.¹⁸ However this may be, Absalom, after retaining his revengeful purpose "two full years" unexecuted, and impelled by other motives than those of justice, or even, perhaps, of resentment, for this particular crime, entrapped Amnon (his elder brother,) to a feast at his sheep-shearing, despatched him and fled.

Amnon's death and Absalom's flight.

David now indulged an unavailing grief which gradually centred itself in the loss of Absalom, until Joab employed a woman of considerable address to induce him to give orders for his return.

A.M. 2974. She appeared before the king with a well-constructed tale of a calamity similar to his own, and representing the demands of justice upon the life of one of her sons for the murder of his brother, with all a mother's feelings, she softened him to the purpose of her employer ; who first procured a permission for Absalom to return to Jerusalem, and after two further years of penance, to the presence of his unhappy father.

Absalom's return and plans.

Within about four years after this period, the true character of Absalom was finally developed. Availing himself of the now advancing age of David, and of the certainty of finding individual murmurers amongst the claimants for public justice, this ambitious prince could devote the revenue assigned him by his father to the purpose of producing disaffection in the hearts of his subjects. He appeared in splendid equipages, he soothed the discontented, and inflamed the clamorous, until "the conspiracy was strong," and a message came to David that the hearts of the men of Israel were with Absalom. David now seems fully to have anticipated the baseness of which this favourite child was capable ; he was driven from his capital, and after a pious remonstrance with Zadok, the priest, who wished the ark of God to partake in his banishment, "he went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered and he went barefoot ;" halting a little beyond the hill, to understand the extent of the treason, and make proper dispositions for receiving tidings of its progress.

A.M. 2981. Absalom was finally developed. Availing himself of the now advancing age of David, and of the certainty of finding individual murmurers amongst the claimants for public justice, this ambitious prince could devote the revenue assigned him by his father to the purpose of producing disaffection in the hearts of his subjects. He appeared in splendid equipages, he soothed the discontented, and inflamed the clamorous, until "the conspiracy was strong," and a message came to David that the hearts of the men of Israel were with Absalom. David now seems fully to have anticipated the baseness of which this favourite child was capable ; he was driven from his capital, and after a pious remonstrance with Zadok, the priest, who wished the ark of God to partake in his banishment, "he went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered and he went barefoot ;" halting a little beyond the hill, to understand the extent of the treason, and make proper dispositions for receiving tidings of its progress.

His rebellion.

Ahithophel, one of his chief statesmen, had joined the standard of revolt ; David again commits himself to a wisdom rarely sought by statesmen : and keeping his eye firmly on the master-point of the enemy's strength, (as that wisdom alone could enable him to do,) he seems to embark his whole cause and crown on the issue of his memorable prayer, That "JEHOVAH would turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." He was not disappointed. After enduring the shameful curses and personal violence of Shimei, who

¹⁸ See the peculiar provision made Deut. xxii. 23, 24.

stigmatized him as a bloody man and an usurper, and, in the spirit of his best days, forbidding Abishai to resent them;—after hearing of the violation of his wives by the counsel of Ahithophel, as predicted by Nathan, when he had outraged the honour of that statesman's own family;—after the very counsel had been given to Absalom which would have effected the final ruin of David; that counsel was overruled by a specious declamation of the secret friend of David, Hushai, who had joined himself to the advisers of Absalom; and the indignant Ahithophel hung himself! The king had now passed the Jordan, and encamped at Mahanaim, whither he summoned all his troops, and placing them under the joint command of Joab, Abishai, Ittai, and himself, prepared to go forth with them to the contest. Absalom in the interim had conferred the command of his forces upon Amasa, and had followed his father to the wood of Ephraim. The adherents of David remonstrating with him, on the needless exposure of his person which might ensue in a general engagement, he finally agreed to wait with a reserved force in the town of Mahanaim; and the day of this most unnatural strife approached. Peculiar imbecility would appear to have attended all the measures of Absalom; we read scarcely of any orderly resistance which his forces made; “the battle was scattered over all the face of the country,” 20,000 of his followers fell, and “the wood devoured more people that day than the sword.” In the sequel this aspiring prince himself was found suspended by his hair in an oak, which had thus entangled him in his flight, and Joab receiving the intelligence, came up and despatched him there. Against this catastrophe David had so far expressly provided as to enjoin upon all his followers to spare the prince; and received the tidings of his death with heartfelt agony. *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom my son, my son!* were the bitter strains which he repeated; and until roused by the unfeeling threats of Joab, seemed hardly sensible that he had regained a kingdom, and had still the arduous task of ruling it.

His death.

Returning to Jerusalem over the Jordan, he was now met by the abject Shimei, suing for his life, which David promised him; by the grateful Mephibosheth, who came to refute the calumny with which Ziba had met David on his retreat; and by Barzillai, a Gadite, who had munificently supplied him with provisions at Mahanaim. But an unhappy jealousy arose between the men of Judah and the other tribes. The former had been most active in bringing back the king, and their brethren were angry that they were not specially invited to join them. An artful political incendiary, Sheba, availed himself of this inflamed state of the popular mind; and the king had scarcely seated himself at Jerusalem when the great body of the tribes again revolted from him. Amasa, the former general of Absalom, who on his defeat had been peculiarly

Sheba's revolt.

A.M. 2982.
B.C. 1022.

A.M. 2982. active in securing the tribe of Judah to the king, was now called
 B.C. 1022. upon to head the army; but being somewhat dilatory in his measures, a reinforcement was sent out, including the troops under the immediate command of Joab. This powerful chief once more becomes an assassin. Jealous of Amasa's present distinction, he stabbed him in a friendly embrace, and to silence the anticipated resentment of the king, proceeds after Sheba, and quickly brings back his head.

A famine now occurred throughout the whole of the dominions of David for three successive years. Inquiring the cause, he was answered by the divine oracle, that it was for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites; a people, it will be recollected, whom Joshua, the ancient commander of the tribes, swore to spare from the general fate of the Canaanites. By the same authority he seems to have been directed to order the execution of seven of Saul's surviving posterity, (indeed Josephus asserts it expressly,) and the famine ceased.

A.M. 2983. Three years after this period there was a short war renewed with
 B.C. 1021. the Philistines, chiefly remarkable for the personal danger in which David was thrown by another of the Philistine giants, from whom he so narrowly escaped, that the people resolved he should go out personally to battle no more. Four other men of remarkable stature and strength, (all of them probably of the family of Goliath, and one of them expressly called his brother,) fell at this time by the hand of David's servants and generals.

A.M. 2987. Another great public error produces a final public chastisement of
 B.C. 1017. David and his people. The most probable account of this appears to be that suggested by Delaney. The Israelites were commanded by the Mosaic law, whenever the people were numbered, to pay half-a-shekel into the sanctuary for every man twenty years old. David now seems to have ordered this census without paying the Mosaic ransom, and God immediately visited it as an act of pride and presumption. Of three evils, he was commanded to choose one; whether he would endure three years famine in the land, three days' pestilence, or flee three months before his enemies. He seems hardly to have chosen either in the general expression of his resignation to God's will, *Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord for his mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man*; but he evidently inclined toward that judgment which came most immediately from God's hand—the pestilence. Accordingly a plague ensued which destroyed, in less than the short interval threatened, 70,000 men from Dan to Beersheba; a calamity without a parallel in history.

To the deeply-penitent monarch a vision of appeased wrath was at last granted:—to an angel hovering between heaven and earth with a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem, he heard the welcome address go forth—IT IS ENOUGH!—and distinguished the spot by the purchase of the estate over which the awful messen-

Numbering
 the people,
 and its con-
 sequences.

ger was standing, and the sacrifice of numerous burnt-offerings to Jehovah; declaring, at the same time, that this must be the spot on which the future temple of God should be most acceptably erected.

Our limits will not permit us to dwell on the catalogue of materials for this building which David now reduced to order, or the actual preparations for that work which he commenced. Suffice it to observe, that the noiseless fabric which grew afterwards together, as a holy temple unto God, was begun full two years before his death; that a complete schedule of the necessary works, and all the means of accomplishing them, were handed over by this prince to Solomon; and that his dying charge to that monarch, (now declared his successor,) and to the assembled people, respected their grateful and careful use of them.

A.M. 2987.
B.C. 1017.
Preparations
for the
temple.

The brief and indecorous attempts of Adonijah to disturb the arrangements of his dying father, as more properly belonging to the reign of Solomon, are given in a subsequent article. It remains but to notice some two or three personal particulars of the last charge of David to Solomon, which have been thought to exhibit a duplicity unworthy his character. That he should direct the speedy punishment of JOAB for the crimes he specifies, the murder of Abner and Amasa, can surely need no apology; or that he gratefully remembered the attentions of Barzillai. But a difficulty has been found in reconciling the instruction to Solomon respecting Shimei, with David's oath to that worthless person, that he should not die for his former crimes. We submit to the reader, that David himself very prominently names that oath in his charge to Solomon on this occasion, which there could have been no conceivable motive to do, had he meant that it should be violated; that he means to describe his true *moral* character, as it afterwards was fully confirmed, when he says, but "hold him not guiltless," which he certainly was not; that the appeal to Solomon's wisdom had been useless ("for now thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him,") had no discretion been left with him, nothing but a plain direction to punish; and that the construction of the whole, therefore, fairly is, that the particular observation of Solomon must be directed toward this quarter, in which David plainly saw he would find reason at last to inflict the vengeance which he did.¹⁹

David's
charge to
Solomon.

David died in peace at Jerusalem, in the seventy-first year of his age, thirty-three of which he had reigned over the whole people of Israel, and seven over the united tribes of Judah and Benjamin, at his capital in Hebron.

Death
A.M. 2989.
B.C. 1015.

What shall we say of a character which the advocates of infidelity present with some new shade of deformity to every age? That it

¹⁹ Delaney contends, that the particle rendered, connectively in our received Version, should be translated disjunctively, as in Prov. xxx. 8, when the charge would run thus, "Now, therefore, neither

hold him guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him,) nor his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood."

A.M. 2989. has no shades of its own? There is no candid reader of this memoir
B.C. 1015. of David that will suspect us of leaning to such a folly; for do the Scriptures either profess to give us more than ONE perfect model of human character, or spare any one that comes short of it?

David was a poet of high natural genius, commanding a flexible and copious versification, in a comparatively barbarous age; the poets of all countries have borrowed from him, and the most distinguished of our own country have yielded him the highest praise. We first find his talents devoted to soothing the degrading and dangerous malady of a known rival; afterwards at numerous intervals they breathe forth God's praises in exile and in affliction, in defeat and in death. As the candidate for a throne to which he was divinely appointed, he spends the noon-tide warmth of life upon lessons of patience, moderation, and unparalleled forbearance; possessing the throne of Judah and Benjamin, the most powerful of all the tribes, and more than equal under his administration to the forces of all the rest, he waits from thirty years of age to forty for the full establishment of his kingdom after the *death* of Saul. Brave and skilful in war, the habit of his soul was peace; successful as a commander, he is most conspicuous for his pious dependence upon God; as a friend his attachment to Jonathan never was surpassed; as an enemy his conduct to Saul is matchless; born in obscurity, he left his son the richest prince of his age; nursed in adversity, his counsels were remembered and practised by the wisest and most prosperous of men. "In youth a hero," as Delaney finely closes his character, "in manhood a monarch; in age a saint! This is DAVID. What his revilers are their own revilings tell!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ISRAELITISH MONARCHY,

FROM THE REIGN OF SOLOMON TO THE CAPTIVITY OF THE
TEN TRIBES.

B.C. 1015 TO B.C. 721.

THE æra of History now to pass before us, will present all those mingled characters, and sudden transitions, which might well be deemed an epitome of human affairs upon the largest scale, and a map of the political changes made on the face of the whole earth from age to age. It opens with a splendour eclipsing the glory of the mightiest empires; it closes under a cloud, which may admonish all nations of their instability, and of the claims of truth and righteousness to be the firmest pillars of a state. Nothing can more distinctly prove the extent of the renown of the Jewish empire at the period of which we speak, than the fact, that the name of Solomon has passed over all countries, and has ever been associated with the qualities of power, of wisdom, and of glory; while the very fables with which imagination has connected them, tend to establish the facts which are recorded of this monarch in the Scriptures. Had he been any thing less than he is there represented, it had never occurred to the wildest fancy to decorate him, almost in preference to every other potentate, with superhuman attributes. But all the East resounds with his name and his praise; and the system of Mohammed has borrowed its most vivid beauties from the traditions which have been circulated relative to this prince. Not satisfied with the fact, that he developed the secret laws of nature, they assigned to him the command of the elements; and, as though the material universe were too limited a dominion, they have subjected to his control the rebel spirits and the invisible world; they have invested him with an authority which survives the kingdom over which he ruled; and have constructed the mighty machinery of genii and magic upon the traditions of his wisdom and their conceptions of his majesty.

The reign of David terminated in glory, yet it was troubled to the last moment. He named Solomon his successor, neither from caprice nor from parental partiality, but by divine appointment. That illustrious monarch had projected the building a splendid temple to

A.M. 2989.
B.C. 1015.

Prosperity
of Solomon's
reign.

His
universal
fame.

A. M. 2939. Jehovah; and the design was approved, but he was not to be the instrument of carrying it into effect. His hands were polluted with blood; the stormy character of his reign had compelled him too frequently to make appeal to the sword, for the God of Peace to think it fitting that he should rear the national sanctuary; and when Solomon, whose very name became a pledge of the peaceful character of his reign, (שלום, *peaceable*, from שָׁלוֹם,) was appointed as his successor, it was promised that *he* should accomplish this pious purpose; that the throne of David should be established in him; and as well for the consolation of the father, under the loss of his first child by Bathsheba, as to mark the divine favour to this young prince, he received another title from Nathan the prophet, Jedidiah, *i.e.* *Beloved of the Lord*.

David's project for a national temple,

Referred to Solomon.

Adonijah's conspiracy.

Notwithstanding this appointment, so evidently under divine disposal, the eldest son of David, Adonijah, in the closing days of that monarch, attempted to usurp his throne, and formed a powerful conspiracy, in which Joab, the celebrated Israelitish general, and Abiathar the priest, who had remained faithful during the revolt of Absalom, were involved, to exclude Solomon from the succession. The tidings of this formidable coalition were brought to the ears of the aged sovereign by Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, a rising general, through Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. In this extremity, David commanded the immediate coronation of Solomon, who thus came to the kingdom before the death of his father; and Adonijah, unable to establish his pretensions, submitted to the youthful monarch, and was forgiven his rash attempt upon the empire. This clemency proved, in the event, of little avail.

Solomon crowned.

David's last charge.

David having issued instructions relative to the projected temple, and placed in the hand of his son a schedule of the immense materials he had prepared for that purpose, in giving his last charge, did not forget the indignities which he had suffered from Shimei and Joab; the latter of whom he enjoined upon Solomon decidedly to punish, while he was carefully to watch over the conduct of the former. Accordingly, upon the death of his father, one of the first acts of Solomon's reign was to deal with these offenders. Adonijah, who seems to have forgotten the perilous circumstances from which he was just rescued, with a rashness at which one cannot but be astonished, requested that he might be permitted to marry Abishag, the wife of the late king. This petition was also put in the most arrogant terms, enforcing his right of primogeniture, affirming the choice of the people, and making a merit of the resignation of the throne, for which he would consider the grant of this favour as a sufficient remuneration. It seems still more remarkable, that Bathsheba should have consented to prefer a demand so couched, especially when to marry any of the king's concubines was notoriously considered, by oriental nations, treason against the royal dignity. Solomon instantly perceived those covert designs, as well as the gross

Adonijah's rashness.

insult, which his mother had overlooked; and enraged at the temerity of Adonijah, he commanded him to be immediately put to death, and proceeded to the punishment of others involved in the former conspiracy.

The king dispossessed Abiathar of the priesthood, and put Zadoc in his place; but he spared his life in consideration of his fidelity to his father; and, with strong menaces, confined him to his possessions in Anathoth. Thus, at the close of a century and a-half, the house of Eli was visited in the person of Abiathar, as had been predicted by Samuel; and the punishment which commenced with the death of Hophni and Phinehas, reached even to the reign of Solomon. Joab heard of these proceedings, and foresaw his own destruction. He fled to the tabernacle as a sanctuary, and was slain, even while he clung to the horns of the altar. This severity was justified by the crime of Joab, in shedding innocent blood in two instances, which the perilous situation of David's affairs at the time, did not allow him to punish. Benaiah, who executed the king's sentence, received his appointment as commander of the forces, in the room of Joab. It remained only to visit Shimei; and Solomon appears to have respected the original promise of David, that he should not die for his former offence, (2 Sam. xix. 23,) by only confining him within the walls of Jerusalem:—at the same time apprizing him that if he presumed to trespass upon the injunction his life would be the forfeit. To this condition Shimei thankfully subscribed; but violating it, three years afterwards, by passing over to Gath in pursuit of two of his servants who had fled from him, he voluntarily incurred the penalty, which Solomon immediately executed.

Having firmly seated himself on the throne, Solomon sought to strengthen his kingdom by foreign alliances; and married the daughter of the king of Egypt, at that time one of the most powerful empires existing. This marriage has been differently regarded by different writers. Some, considering it a violation of the Mosaic law, at least in the spirit of it, as including *all* foreign alliances, besides those expressly enumerated, have seen in this connection the source of that idolatry into which this distinguished prince degenerated in his old age: while others have supposed that this princess had embraced the Jewish religion before he married her. It is certain that no disapprobation is expressed, or implied, on the part of Deity, and that this event was immediately followed by a very signal mark of divine favour at Gibeon, which laid the basis of Solomon's pre-eminent wisdom; while the idolatry of his advanced life may be traced to another origin than his alliance with the Egyptian princess, in his connection with "many strange women (besides the daughter of Pharaoh);" from those very nations with whom marriages had been expressly prohibited, and whose manners and superstitions he was seduced to imitate. Upon occasion of his union with the Egyptian princess, it is supposed that matchless specimen of oriental

A.M. 2990.
B.C. 1014.
His death.

Punishment
of Abiathar.

Death of
Joab,

and of
Shimei.

Solomon's
marriage
with
Pharaoh's
daughter.
Deut. vii. 3.

A.M. 2990. poetry, called Solomon's Song, was composed as an epithalamium :
 B.C. 1014. together with the sublime forty-fifth Psalm. The latter bears evident
 Solomon's reference to something beyond the occasion, and involves consider-
 Song. ations relative to the empire of the Messiah of the highest order ;
 and that the former should be considered not merely as an epithala-
 mium, but as having a hidden and spiritual meaning conveyed in its
 splendid imagery—its position in the sacred canon, and the concurrent
 judgment of many distinguished divines, may well induce us to
 suppose.

Before the erection of the temple, the tabernacle was at Gibeon ;
 and while this sumptuous structure was rearing, Solomon went up
 thither to sacrifice. Hitherto, the testimony respecting him was,
 " Solomon loved the Lord : " and this testimony was recorded *after* his
 marriage with Pharaoh's daughter. On one solemn occasion, he
 offered no less than a thousand sacrifices. While he remained at
 Gibeon, it pleased God " in a dream by night, " to signify his appro-
 bation of the youthful monarch ; and to say, " Ask what I shall
 give thee. " Sensible of the weight of government which rested upon
 his youthful shoulders, he implored for *wisdom* in preference to every
 other blessing. This choice was approved so highly, that not only
 was it promised he should excel all other men in knowledge, but the
 honour, and riches, which he had not sought, were superadded ; and
 it was further stated, on condition of his keeping the divine statutes,
 that his days should be lengthened also.

Solomon's
 dream and
 choice

His wise
 judgment.

An occurrence soon happened to put his qualifications to a public
 test. Two women brought before him a living and a dead child,
 each affirming herself to be the mother of the living infant, and
 assigning the dead one to her antagonist. The plea seemed so equal,
 that in the absence of other evidence than their own, which was
 directly contradictory, it was impossible to decide which had the real
 right in the surviving babe. Solomon took the most effectual way
 of determining this intricate question, by irresistibly calling forth the
 feelings of nature. He commanded a sword to be brought, that the
 living child might be divided between the claimants. This the real
 mother could not endure, but consented to relinquish her interest in
 the babe, rather than be accessory to its death ; while the other
 applauded the equity of the sentence. To her whose tenderness
 discovered her relationship to the child, he commanded it to be
 delivered, amidst the admiration of his surrounding counsellors, and
 the reverence of his people, among whom the report of this instance
 of his penetration soon diffused itself.

National
 prosperity.

The wisdom of Solomon was further demonstrated in his political
 appointments ; the princes whom he called round his person, and the
 general provisions for the government of his empire. The prosperity
 and glory of his reign may be gathered from the extent of his
 dominions, from the Euphrates to the Nile, and even beyond the
 Euphrates ; and from the profound peace which prevailed during his

life. The nations around him were either tributary to him, or strengthened him with their alliance: “and Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, from Dan even unto Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.” In the mean while, the unbounded researches of his mighty mind were exploring the fields of nature; the animal and vegetable world submitted to his scrutiny; nothing escaped his penetration, from the loftiest to the most minute forms of the creation; while the fountains of intellectual being were broken up to his view, and displayed in productions, some of which only survive to tell the world what he was, and others have passed away with the age that produced them. His fame reached the remotest parts of the known world, and incorporated itself with the history of all countries.

The attached and tried friend of his father David, Hiram, king of Tyre, was among the first to offer his sincere congratulations to the young prince, who so ably filled the throne. This prompt tender of friendship was as frankly and warmly met on the part of Solomon, who concerted with this monarch the means of carrying into effect the intention of his father, and of accomplishing his own magnificent plans for the temple. Hiram engaged to furnish him with skilful artificers to co-operate with his own workmen, and to transport cedars, fir-trees, and other wood, from Lebanon, in floats to his own ports. Solomon, in return, agreed to furnish him yearly with “20,000 measures of wheat, for food to his household, and 20 measures of pure oil:” so the Hebrew and the Vulgate read; but it is generally agreed that it ought to be read, 20,000 measures of oil also. Startling as this circumstance may at first appear, it should be remembered that the ancient mode of defining numbers by letters, with super-added marks, the least of which would swell units into thousands, and the omission of a point sink thousands into units, will easily account for certain numerical variations, almost unavoidable in such a process, while these variations, so easily and naturally accounted for, in mere numbers, leave the authenticity of the history unimpeached, and its general features unchanged. We make this remark here, and once for all, because other instances occur of differences *in numbers*, arising from these obvious causes, between the historical accounts of the books of Kings and Chronicles, while *the facts* in both are one and the same.

In the fourth year of his reign, and the 480th of the departure of Israel from Egypt, Solomon began that stupendous work, which was the admiration of the world while it stood, and has since been the theme of all ages. He employed, of the descendants of the Canaanites, 70,000 to bear burdens, 80,000 to hew timber and stone in the mountains, under 3,600 overseers; making a total of 153,600. In addition to these strangers, he levied 30,000 Israelites, whom he sent, 10,000 a month, by courses, under the direction of Adoniram. To describe the magnificent structure which rose

A.M. 2990
B.C. 1014.

Hiram.

Assists him
in building
the temple.

Variation of
numbers.

A.M. 2992.
B.C. 1012.

The temple.

A.M. 2992. out of these astonishing labours, would demand a separate article,
 B.C. 1012. and cannot be attempted here. It may be necessary, however, to remark, that the only certain account of the temple must be gathered from the books of Kings and Chronicles; that in the general sketches furnished by these, many particulars must be deficient; that it is not safe to supply these from the extravagances of the Jewish rabbins; that Josephus himself had no other information respecting the first temple than that which lies before us in the sacred writings; that his descriptions, so far as they extend beyond the naked text, should not be depended upon, especially when his fondness for tradition is considered; that many who have written upon this subject, besides adopting such traditions, have confounded the temple of Ezekiel, as seen in vision, with the features and proportions of the actual temple of Solomon; and that, after the closest investigation, we cannot arrive at any absolute certainty as to its form and dimensions.

Begun. Some remarkable circumstances in connection with this extraordinary structure must not be omitted. Of whatever its several parts consisted, the trees were shaped as they were felled, the stones were moulded at their quarries, the metals were formed for their several purposes at the forge, or the depository; every thing was completed before it came to Jerusalem, "so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building;" every part of the materials fitted for its respective position required nothing more than to be adjusted and cemented. The site of the temple was Mount Moriah, a solid rock, presenting unequal surfaces, which must have been levelled with prodigious labour, and might possibly have been attempted, and partly achieved, before the death of David, who had not only prepared materials for this stupendous structure, but actually assembled Tyrian workmen around him. The work being facilitated by these preparatory measures, stimulated by the ardent zeal of the youthful monarch, and superintended by the commanding spirit of wisdom which distinguished him, this astonishing edifice was reared in seven years. It would be unpardonable to pass over a minute fact, which is one of those incidental circumstances that would be naturally noted by a true historian, but never occur to any man who planned a fiction.

Completed. It is said, in the account of the placing the ark in the temple, "There
 A.M. 3000. was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put
 B.C. 1004. there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children
 Ark deposited. of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt." A confirmation is thus indirectly furnished of the history contained in the books of Moses, 491 years after that legislator had written. (See Exod. xxv. 16 and 21, compared with 1 Kings viii. 9, and 2 Chron. v. 10.) In this magnificent sanctuary was a profusion of cedar, brass, silver, gold, and "costly stones," with the richest produce of Tyre, as well in materials as workmanship; nor can a more lively apprehension of

the unbounded wealth of this monarch be furnished, than by regarding the golden shields, and the splendid furniture of a temple overlaid internally with the most precious of all the metals.

The dedication of the temple took place in the year of the ninth Jubilee, celebrated by the Jews; and a little delay seems to have occurred after the completion of the work, that its consecration might, by this circumstance, acquire additional splendour. No sooner was the ark deposited in its sacred receptacle, than the luminous cloud, the visible symbol of the Divine Presence, filled the temple, the brightness of which was so insufferable, that the priests were compelled to suspend their ministerial functions. It was then that Solomon, who had been standing upon a brazen scaffold, before the altar, kneeled down, in the presence of his assembled subjects, and offered up a prayer of consecration, so solemn, so sublime, and so comprehensive, that it is difficult to say what quality was pre-eminent in a devotional effusion which excelled in all. The sacrifices offered were immense; that of the first day of a feast which lasted seven, consisted of 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep. To this august ceremony succeeded the feast of tabernacles, which also lasted seven days; so that the public rejoicings continued uninterruptedly an entire fortnight. At the close of these, a second vision was vouchsafed to Solomon, assuring him of the divine favour, if he held fast his fidelity to God; and warning him, at the same time, that if he forsook the God of his fathers, it was not the magnificence of the house which he had consecrated that should secure it from desolation; but that, in such an event, it should assuredly be laid waste, and his people, carried into captivity, be scattered among all nations.

This superb structure was followed by other embellishments of Jerusalem, suitable to the splendour of his own mind, and according with the prosperity of his reign. He built a palace for himself, which consumed thirteen years in its erection; a second, which he called "the house of the forest of Lebanon;" and a third for his queen, "the daughter of Pharaoh." These were all constructed on plans of the utmost magnificence. His wealth was prodigious—all his establishment of surpassing grandeur—his wisdom unrivalled in Egypt, and throughout the East—his writings, of which only a few remain, innumerable—his power equal to his prosperity—since he rendered the whole of the remaining Canaanites tributary—and his empire extended over the Philistines, the ancient enemies of Israel, "even to the border of Egypt." Two things which added to his princely magnificence and amazing riches, have been considered as a departure from the prescriptions of Deity, relative to the government of the Jews; the one, the multiplication of chariots and horsemen, as well for war, as for purposes of state; and the other, the commercial relations which he formed with other nations, stimulated probably by his very intimate connection with Tyre, but inconsistent, apparently, with the duties of a people, who were

A.M. 3000.
B.C. 1004.Dedication
of the
temple.Sacrifices
and
offerings.A.M. 3012.
B.C. 992.Solomon's
palaces.Tributary
nations.

Commerce.

A.M. 3012. commanded, as the badge of their peculiar destination, to keep
B.C. 992. themselves separate from all other states.¹

Hiram's
discontent.

The mutual agreement between Solomon and the king of Tyre did not terminate so happily as it promised; for Hiram was displeased with the twenty cities in Galilee which the king of Israel had assigned to him in acknowledgment of his assistance in the stupendous works of Jerusalem, and marked his disapprobation as well by his expostulations, as by the name which he imposed upon them; nor would he retain them; and Solomon appointed them in consequence as the residence of certain colonies of his own subjects.

Jerusalem
fortified.

Amidst the prosperity of his peaceful reign, this great monarch did not neglect whatever was essential to the security of his dominions, either in his own, or aftertimes. To him Jerusalem owed its almost impregnable walls; and various other towns, and positions of importance, in his vast empire, were fortified with great care and expense.

Queen of
Sheba.

Among the illustrious visitors whom the fame of Solomon's wisdom and power drew to Jerusalem, the most distinguished was *the queen of Sheba*. And here a question arises, as to the country of this renowned princess. She is called "the queen of the south;" and our Lord says, "she came from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon." Our attention is naturally directed to countries *south* of Jerusalem, and an examination of those parts most *distant* from the seat of the Israelitish empire, from which an acknowledgment of the greatness and renown of Solomon was voluntarily offered. The point at issue appears to lie between Arabia and Ethiopia; both of which are south of Judea. But there is a very important circumstance, long agitated, and more lately illustrated by Mr. Bruce, which seems to point more distinctly to Ethiopia. He found that the Abyssinians (in other words, the Ethiopians,) maintain to this hour, that this princess was of their country; that her posterity long reigned there; that she had a son by Solomon, from whom the regal stock is derived; and they hold various traditions respecting this monarch. It is not impossible, however, that the queen of Ethiopia might be sovereign of Arabia also—an empire divided only by the Red Sea; and thus the differences of those accounts, which agree in many essential points, become reconciled. Whatever might be the precise spot of her empire, it is evident that she was governed by an ardent thirst of knowledge, which could attract her to Jerusalem, confessedly very remote from her country. She was overwhelmed by his magnificence, and still more by his matchless wisdom; which she proved, according to the practice of the times, (which long after prevailed,

Her country.

¹ The *nature* and *extent* of his commercial pursuits appear to us, at least, questionable; while the multiplication of chariots, the accumulation of great

wealth, and especially the multitude of wives, are expressly prohibited. See Deut. xvii. 14—20.

and was recognised by the seven Grecian sages, at their meetings,) A.M. 3012.
 by difficult questions and abstruse propositions: her satisfaction B.C. 992.
 was so entire at his solution of her inquiries, and her admiration so
 unbounded at the splendour of his state, that she avowed fame had Her
 not done him justice; for "the half had not been told her." After admiration
 an interchange of presents, they parted, mutually gratified; and of Solomon.
 this memorable interview was but one more tribute to a wisdom, to
 which all existing monarchs paid homage, and which all succeeding
 ages have consented to eulogize.

It may be proper to pause here, and mark more particularly those principal occurrences in the Scripture narrative of the reign of Solomon, which have that collateral and foreign confirmation we should expect to find. About this time, or rather later, the earliest Grecian poetry has its origin; from which the first historians of antiquity gathered most of the materials of their records.

The temple of Solomon was a structure too celebrated not to be referred to as an actually existing monument of the power and wealth of the Hebrews at that time; and the temple of Vulcan in Egypt, and other magnificent sanctuaries in the heathen world, borrowed their grand outline from this stupendous edifice. To affirm the existence of such a building, supposing it never to have existed, must have subjected the records of the country boasting of it to derision and contempt. To admit its existence, and in the splendour assumed, must afford sufficient evidence of the prosperity of the Israelitish empire at that time, and of the power, magnificence, and wealth, of the reigning monarch. The facts, whatever they were, must have been known to the Tyrians, who assisted in the execution of the design; and to the Babylonians, who were the instruments of its destruction: and had any thing been affirmed in the Jewish writings contrary to truth on those points, their testimony must have been arraigned and exposed by the records of these countries. The wisdom of Solomon also was not confined within the limits of his empire, extensive as *that* was, but the earth is filled with his fame. His penetration—his knowledge—his majesty and might, were recorded by nations the most remote from each other, in point of position; the most opposed in political interests; and the most unlike as to habits and circumstances.

We are now to notice a melancholy reverse of all this wisdom and glory—to see the sun darkening as it declined, and finally setting behind an impenetrable cloud. An awful lesson is afforded to the world when such an understanding as that of Solomon was capable of being seduced; and the desolating power of sin is affectingly shown, contrasted with so much moral and intellectual beauty. As he advanced in life he multiplied his wives and his concubines to an enormous extent, having seven hundred of the former, and three hundred of the latter; and these, in violation of an express law, were indiscriminately taken from foreign and idolatrous nations.

- A.M. 3022. Their ascendancy over the king induced him to adopt their various
 B.C. 982. superstitions; and he filled his country with altars and groves dedi-
 Solomon's cated to their respective idols; which, abounding in Jerusalem,
 defection. polluted the very fane that he had himself reared at such immense
 cost, and consecrated to Jehovah. Among these were the objects
 of the worship of the Ammonites and of the Moabites, distinguished
 Ashtoreth. for the foul and cruel rites practised by their adorers; and "*Ash-
 toreth*, the goddess of the Sidonians," a popular deity in that and
 subsequent ages; called also *Astarte* by the Phœnicians, and *Aestar*
 by the Saxons, whence our term *Easter* is said to be derived, sacri-
 fices being offered to this idol in the month of April. These idols
 had temples erected to them on the Mount of Olives, directly over
 against the temple of Jerusalem. The divine displeasure was now
 marked in another communication to the uxorious monarch, far
 Solomon different from his two former dreams; and it was distinctly told him,
 threatened. that his kingdom should be divided, and the largest portion pass
 away from his family, a remnant only remaining, in reward of the
 piety of his father David. In compassion also to one whose youth
 was so full of promise, it was added, that the threatened separation
 should not take place in his day. While this communication was
 made to Solomon, the means of carrying into effect its substance
 were actually adopting, and the last days of Solomon were disturbed
 Hadad. by incipient troubles which fell heavily upon his successors. Hadad,
 the king of Edom, cherished an irreconcilable hostility against the
 family of David, by whom his country had been laid waste; and
 although he was compelled to shelter himself in Egypt, during the
 reign of that monarch, and a part of that of his illustrious successor,
 his inextinguishable hatred burnt with a fury over which time had
 no power. He strengthened himself by alliances in Egypt, and
 subsequently by preparations at home, to strike a decisive blow at
 his adversary, the first opportune moment that might present itself.
- Rezon. Another enemy to Solomon and to Israel was found in the person
 of Rezon, who first revolted from the king of Zobah, and afterwards,
 at the head of a band of men, who joined his fortunes, established
 a kingdom at Damascus, and reigned over Syria. It appears, from
 the sacred historian, that each of these adversaries, so formidable
 afterwards, harassed the Israelites during the close of Solomon's
 A.M. 3024 reign. The prophet Abijah had received the divine command to
 B.C. 980. state to Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, of a quick judgment and a daring
 Jeroboam. spirit, whom Solomon had patronized and employed, that ten of the
 tribes of Israel should, at the death of the king, come under his
 government, (the remainder alone being spared to the royal heir,)
 because of the idolatries of Solomon, yet that this division should not
 take place while the reigning monarch lived. The manner in which
 this prediction was conveyed, accorded with the symbolical usages
 of the age and country. Jeroboam, being clothed in a new garment,
 The prophet met the prophet alone in a field, by whom his robe was taken off,
 Abijah.

and rent into twelve pieces, of which he gave Jeroboam ten, signify- A.M. 3024.
 ing thereby not only the division of the empire, but the proportionate B.C. 980.
 share which he should have in it. This extraordinary rencontre,
 with all its circumstances, coming to the ear of the king, Jeroboam
 was compelled to flee to Shishak, king of Egypt, under whose pro-
 tection he lived until the death of Solomon.

Whether these conspiring events, attended by the express admo-
 nition which he had received, wrought repentance in the heart of the
 aged monarch is not said, nor does it become us to attempt to decide
 upon the great question of his final state. This has been frequently
 agitated, and often with little decorum. If we were to venture an
 opinion, it would be a favourable one; for he who was honoured with
 the distinguished title, *the beloved of the Lord*, in his youth, one
 would fain conclude, would not be left wholly to perish in his age.
 Besides which, it has been thought, with a high degree of probability,
 that the book of Ecclesiastes was the production of his old age, and
 the depository of his better thoughts, when the delusions of life were
 fast fading from his eyes. This is a point, however, upon which we
 have no evidence; and it appears to us to comport with the justice
 and purity of the divine character, that the state of even such a man
 as Solomon should be left doubtful, as a punishment of his apostacy,
 and an alarming instance of the malignity of sin: he died after a A.M. 3029.
 reign of forty years; precisely the date of his father David's B.C. 975.
 sovereignty; and so far as we can judge, upon the reasonable sup- His death.
 position that he came to the throne in his eighteenth year, about
 fifty-eight years old. Thus the riches and glory which were promised
 him, as annexed to his wisdom, because he made so judicious a
 choice, were granted: but the length of days, which was conditionally
 held out to him, if he adhered to the divine statutes, was denied;
 for the statement of Josephus, who assigns to him eighty years of Error of
 reign, and ninety-four of life, is not only without foundation, but will Josephus.
 appear upon examination to be a palpable error.

REHOBAM.

Solomon, at eighteen years of age, when he came to the throne,
 began to astonish Israel with that wisdom which afterwards spread
 through the whole earth; Rehoboam, who succeeded him at the age Rehoboam.
 of forty, afforded, at the commencement of his inauspicious reign,
 such an instance of his folly and tyranny, as revolted the hearts of
 his subjects, and alienated ten parts of his empire. How unlike to
 his illustrious predecessor! and how striking an exemplification of
 Solomon's own description of "a foolish son!" That eminent men His folly.
 should have weak children, is an occurrence not uncommon in the
 history of mankind—*why* it is so, is not easily solvable on any phi-
 losophical principle. At forty, Rehoboam was old enough to have
 preferred the wise policy of his father's tried and aged counsellors—
 nor could the young men who "grew up with him" have been

A.M. 3029. novices; but they seem to have had the same measure of understanding with himself; and it is the characteristic of a weak man to delight in the company of fools. Upon the death of the king of Israel, Jeroboam returned out of Egypt, and Shechem being the place at which the new monarch intended to receive the homage of his people, this adventurer presented himself at the head of a multitude, who thought themselves aggrieved by certain taxes imposed by Solomon, and required a relaxation of these burdens as the condition of their allegiance. Contrary to the advice of his father's ministers, Rehoboam, at the close of three days, which he had demanded to deliberate upon their petition, returned for answer, as he had been counselled by his rash companions, that so far from purposing to relax the severities of his predecessor, it was his fixed resolution to impose upon them a yoke incomparably heavier. This weak and wicked determination caused ten of the twelve tribes of Israel to separate from the house of David. Adoram, the collector of tribute, was slain; Jeroboam elected king of Israel; Judah and Benjamin, with a remnant of the other tribes, alone remaining faithful to the son of Solomon; and Rehoboam himself was compelled to seek his personal safety by flying to Jerusalem. In this emergency, he raised an army of 180,000 men to chastise the revolters, and reduce them to obedience; but when this formidable force were upon the point of marching against their rebelling brethren, a message from God, by the prophet Shemaiah, forbade their expedition, and explained, that this defection had been permitted by him as a visitation for the idolatry of Solomon.

Revolt of the ten tribes.

Jeroboam's idols.

Regal and priestly dignity united.

In the meanwhile Jeroboam sought to establish his newly-acquired empire, making Shechem the seat of government, until Samaria afterwards obtained that distinction, (which, however, from local advantages, reverted again to Shechem after Samaria was destroyed.) The policy of the new monarch of Israel suggested to him, that he would always be in danger of revolt while his subjects went up year by year to the metropolis of his rival to worship. He, therefore, erected two altars, the one at Dan, the other at Bethel, for the specious purpose of their convenience in *remembering* the God that brought them up out of Egypt, but in reality for idolatrous worship. According to the model furnished by Egypt, and familiar to Israel, two golden calves were set up, in imitation of the Apis of that country, to which the people had, in the wilderness, shown so fatal a preference; and, with their former ungrateful caprice, his subjects quickly complied with the suggestion of their monarch. But as he stood by the altar to offer incense, evidently for the further purpose of blending the priestly with the kingly dignity, (a practice as strictly forbidden to the Jews, as it was prevalent among other nations, to the fall of the Roman empire,) and approached to perform these usurped functions, a prophet, who is not named, drew near, and in a strain of vehement eloquence "cried against the altar, in the name of the

Lord." He predicted that the bones of these very priests, who were now officiating subordinately to the king, should be burned upon that altar, by a future monarch, of the name of Josiah, descended from the house of David; a declaration actually fulfilled 351 years afterwards, (and remarkable amongst the few cases in ancient prophecy, in which the instrument as well as his work was *named*;) facts which, when well authenticated, must lead beyond dispute to the source of such predictions. As a sign of his mission, and of the certainty of the events foretold, this prophet also declared that the altar itself should immediately be rent, and the ashes poured out. Enraged at the interruption occasioned by this stranger, and still more at the import of his threatening, Jeroboam stretched forth his hand, commanding him to be seized, or perhaps as the executioner of his own haughty will. It was instantaneously withered and powerless; nor was it restored but at the intercession of the man of God: the altar also was divided as he had said. To give emphasis to his message, this nameless seer had received a strict command neither to eat at Bethel nor to return by the road by which he approached it; accordingly he refused the invitation of Jeroboam to refresh himself. But deceived by another prophet, who, for motives which are not stated, and cannot be assigned therefore by us, pretended to have received a contrary mandate, he violated the injunction of God and turned aside to the deceiver's house. Here, while the victim of his falsehood sat at his table, his seducer was seized with a prophetic spirit, and testified the punishment of his disobedience by a violent death; which occurred as he returned home, a lion killing him by the way. There is a mystery about this transaction upon which we cannot undertake to reason, but which is connected with too many acknowledged events, dependent upon it, and affecting a whole people, not to be received as an undoubted fact. The very sepulchre of this prophet, with some characteristic inscription, remained to the days of Josiah, and became the means of accomplishing the prediction in question.

Jeroboam's
hand
withered and
restored.

Disobedi-
ence and
death of the
prophet.

Jeroboam, unaffected by this visitation, is chastised by another. His pious child, Abijah, was seized with a threatening sickness, and, anxious to ascertain the result, he sent his queen disguised to Abijah, who had predicted his sovereignty. The prophet, who was now blind with age, was inspired to know who his visitor was, and to foretell the death of her son, when she should approach her own house; not as an evil to the child, but as a punishment to his hardened parent: the ruin of whose family was also denounced. In the meanwhile Rehoboam had an opportunity given him of recovering his empire. The Levites, and a large body of the Israelites, disgusted at the idolatry of Jeroboam, returned to the house of David; and his forces became equal to those of his ambitious rival. But Rehoboam was the son of an Ammonitess, and enslaved by his mother's idolatry and counsels. The opportunity was lost, and the

Death of
Jeroboam's
child.

A.M. 3033.
B.C. 971.

Rehoboam's
idolatry.

A.M. 3046. corruption of Judah was not less than that of Israel. The punish-
 B.C. 958. ment followed, in the invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt, foretold
 Shishak's by the prophet Shemaiah; and the conqueror despoiled the temple
 invasion. of its golden shields and its treasures, together with the riches of
 the palaces. Thus, in the short interval between Solomon and Reho-
 boam, Jerusalem began to be impoverished, and the sanctuary pro-
 faned. Rehoboam substituted bucklers of brass, for those of gold;
 and for the present was spared further ruin. He seemed touched
 at length with his situation, and humbled himself before God, who
 suffered him to reign twelve years afterwards in peace. Having
 fixed upon the heir of his kingdom from among his sons, he had the
 prudence to make settlements for his other children suitable to
 Rehoboam's their princely rank; and died at the age of fifty-eight, having
 death. sustained a weak and stormy reign of seventeen years.

Abijah. Abijam, or Abijah, as the name is written indiscriminately, suc-
 ceeded him. His reign was short, but not inglorious, if military
 exploits are to be the standard of distinction; if morals, then, alas!
 it is recorded of him, that he "walked in all the sins of his father."
 His first object was to attack Jeroboam, whom he reproached for
 his rebellion, and, in his expostulation, admitted the weakness of
 A.M 3047. his father. The levy with which he advanced to meet his adver-
 B.C. 957. sary, although large, was unequal in numerical force to the power
 opposed to him; the army of Abijah, consisting of no less than
 400,000 men, being still doubled by that of Jeroboam. The king
 of Judah had the victory, and so completely defeated his antagonist,
 Defeats that Jeroboam never "recovered his strength."
 Jeroboam.

Abijah dies, After a reign of not more than three years Abijah died, and was
 and Asa succeeds. succeeded by his son Asa, whose attachment to religion formed the
 A.M. 3049. best pledge of the security of his empire. Two years after he came
 B.C. 955. to the throne Jeroboam died, after a reign of twenty-two years, it
 Death of should seem, by some sudden or unusual stroke of mortality, since
 Jeroboam. it is said, "the Lord struck him with death." The zeal of the
 Asa's piety. king of Judah was so ardent and sincere, that he deposed his own
 A.M. 3050. mother on account of her idolatry, and destroyed all the monuments
 B.C. 954. of her superstition. In the meanwhile Nadab, the son of Jeroboam,
 Nadab. had succeeded to the throne of Israel, which he held only two years;
 for in the siege of Gibbethon, belonging to the Philistines, Baasha,
 of the tribe of Issachar, conspired against him and slew him; and
 not satisfied with seizing upon his kingdom, the usurper extirpated
 the whole family of Jeroboam, as had been predicted. It is neces-
 sary to trace, with a rapid hand, a succession of reigns, in both
 kingdoms, distinguished by no features of particular interest, that
 circumstances more deeply important may occupy a due proportion
 of our attention.

Asa availed himself of the tranquillity of the early part of his

reign, to fortify the fenced cities of Judah, and establish a considerable army. This is stated to have consisted of 580,000 men; and it is necessary to observe, in connection with the prodigious numbers of warriors, represented in these ages as mustered on particular occasions, that they were not a standing army, but the whole body of the empire, capable of being called out upon an emergency, a part of whom only served in common, and were dismissed in turn to their domestic concerns; but the whole of which might be calculated upon, in the event of invasion, or of any extraordinary demand for exertion; and they were accordingly all employed on certain occurrences. These precautions of Asa were soon proved to be not only political, but absolutely necessary, by the spirit of his restless neighbour, Baasha, between whom and himself perpetual hostility subsisted. An army of Ethiopians invaded him, with no less than 1,000,000 of men, whom he defeated, and received encouragement from Azariah, the son of Obed, to continue firm in his allegiance to God. His faith failed him, however, upon an attack of Baasha, in conjunction with Benhadad, king of Syria; the latter of whom he bought off with presents, which stripped the sanctuary of its wealth, as well as emptied his own treasury. This distrust of providence, and alliance with an idolatrous monarch, called forth a severe reproof from the prophet Hanani, which enraged the king, who was now suffering with some disease in his feet, and the seer paid the penalty of incarceration for his fidelity. Several acts of petulance, which are glanced at, but not specified by the sacred historian, disgraced the close of this otherwise distinguished reign, which lasted forty-one years.

Before the death of Asa, several important revolutions had taken place in the rival kingdom of Israel. Jehu, the son of Hanani, had been commissioned to apprise Baasha, that as he practised the sins, he should share the punishment of his predecessor, not only in his own person, but in his posterity; and these calamities respected also the violence by which he had usurped the throne. When man becomes the instrument of executing judgment upon his fellow-man, swayed only by his own ambition, and unconscious of the high behest he is accomplishing, the sentence inflicted is just; but the administrator of it is no less amenable for his own motives. Baasha died, and was succeeded by his son Elah, in the 26th year of Asa's reign. The cup which his father had administered to his master, was put to the lips of his son, by his own servant. Zimri conspired against him, and slew him, nor did he deem himself secure upon his usurped throne, until he had cut off "all the house of Baasha."

Seven days only was the inglorious reign of Zimri, a space, however, sufficient to enable him, by the expedition with which he followed the work of death, to fulfil the destiny of his master's family.

The usurpation of Zimri was never ratified by the Israelites; who

A.M. 3053.

B.C. 951.

Asa's
military
strength.

A.M. 3063.

B.C. 941.

Baasha king
of Israel.

A.M. 3064.

B.C. 940.

Asa.

A.M. 3090.

B.C. 914.

A.M. 3074.

B.C. 930.

Baasha.

Dies.

Elah.

A.M. 3075.

B.C. 929.

Zimri's
short
usurpation.

A.M. 3075. so soon as they heard of his conspiracy and murder, chose Omri,
 B.C. 929. "the captain of the host," as their monarch; he besieged Zimri in
 Omri chosen and Zimri's death. Tirzah; who, finding that the city was taken, and his cause hopeless, shut himself up in the palace, which he fired, and perished in the flames.

Tibni's rivalry and death. As yet Omri was not firmly seated on the throne; for another rival appeared in the person of Tibni, who had found means to divide the Israelites on the great question of the successor to the monarchy.

A.M. 3079. But the contest terminated fatally to Tibni: and in the 31st year of
 B.C. 925. Asa's reign, Omri was quietly established in the regal authority of Israel. His whole reign was about twelve years; on the first half of which he was occupied in supporting his pretensions to the diadem; the last presented him, confirmed indeed, in his authority, but immersed in the criminality of his predecessors. One circumstance is worthy of attention, because it subsequently furnished a metropolis to Israel, he bought of Shemer the hill which was called after the name of its possessor, and built upon it a city, which he called Samaria; not changing its original title.

Omri builds Samaria.

AHAB.

A.M. 3086. In the 38th year of Asa, king of Judah, Omri, king of Israel
 B.C. 918. died; and was succeeded by Ahab his son, who exceeded his predecessors in evil, and added to his offences in his alliance with Jezebel, daughter of the king of Zidon, but whose reign was distinguished by many important and miraculous occurrences. Among others, in his days, Hiel, the Bethelite, braving the curse of Joshua against those who should rebuild Jericho, had the temerity to attempt it; and suffered for his rashness, the loss of his eldest and youngest child: thus sustaining the penalty of a prediction which had been delivered five centuries before.

Ahab succeeds.

Jericho and Joshua's curse.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

A.M. 3094. At this time we are suddenly introduced to an extraordinary
 B.C. 910. character, Elijah, the Tishbite, who rises upon us amidst the moral darkness of his country, like the sun in his strength; obscured, indeed, until his very meridian, and not affording the gradations from the twilight to the perfect day. This distinguished prophet is seen, for the first time, announcing to the guilty king of Israel, a famine, which lasted three years and a-half. For himself, he was commanded to remain concealed from the indignation of the offended monarch, by the brook Cherith; not improbably wandering through some such wild ravine, as the glens which are familiar to us in the northern parts of this empire, and where the raven delights to find her home: there he was fed by miracle, this voracious bird being the purveyor of his daily provision. Such an interposition, in an age of miracles, befitted the character of one, who stood almost alone against an empire.

Fed by ravens during the dearth.

“ Among innumerable false, unmov’d,
 Unshaken, uneduc’d, unterrified,
 His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal !
 Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
 Though single.”

A.M. 3094.

B.C. 910.

The continuance of the drought having exhausted the brook, he was directed to go to Zarephath, a city of Zidon, and to take up his abode with a widow, whom he found so impoverished, and so hopeless because of the severity of the famine, that she was gathering a few sticks to bake the cake which she had made from the last handful of meal, and the little oil in her possession, for herself and her child; having no prospect before them afterwards but that of a miserable death by hunger. Elijah predicted that these scanty resources should prove inexhaustible, until the fruitfulness of the seasons should be restored: and, accordingly, with her he lived until that period; the barrel of meal, and the cruse of oil, having been miraculously supplied. While this lowly roof sheltered the prophet, her child died; and in the paroxysm of her anguish, she seemed disposed to impute this calamity in some way to her guest, supposing that his purity had occasioned a visitation for her sins. Elijah, who appears to have feebly sustained his patience, in this trying scene, took the body into his own chamber, and having stretched himself upon the child and prayed over him, it pleased God to restore him again to life.

Sent to
Zarephath.Miraculous
supply.Raises the
widow's
child.

In the meanwhile, Ahab, influenced by Jezebel, multiplied idols of every description in his empire, and gratified her cruel disposition by destroying so many of the prophets of the Lord as he could seize. In this sanguinary persecution he was secretly counteracted by Obadiah, the governor of his house; who found means to conceal, and, notwithstanding the severity of the famine, to support one hundred of the prophets of Jehovah. After the drought had continued more than three years, Elijah was commanded to visit Ahab; and as he went towards Samaria, he met Obadiah, who had been sent by the king to search the land in one direction, while he himself took another route, to discover what water-springs might remain, as the last hope of the country. Elijah commanded this officer to return and acquaint Ahab that he awaited his arrival: a bold message to a king from a subject, who disdained to follow him—to such a tyrant also as Ahab, who had, during the whole time of the prophet's concealment, earnestly sought after him to put him to death. Obadiah reluctantly undertook this commission, fearing that Elijah might be transported in the interval to some other spot, by that supernatural influence which frequently carried the prophets, by sudden transitions, from place to place; and that Ahab, disappointed in not finding him, would take the life of his messenger. Elijah assured him that he must have an interview with the king that day. Obadiah departed to apprise his sovereign, and Ahab immediately returned to encounter the prophet. They met; and Elijah returned the reproaches of

A.M. 3098.

B.C. 906.

Jezebel.

Obadiah's
piety.Elijah sent
to Ahab.Elijah and
Ahab meet.

A.M. 3098. Ahab with a firmness and authority which the monarch could not resist. At the direction of the prophet, the king assembled the people of Israel and the prophets of Baal; and when they were convened, he proposed to put the claims of Jehovah and the pretensions of their idols to the issue of a miracle. Bullocks were prepared, and the wood laid on the altars; but no fire was put under. They were to address the objects of their respective worship, and "the God that answered by fire," was to be acknowledged as the true God. The experiment was first made by the priests of Baal; who mangled their flesh after the barbarous custom of his idolatrous worship, and cried in vain upon their deity, stimulated to persevere in their attempts to support his honour by the severe sarcasms of Elijah. It was in the evening of the day, when all the ceremonies of idolatry had been practised, and when all pretensions for further delay were exhausted, that the priests of Baal retired abashed and mortified, and Elijah drew near to repair the altar of Jehovah, which neglect, and time, and insult, had demolished. Having made ready the sacrifice, to remove all possible suspicion of concealed fire, he caused water to be poured upon the victim, the wood, and the altar, until the trench with which it was surrounded overflowed; and then calling upon that great and venerable name which had been so long dishonoured and disused, "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench;"—while "all the people fell on their faces," and shouted, "The Lord, he is God! The Lord, he is God!"

Fire from heaven consumes the sacrifice.

Foreign testimonies.

The historian Menander, in his acts of Ithobab, king of Tyre, records this dearth in the days of Ahab; and Julian, who, as Grotius justly observes, was "equally the enemy of Jews and Christians," admits the miracle of the fire falling from heaven to consume the sacrifice of Elijah.

Slaughter of the priests of Baal.

The slaughter of the priests of Baal which followed, at the command of Elijah, was not the indulgence of personal revenge, but an act of retributive justice for the blood of the prophets which they had caused to be shed; and of righteous punishment for the guilt which they had incurred in seducing the Israelites from the worship of the true God; to whom also they owed allegiance as their special protector, having been by HIM separated from all other nations.

Elijah flees from Jezebel.

Neither the public miracle which had been wrought in attestation at once of the mission of the prophet, and of the true object of religious worship; nor the blessing of rain, which, at the prayer of Elijah, abundantly followed, could convince or appease the queen, when Ahab told her of the slaughter of so many of her priests, and the prophet was once more compelled to flee for his life. Under these circumstances of repeated danger and difficulty, he began to desire a release from his labours and a dismissal from the world. He was favoured with a manifestation of Deity, at once sublime and affecting, preceded by the stormy elements, and speaking in "the small,

still voice" of goodness and compassion. Elijah was encouraged by the prospect of an assistant in his arduous office; and enlightened as to the events of future time, which would severely punish the apostacy that he deplored, and "justify the ways of God to man." He was commanded to anoint Hazael to be king of Syria, Jehu to be king over Israel, and ELISHA to be prophet in his stead. It is a remarkable circumstance that the *last* only of these commissions was accomplished by the prophet. Jehu was not anointed until twenty-three years later than this event, by one of the sons of the prophets. Hazael had his greatness foretold by Elisha a year earlier, upon his coming to inquire whether the *then* king of Syria should recover, and both events took place nearly ten years after the removal of Elijah. We must, therefore, suppose either that these events were only revealed to him for his instruction, and to teach him to wait with patience the issue of the divine dispensations, or that, in the appointment of Elisha, which was the act of this prophet, who succeeded him in his work and retained his spirit, what was done, probably, by his own direction, among the instructions he would leave with him, was accounted as done by himself; or, which is, perhaps, far better, we must leave the facts as circumstances which we ought to notice, but for which we cannot account in the silence of Sacred History itself, which offers no solution of them. His destined colleague and successor was found by him at plough, consistently with the simplicity of the times, when agriculture afforded wealth, and the rich disdained not to share in the pursuits whence they derived their abundance. The prophet "cast his mantle upon him," and he appears instantly to have understood the appointment signified by this expressive symbol. He took a yoke of oxen, which he could not have done had not the property been his own, and gave a parting feast to his friends; after which he immediately followed Elijah, and ministered to him as a servant. His service was afterwards described by a phrase truly oriental, "Elisha, who poured water upon the hands of Elijah," *that* being the duty of a servant when the tables are removed, in countries where ablutions are frequently used, and in which, the hands being chiefly employed at meals, the custom becomes necessary for cleanliness no less than for refreshment.

Sent to
Damascus.

Elisha
chosen a
prophet.

In this pause of the history of Elijah it is proper to observe, that about eight years before this period, and in the fourth year of the reign of Ahab, Asa, the king of Judah, died, after a reign of forty-one years, and was succeeded by his son JEHOSEPHAT, who was distinguished for his piety. The result accorded with the principle; at the same time that the neighbouring state, under the dominion of Ahab, was suffering every imaginable privation, Jehoshaphat was strengthening his fortresses, and enjoying, with his people, distinguished ease and prosperity. The Philistines and Arabians were tributary to him; and his empire, although so considerably retren-

A.M. 3090.
B.C. 914.
Death of
Asa;
Jehoshaphat
succeeds.

A.M. 3090. ched by the separation of the ten tribes from his family, seemed to
 B.C. 914. recover something of that ancient splendour which it had enjoyed in the days of Solomon; "and he had riches and honour in abundance."

A.M. 3103. In the eighteenth year of Ahab, and during the time that we lose
 B.C. 901. sight of Elijah, Benhadad, king of Syria, at the head of an immense army, and supported by no less than thirty-two tributary monarchs, besieged Samaria. Without any pretext for the war, he sent to urge those demands which implied that the king of Israel was not only tributary to him, but his wealth and possessions wholly at his disposal. Ahab conceded even this stern requisition; but as it was followed by another yet more insolent and threatening, the king of Israel found it necessary to resist such unlimited impositions. A prophet, who is not named, predicted the entire defeat of the invading army, and prescribed the order of the battle. The victory on the part of the Israelites was complete, and the slaughter of the

The Syrians defeated.

A.M. 3104. Syrians immense; but Ahab was warned by the same prophet, that
 B.C. 900. Benhadad would renew the conflict the year succeeding.

The invasion renewed.

The invasion was accordingly renewed, and the overthrow of the Syrians again predicted and achieved; and so great was the destruction of the invading army, that Benhadad was compelled to solicit the compassion of the king of Israel. Ahab exercised, in this instance, an imprudent and ill-timed clemency, for which he was severely reprovved by one of the sons of the prophets, who, disguising himself, conveyed the disastrous tidings to the king, of the divine displeasure which he had incurred, in the prevailing parabolic form, a method which led the monarch, unintentionally, as in the case of David, so pass sentence upon himself; and he was assured that his own life would be the forfeit of the rash and false generosity which he had exercised.

Jezebel murders Naboth.

Elijah pronounces the ruin of Ahab's house.

Soon after this event, Ahab wishing to obtain the vineyard of Naboth, which was near his palace, and not being able to prevail upon him to part with it, (as it was contrary to the law for a man to sell his inheritance from his family,) Jezebel caused Naboth to be slain upon a false accusation, and the king went down to take possession of this contested piece of ground. As he drew near he was met by Elijah, who here makes his final appearance to the king, and threatens him with the entire destruction of his queen and his family, in language so severe and awful, that even the heart of this proud tyrant was terrified, and he humbled himself, until it was promised that the evil denounced should not take place in his own reign; after which, he appears to have returned to his evil courses with unaltered effrontery.

A.M. 3107. Jehoshaphat had formed an alliance with Ahab; and at the end
 B.C. 897. of three years from the treaty which the king of Israel had made with Benhadad, (during which the transaction just recounted took place,) the king of Judah went down to see him, and finding him

Alliance of Jehoshaphat with Ahab.

about to attack Ramoth-Gilead, which the king of Syria withheld from him, offered to be his ally in the proposed war, but first wished the prophets to be consulted as to the issue. They were accordingly summoned before the two monarchs, and promised Ahab success in his enterprise. Jehoshaphat seems to have gathered, from some circumstance not explained, that these prophets were either deceived themselves, or disposed to flatter; for he earnestly inquired whether there did not remain some other seer who might be consulted. Ahab acknowledged that Micaiah was absent, who seems to have fallen under his displeasure for his blunt fidelity, and has by some been, therefore, conjectured to have been the prophet who predicted that the life of Ahab should go for the life of Benhadad. It is not unlikely that the prophets consulted were prophets of Baal, and that Jehoshaphat, perceiving this, was anxious to have called a prophet of the Lord; and if this conjecture, which is adopted, under a full persuasion of its correctness, by Calmet, be admitted, it will throw some light upon that spirit of delusion which was said, by divine permission, to rest upon them. However this may be, Micaiah predicted the overthrow and death of Ahab, who, highly incensed, ordered him to prison; and to turn aside the prophecy, persuaded Jehoshaphat to put on his royal robes, while he himself went into the battle disguised as a private man. In the course of the conflict, Jehoshaphat was so hardly pressed, the king of Syria having commanded his men to direct all their attacks against the person of the king of Israel, that he was compelled to discover himself, and with difficulty escaped with his life. Ahab, in the meanwhile, disguised as he was, was slain by an arrow drawn at a venture, but divinely directed, and thus perished, as was foretold.

Micaiah.

Ahab slain.

AHAZIAH succeeded his father Ahab in every sense, being as devoted to idolatry as his predecessor. Jehoshaphat returned to his kingdom after the late disastrous battle, and was so severely reproved by the prophet Jehu for his alliance with Ahab, that when Ahaziah wished to join him in a commercial enterprise, the king of Judah for some time refused all further connection with that family. Ahaziah, in the second year of his reign, was so injured by a fall that his recovery appeared extremely doubtful. He sent to inquire of Baalzebub, the idol of Ekron, what should be the issue of his sickness; and his messengers were met by Elijah, who sent them back with the information that he should never again rise from his bed. The king knew the prophet from their description of his person and dress, and sent three officers, successively, each commanding a company of fifty men, to apprehend him. Two of these parties were consumed by fire from heaven, at his word, (a circumstance noted by the disciples of our Lord,) and the third he spared, accompanying him to the king, and confirming his prediction in the

A.M. 3108.
B.C. 896.Ahaziah
succeeds.His fall and
sickness.Elijah
foretells his
death.

A.M. 3108. royal presence. Ahaziah died accordingly, after a reign of two
B.C. 896. years.

A.M. 3110. The time now approached for the departure of Elijah, with all
B.C. 894. its miraculous circumstances. Accompanied by Elisha, who refused
to leave him, he visited the schools of the prophets at Bethel, and
at Jericho; after which, he went to Jordan, and smiting the waters
with his mantle, they divided, and the prophets passed over dry-shod.
Having reached the opposite bank, Elijah apprized his companion
that the hour of separation was come; and asked him to prefer his
last request. He desired a double portion of the spirit of his
master: and while he solicited this boon, an appearance as of a
chariot and horses of fire parted them, and Elijah was taken up
into heaven. His mantle fell from him as he ascended, and was
regarded by Elisha as the grant of his petition. He took it up,
and smiting with it the waters of Jordan, they again divided, and
afforded him a passage. The sons of the prophets received him as
the successor of Elijah: and his miraculous interference was solicited
and exercised in cleansing the unwholesome waters, and rendering
fruitful the barren lands of Jericho. Some young persons, the
children probably of idolatrous parents, who insulted the religion of
Jehovah in their mockery of his prophet, were punished at Bethel
with a violent death.

Elijah's
translation.

Jehoram
king of
Israel.

Assisted by
Jehoshaphat

In the same year JEHORAM, the son of Ahab, and brother of
Ahaziah, succeeded to the throne of Israel, stained with the same
vices as those which dishonoured and ruined his predecessors,
although not to the same idolatrous extent. Finding himself
involved in a war with Moab, he sought the alliance of the governor
of Edom, and of Jehoshaphat, who again shared the dangers of the
rival kingdom, by a strange prepossession in favour of the family
of Ahab. The confederate armies were on the point of perishing
with thirst, and the king of Judah was immediately for consulting
the Lord. Elisha was sent for, who, after severely reproving
Jehoram, and expressing a high respect for Jehoshaphat, foretold
a sudden and large supply by a land-flood, together with the defeat
of the Moabites, which came to pass accordingly. Jehoshaphat
himself, towards the close of his reign, was invaded by a confederacy
of Ammonites, Moabites, and other nations; but whether a little
before, or immediately after, the events just alluded to, it is not
easy to determine. In this extremity the king of Judah proclaimed
a fast, and received a message from the prophet Jehaziel, that this
formidable army should fall self-destroyed the next day. These
allied powers turned their arms against each other, and so com-
pletely extinguished their forces, that it only remained for Jehosha-
phat and his people to gather the spoil. With this miraculous
transaction we close the life of this illustrious monarch, who died in
peace after a prosperous reign of twenty-five years.

A.M. 3115.
B.C. 889.

Jehosha-
phat's
victory and
death.

In the meanwhile, throughout the reign of Jehoram, king of Israel, Elisha the prophet was filling up a brilliant career, of which our limits will only suffer us to give a hasty sketch. The widow of one of the prophets came to Elisha, and complained that her husband's creditor was about to sell her two sons as bondmen to liquidate a debt which she was unable to pay. This practice is prevalent through all the East, and under most despotic governments, the persons of the peasantry being considered as much the property of the master as their labour. Our Lord alludes to the circumstance more than once in his parables. A similar instance of the savage features of the age, which we passed over in the preceding narrative, was the conduct of the king of Moab, who, when he found himself pressed in the siege by the united arms of the sovereigns of Israel, Judah, and Edom, according to the superstitions of his day and country, took his own son, and sacrificed him upon the walls, to appease the offended deities; a practice afterwards notorious among the Carthaginians, prevalent also wherever Moloch was worshipped, and not unknown to the Israelites, who "caused their sons to pass through the fire," when they had resigned themselves to idolatry. In this instance, the act of the Moabitish monarch raised such horror and indignation in the bosoms of the besiegers, that they raised the siege, and departed from him. To return to the narrative—Elisha, finding the prophet's widow possessed only a cruse of oil, ordered her to borrow as many vessels of her neighbours as she could procure, and to pour out into them, the oil multiplying miraculously until they were all filled; and by the sale of it she was enabled to discharge her debt.

A.M. 3115.
B.C. 839.Elisha's
miracles.Eastern
despotism
and super-
stitions.Elisha
multiplies
the oil.

A Shunamite of consideration in her city, perceiving that the prophet often passed that way, proposed to her husband to make some accommodation for him in their house. To recompense this spontaneous benevolence, of which he availed himself, Elisha, finding she was childless, promised her a son, and his prediction was accomplished. The child grew up, and then died suddenly; probably by one of those sun-strokes which are not unusual in hot countries. She apprized Elisha of this sad event, and manifested under it a singular combination of grief and resignation. He raised the child from the dead, and in recording her speechless gratitude, the narrator produces one of those simple and affecting descriptions which so much abound in the sacred writings, and in which the whole scene passes again before us—"then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out." No other language could have expressed emotions so powerful.

Sojourns
with the
Shunamite.Raises her
son.

At Gilgal, during a severe famine, one of the sons of the prophets gathered wild gourds, and having prepared them, served them up to the people, not knowing that they were poisonous. By casting meal into the pot, Elisha miraculously rendered the food wholesome.

Neutralizes
poison.

A.M. 3115. About the same time, having received a present of twenty barley
 B.C. 889. loaves, he multiplied them until one hundred men were satisfied,
 Multiplies and left fragments of the provision.
 bread.

The commander of the forces of the king of Syria, a man distinguished as well by his noble qualities as by the royal favour, was afflicted with a leprosy which appeared to be incurable. A young female slave, who had been taken away from the land of Israel in one of the invasions, mentioned Elisha as able to recover her lord; upon which the king of Syria sent Naaman with a letter to the king of Israel, entreating his restoration to health, to the surprise and dismay of the latter monarch, who considered it intended as an occasion of war between them. Elisha required the attendance of Naaman, and recommended him to wash seven times in Jordan. Naaman, who did not consider himself as treated with sufficient respect, as the prophet did not see him, and who placed no confidence in the proposed remedy, at first refused to comply with the injunction of the prophet; but was afterwards persuaded to make trial of it, and recovered his health instantly. He now would have loaded the prophet with presents, by whom they were all peremptorily refused; but his servant, willing to enrich himself at the expense of the illustrious stranger, followed after him, and requested, in the name of his master, a talent of silver and two changes of raiment; which were not only granted, but Naaman pressed upon his acceptance, *two* talents, amounting to nearly £700 of English money, and the garments were probably costly. Upon his return, after concealing the articles thus fraudulently obtained, Gehazi was instantly charged with his crime by the prophet, who sentenced him and his family to the penalty of that disease of which he had just cured Naaman. About the same period, the sons of the prophets requiring a larger dwelling, in making suitable arrangements for their accommodation, one of them dropped the head of his axe into the river, and upon complaining to Elisha, the prophet caused the iron to swim.

Heals
 Naaman.

Gehazi.

A.M. 3111.
 B.C. 893.

Causes iron
 to swim.

At this time the king of Syria was engaged in hostilities against the king of Israel, but always defeated in his purposes, through the anticipation of his plans by his opponent. At first he suspected treachery among his own servants; but it afterwards appeared, that the inspiration of Elisha enabled him to discover the most secret councils of the Syrians to his own sovereign. The incensed monarch resolved to possess himself of his person, and sent accordingly a considerable body of troops to seize him. They encompassed the city, and the servant of the prophet was much alarmed; until, at the prayers of Elisha, his eyes were opened to discern the spiritual guardians which were planted round his master. The Syrian army was seized, in the sequel, either with an actual blindness, or a confusion of vision, which did not suffer them to distinguish objects; and in this state, as they were inquiring the

Exposes the
 councils of
 the Syrians.

Strikes their
 host with
 blindness.

road to the point of their destination, Elisha led them into the heart of Samaria, and there delivered them into the power of the king of Israel; at the same time stipulating for their safety, restoring them their sight, and after they had been refreshed with food, causing them to be sent back to Syria.

A.M. 3111.
B.C. 893.

The war did not, however, so terminate. Benhadad besieged Samaria, and bitterly did the son of Ahab lament the ill-timed generosity of his father to this oppressor; for such was the extremity of the famine, that two women came to the horrible agreement to kill each of them her only child, and devour the unnatural food between them. Such an event had been predicted by Moses, when he foretold what would be the desperate circumstances of the Israelites if they forsook their God; and a similar occurrence is recorded by Josephus as having taken place in the final siege of Jerusalem by Titus. One of these mothers had actually thus destroyed her son; but her associate, who had shared the revolting provision, touched with maternal compunction, concealed her own child. On this dreadful business complaint was made to the king, who considered Elisha either as indifferent to these calamities, or as slow to remove them, (presuming upon his ability, from what he had seen of his miraculous agency,) and sent a messenger to command him to be beheaded. The prophet detained him at the door until the king himself, who followed closely after, arrived. Elisha assured him that on the very next day, at the same hour, abundance should be enjoyed—a prediction so very unlikely in the calamitous state of the city, that it was repelled with derision by one of the attendant lords, who was threatened that he should himself see, but not partake of the plenty, which was introduced by the following circumstance. Four men, who were lepers, and, according to the law, thrust out of the city, were perishing with hunger at its gates, and wrought up to desperation, they resolved to throw themselves upon the mercy of the Syrians—satisfied that they could *but* die. They came accordingly to the camp, and found it deserted; the God of Israel having in the night caused the besieging army to hear a miraculous noise as of chariots, horses, and a mighty army, they fled, with the utmost precipitation, from a force which they imagined Jehoram had found means to hire from Egypt and other nations superior to their own. When these lepers had made a report of these circumstances, the king of Israel suspected a stratagem of war; but upon further scrutiny, he found that the Syrians were actually departed. The quantity of provision they had left behind them afforded that plenty which Elisha had foretold; and the nobleman who had received the intimation with mockery, being appointed to keep one of the gates, was trampled upon by the people, in their eagerness to obtain supplies of food, and received so much injury that he died.

A.M. 3112.
B.C. 892.
A dreadful
famine.

Elisha's
danger and
prophecy.

Derided.

Accomplish-
ed, and by
what means.

Another famine arose in the year succeeding, which Elisha pre-

A.M. 3112. dictated should last seven years, and he counselled the Shunamite,
 B.C. 892. whose child he had restored, to leave the country until this dreadful
 Another visitation should have passed away. She accordingly departed,
 famine. and at the close of the seven years, returning to petition the king
 of Israel for her land, she found him conversing with Gehazi respect-
 ing the miracles of Elisha, her own case being at that moment under
 consideration; a circumstance so propitious to her application, that
 she was not only reinstated in her property, but indemnified for the
 loss she had sustained during her absence.

Hazael. At this time Elisha went down to Damascus. Benhadad being
 sick, sent Hazael, one of his chief ministers, to learn of the prophet
 if he should recover, who abruptly intimated to him his own designa-
 tion to the Syrian throne;—depicting also the bloody crimes toward
 the Israelites that would stain his future reign. To this, Hazael
 replied, with that memorable indignation at his own existing
 dispositions, which was at once a proof of the blindness of his heart,
 and the correctness of his moral perceptions, “But what is thy
 servant a DOG, that he should do this great thing?” Upon his return
 he murdered his sovereign, and seized upon his throne.

A.M. 3115. Jehoram had succeeded his father Jehoshaphat on the throne of
 B.C. 889. Judah, and his first act was to destroy all the branches of the royal
 Jehoram, family, with several of his nobles. This barbarous custom of securing
 king of the throne by the extermination of those who might be supposed
 Judah. likely to advance any pretensions to it, is very prevalent in the East;
 and the seclusion, almost confinement, in which the princes of the
 family are kept, renders them an easy prey to the first jealous tyrant
 who assumes the reins of government. He had married the daughter
 of Ahab, and shared her idolatry. The Edomites revolted from his
 sway, and he lost also Libnah. A writing from Elijah was brought
 him, prepared, it should seem, some time before, as the prophet had
 been translated some years, foretelling the calamities which should
 fall upon his family, and his own mortal disease. These things hap-
 pened accordingly, and he was not even buried in the royal sepulchres.

A.M. 3119. Ahaziah (or, as he is otherwise called, Jehoahaz) succeeded him,
 B.C. 885. and joined Joram, king of Israel, in a second attempt to recover
 Ahaziah. Ramoth-Gilead, which proved as disastrous as the former; for the
 king of Israel was severely wounded, and the king of Judah continued
 with him, on account of this indisposition; during which Elisha sent
 a young prophet secretly to anoint JEHU king over Israel, who was
 immediately acknowledged by his fellow-officers, and proceeded
 without delay to surprise the sick monarch at Jezreel. The kings
 of Israel and Judah went out to meet him, and demand the occasion
 of his unexpected appearance; he slew them both, and entering the
 city, saw Jezebel, who was yet living, at one of the windows of the
 palace, from which he caused her to be precipitated, and she died.

Jehu anointed king. The body of Jehoram was cast into the field of Naboth, whom his
 father Ahab had murdered; and when Jehu sent out to bury Jezebel,
 Kings of Israel and Judah slain. Jezebel slain and devoured by dogs.

he found her almost devoured by dogs, according to the prophetic threatening delivered so long before. A.M. 3119.
B.C. 885.

Jehu followed these severe measures with the slaughter of the seventy sons of Ahab and forty-two of the relations of Ahaziah. He then, with a mixture of fraud and unhallowed zeal, proclaimed a solemn festival in honour of Baal; and thus assembling all the worshippers of that idol, caused them to be slain in the temple, and extirpated idolatry in general. But he afterwards fell into the practices of Jeroboam, and dishonoured his early career. Hazael at this time began to weaken the empire of Israel, and Jehu died after a reign of twenty-eight years. Jehu's zeal,
and idolatry.
Dies.

ATHALIAH, in the meanwhile, had, at the death of her son Ahaziah, destroyed all the seed-royal, with the exception of Joash, then an infant, who was secretly conveyed beyond her malice, while she usurped the throne of Judah. At the close of six years, Jehoiada the high priest took such measures as terminated her tyranny, by proclaiming JOASH king, and causing her to be put to death. During the life of Jehoiada, he conducted himself uprightly, and showed his zeal for religion in repairing the temple; but when the high priest died he turned to idolatry, and being reproved by Zechariah, the son and successor of his aged benefactor, he forgot his obligations, and commanded him to be stoned to death. This cruel act was followed by exemplary punishment. Hazael advanced upon Jerusalem with a small, but successful army, and Joash was obliged to purchase his forbearance at the expense of the treasures of the temple and of the palace. He then languished under a complication of diseases, and was soon after slain by a conspiracy of his own servants. A.M. 3120.
B.C. 884.
Athaliah.
Joash.
A.M. 3164.
B.C. 840.
A.M. 3148.
B.C. 856.

Jehu was succeeded by JEHOAHAZ in the government of Israel, who, adhering to the vices of his father, was punished by the oppressions exercised by Hazael, king of Syria, and the kingdom was greatly reduced. His reign lasted seventeen years, and he was succeeded by his son JEHOASH. In his reign Elisha was seized with his mortal sickness, and the king visited him with much affection. The dying prophet instructed him to "take bow and arrows," and open the windows eastward, and shoot. He obeyed, and was told that he should smite the Syrians at Aphek. He then directed him to take the arrows and smite upon the ground; and the king smote thrice. The prophet was grieved that he had not struck it more repeatedly, and foretold that he should only prevail against Syria three times. Soon after Elisha died, and before the year closed, as they were proceeding to bury a man, they discerned a band of Moabites, and in their haste and terror cast the dead body into the sepulchre of the prophet; "and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood upon his feet." Hazael dying, was succeeded by Benhadad his son, from whom Jehoash recovered the cities which his father had seized, and thrice defeated him, according to the dying prediction of Elisha. Jehoahaz,
king of
Israel.
A.M. 3165.
B.C. 839.
Jehoash.
Sickness of
Elisha,
and death.
His bones
recover a
dead man.
Benhadad.

- A.M. 3178. AMAZIAH succeeded his father Joash on the throne of Judah, and
 B.C. 826. reigned well for a season. He punished his father's murderers with
 Amaziah. death, but spared their children, according to the law of Moses. He raised a prodigious army of his own, and increased it by hiring 100,000 Israelites. This alliance being forbidden by a prophet, he incurred the loss of the money which he had given them, and their displeasure, when he separated himself from them. He defeated the Edomites; but, among the spoil which he took, brought home their idols, and suffered himself to be betrayed by them into idolatry. Then began his disasters. A prophet was sent to reprove him, and he resented his faithful admonition. He challenged the king of Israel, by whom he was defeated, taken prisoner, and brought to Jerusalem, his own metropolis, which the conqueror stripped of its treasures, as a ransom, and demolished a considerable part of its wall, before he departed to Samaria. A conspiracy was finally formed against Amaziah at Jerusalem, from which he fled to Lachish, whither he was followed and slain; the people of Judah choosing his son Azariah, otherwise called Uzziah, as his successor, at the age of sixteen.
- A.M. 3194. JEROBOAM, the second of the name, was the son of Jehoash, the
 B.C. 810. king of Israel, and succeeded his father, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, king of Judah. He is charged with the prevailing sins of his house; yet his reign was prosperous, and he was distinguished for his courage, and for his enterprising spirit. He followed up the advantages which his father had gained over the Syrians, and, encouraged by the prophet Jonah, pressed on until he had restored the entire coast of Israel, "from the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain," or the Dead Sea. He captured also Damascus, the Syrian capital, and reigned forty-one years.
- A.M. 3179. JEROBOAM, the second of the name, was the son of Jehoash, the
 B.C. 825. king of Israel, and succeeded his father, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, king of Judah. He is charged with the prevailing sins of his house; yet his reign was prosperous, and he was distinguished for his courage, and for his enterprising spirit. He followed up the advantages which his father had gained over the Syrians, and, encouraged by the prophet Jonah, pressed on until he had restored the entire coast of Israel, "from the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain," or the Dead Sea. He captured also Damascus, the Syrian capital, and reigned forty-one years.
- Defeats the
 Syrians.
 A.M. 3220. had restored the entire coast of Israel, "from the entering of
 B.C. 784. Hamath to the sea of the plain," or the Dead Sea. He captured also Damascus, the Syrian capital, and reigned forty-one years.
- A.M. 3194. AZARIAH, the son of Joash, better known by the name UZZIAH,
 B.C. 810. was at that time king of Judah. The early part of his sway, and so long as he was under the counsels of a prophet of the name of Uzziah. Zachariah, (*not* the person who stands upon the list of the prophetic books,) was distinguished for his personal piety, and the prosperity of his empire. He defeated the Arabians, Philistines, and Mehunims, and received tribute from the Ammonites. His army consisted of more than three hundred thousand men; he fortified Jerusalem, invented instruments of war, built fortresses, founded magazines, and particularly applied himself to agriculture; an attachment not often felt to home interests by princes of military genius. Prosperity produced in him, however, as in other affecting instances which have presented themselves in this chain of history, that presumption which led to lamentable reverses. He invaded the sacerdotal office, which, however blended with the regal in other nations, was expressly and carefully kept separate in the Jewish economy; he entered the temple to burn incense, and, notwithstanding the expostulations of the high priest, he persisted in his transgression, until he was sud-

denly smitten with a leprosy, which not only drove him from the sanctuary, but from his throne, and devolved the regency upon his son Jotham. He quitted the city, and lived in a house by himself, the leprosy cleaving to him until his death, which happened about seven years afterwards, and in the fifty-second of his reign.

Zachariah, who had succeeded Jeroboam, followed the idolatries of his ancestors, and reigned but six months, when he was slain by the conspiracy of Shallum. Thus the dynasty of Jehu terminated in the fourth generation, as had been foretold. As ZACHARIAH did not come to the throne until the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah's reign, Archbishop Usher supposes there must have been an inter-regnum of eleven years, a chronological difficulty which it is not easy to settle, and which this is not the place to determine. The ill-gotten crown of Shallum remained on his head only a month; for, at the expiration of that period, he was put to death by Menahem, who held the sceptre which he had thus wrested ten years. Nothing is recorded of his stormy reign but acts of cruelty, briefly expressed, but full of horror. Israel was invaded by Pul, king of Assyria, and her tyrant was compelled to purchase his forbearance and assistance at an enormous expense, which led to further exactions upon his subjects, in order to raise the sum required. He died in the fiftieth year of the reign of Uzziah, and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah. The kingdom of Israel was now fast verging to ruin; it had been long declining, and from the reign of the last branch of the house of Jehu, had presented only a succession of conspiracies and bloodshed, to its utter desolation. Pekahiah reigned but two years, when the cup of blood of which his father had caused his predecessor to drink, was transferred to his own hand. He died by the conspiracy of PEKAH, the son of Remaliah, one of his captains, who seized his authority, and followed his transgressions. He reigned, however, twenty years; in the second of which commenced the reign of JOTHAM over Judah.

The son of Uzziah walked uprightly, after the example of his father, in the earliest and happiest days of his sovereignty. During sixteen years he supported the regal dignity with distinction, and exercised its authority for the welfare of his people. In this, and the latter part of the preceding reign, Isaiah, the prophet, flourished, and held on his illustrious career until the days of Manasseh.—(See the article ISAIAH.) Jotham repaired the sanctuary, and built cities and fortresses in Judah. He defeated the Ammonites and rendered them tributary; and found an honourable sepulchre with his fathers, in the 41st year of his age; a short, but not inglorious life!

He was succeeded by his son AHAZ, who, unhappily for his country, was of a far different character. He also reigned sixteen years; but they were years of vice and misery. Israel had formed an unnatural alliance with Syria against Judah; and Pekah and Rezin were confederates against Ahaz. His affliction on this occasion touched Isaiah, who was sent to announce to him the speedy destruction of

- A.M. 3263. the allied monarchs: the particulars of which prediction will be found
 B.C. 741. in the life of that prophet. Notwithstanding this encouraging assurance, (and it was eventually accomplished in all its particulars,) he looked abroad for that assistance which he knew he had forfeited at home. He plunged into the grossest idolatries of the heathens, and practised, with their impure rites, their most cruel superstitions—causing one of his sons “to pass through the fire.” As a punishment, his enemies were suffered cruelly to lay waste his dominions, although they were not permitted wholly to vanquish him. The king of Syria, who had not succeeded in his expedition against Jerusalem, stripped him of some of his remoter possessions, and particularly deprived him of Elath, a seaport on the Red Sea, where, from the reigns of David and Solomon, a most important trade had been conducted with the East. Zichri, an Ephraimite, also slew one of his sons, the governor of his house, and his prime minister. And the king of Israel obtained still more considerable advantages over him: 120,000 men were killed in battle, and 200,000 of his people were made captive; but as these were being transported to Samaria, the prophet Obed met the triumphant army, and commanded them to restore the prisoners, and content themselves with the spoil. His remonstrances being seconded by some princes of Ephraim, they not only gave the prisoners their liberty, but clothed them from the booty, and safely conducted them so far as Jericho, in their own country. In this desperate condition of the affairs of Ahaz, he learned, to his further dismay, that the Edomites and Philistines were successfully invading his territories; and in his extremity he sent to Tiglath-pileser for assistance, in the most humble terms, at the same time plundering the temple to add to the present which he had drained from his own treasury for the king of Assyria. The present was accepted; but the aid was not so complete as the king of Judah had hoped. His ally, however, caused a diversion in his favour, by attacking the king of Syria, whom he slew, and captured Damascus, transporting its inhabitants to Kir. Upon this success, Ahaz went to Damascus to compliment Tiglath-pileser; and while he was there, his idolatrous propensities induced him to take the pattern of a heathen altar, which he sent to Jerusalem, commanding one to be constructed exactly like it. Upon his return, he was pleased with the execution of his orders—offering upon this altar—shutting up the temple, the sacred utensils of which he displaced; rearing shrines to heathen deities every where, and resigning himself to the most vicious courses. He died unlamented in the thirty-sixth year of his age, but was not deposited in the royal sepulchres.
- A.M. 3278.
 B.C. 726. Increasing idolatry and death.
- A.M. 3274.
 B.C. 730. Hoshea. In the twelfth year of Ahaz, HOSHEA, having conspired against Pekah, and slain him, reigned over Israel. This transaction is said to have taken place in the twentieth year of Jotham, king of Judah; but as Jotham only reigned sixteen years, the calculation made from the time when that monarch began to reign falls upon the fourth

year of Ahaz, his successor. The tumults following Hoshea's usurpation not allowing him firmly to seat himself immediately upon the throne, it was not until eight years afterwards that he wholly established himself, and is, therefore, by a subsequent account, said to *begin to reign* in the twelfth year of Ahaz. Considerations of this nature are necessary to reconcile certain apparent differences between the books of Kings and Chronicles, but cannot be in every instance noted as we proceed in the narrative. Uninstructed by all the calamities of his predecessors, he followed their idolatrous practices, although not to the same extent with some of them; and in his days the captivity of Israel took place.

A.M. 3274.
B.C. 730.

Chronological differences.

Hoshea's vices.

The ostensible cause of this captivity was, that Shalmaneser having invaded Israel in an early part of the reign of Hoshea, *that* monarch bought him off by presents, and declared himself tributary to the king of Assyria. But some years afterwards, the king of Israel secretly conspired against him; and having solicited the assistance of So, king of Egypt, withheld the annual tribute from Assyria. So is called Setho by Herodotus, and Sabachon by Diodorus Siculus, and is the celebrated potentate who deposed and murdered Boccharis, king of Egypt, and seized upon the empire. The revolt of Hoshea coming to the knowledge of Shalmaneser, he advanced against Samaria with a powerful army, besieged it, and led its monarch and his people into captivity. Thus terminated the Israelitish monarchy, according to Josephus, "947 years after the departure from Egypt; 800 years from the days of Joshua, and 240 years 7 months, after they had revolted from Rehoboam,"² to which we may add seven centuries before Christ. It commenced in the days of Pekah, and terminated with the reign of Hoshea.—The people were transported into Assyria, Media, and Persia; and other nations out of Cuthath, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, were planted in Samaria and the possessions of the Israelites. These are the Samaritans against whom the Jews bore particular hatred, and who did not fail to return it. They blended some of the observances of the Jews with the idolatrous rites of their own countries. When the Jews were in prosperity, they were willing to be thought allied to them, but in their adversity always disowned them. They thus availed themselves of the favour which Alexander showed to the Jews, when he visited them, and professed to spring from Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.³ This mutual hatred burned with inextinguishable fury in the days of our Lord; so that 700 years had produced no reconciliation. Menander, the historian, when he wrote his chronology, and translated the Tyrian chronicles into the Greek language, bore testimony to the existence, the power, and the enterprising disposition of Shalmaneser.⁴

A.M. 3281.
B.C. 723.

Captivity of Israel.

So, king of Egypt.

A.M. 3283.
B.C. 721.

Shalmaneser.

Samaritans.

² Jos. Antiq. Jud. Lib. IX. Cap. 14.

³ Ib. Lib. XI. Cap. 8.

⁴ Menand. apud Joseph. Antiq. Jud. Lib. IX. Cap. 14.

A.M. 3283. Israel, is the loss of the ten tribes; we hear nothing more respecting them, excepting the remnant of them who returned with Judah and Benjamin from Babylon. Josephus and St. Jerome suppose them to be absorbed in the nations among whom they were scattered. This appears also to be the prevailing opinion. Others have objected the positive terms in which a restoration of them is predicted by Amos and Hosea. It has been answered, that these prophecies were accomplished in the restoration of the remnant and the Levites with Judah. Some considerable modern writers have maintained their separate, and even their present existence; and pointed out different spots where traces of them are supposed to be found. We have probably yet to receive from the East much light on this subject, and cannot now pretend to decide, or even to discuss, the question; but we may remark, that the very obscurity into which they have dwindled, if they exist at all, is the result of their separation from the line of the Messiah, which took place when they voluntarily resigned their interest in the house of David. We have other memorable instances of a similar righteous retribution in the government of the world; and it is evident that much of the distinction of the Jews in particular depended upon this connection.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ISRAELITISH MONARCHY.

FROM THE CAPTIVITY OF THE TEN TRIBES TO THE CAPTIVITY OF
THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

B.C. 643 TO B.C. 588.

WE closed the narrative of the history of God's chosen people, in our last chapter, at the gloomy period of the captivity of the ten tribes.

In the meanwhile Hezekiah had ascended the throne of Judah, A.M. 3278. and was applying himself, with pious zeal, to the destruction of B.C. 726. idolatry, and the reformation of his people. He opened and Hezekiah's repaired the temple, sanctified the Levites, offered sacrifices, reign. proclaimed a solemn passover, to which he invited the Israelites with His piety. his own people; ordered the courses of the priests and Levites; made provision for public service; appointed proper officers to superintend and apply the offerings, and restored the worship of Jehovah in its purity throughout his dominions.

The most memorable events of his reign are—the invasion of Sen- A.M. 3291. nacherib, king of Assyria, whose army was miraculously destroyed; B.C. 713. the sickness of Hezekiah, from which he was miraculously recovered; fifteen years being added to his life, accompanied by an extraordinary sign in the retrogression of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, fifteen degrees; the complimentary visit of the envoys from Babylon, to whom, in the elation of his mind, he showed all his treasures, and for which he was censured, and their future capture by the Babylonians foretold; but, as these are particularized in the life of the prophet ISAIAH, in the succeeding chapter, they are slightly glanced at here; and it is only necessary to add, that after an honourable and useful career, he died in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-ninth of his reign; and was buried with great distinction, lamented by all his people.

Manasseh, who succeeded him at the age of twelve years, was A.M. 3306. far unlike his father; his first work was to undo all that his pious B.C. 698. ancestor had effected, and to overthrow whatever he had established. Manasseh's He restored idolatry, and added to it the most infamous rites; his wicked reign was so oppressive and tyrannical, that he was said to “fill reign. Jerusalem with blood.” This career of wickedness was terminated

A.M. 3327. by his being surprised and taken prisoner by the king of Assyria;
 B.C. 677. who carried him into Babylon, (which city he had captured about six years before, reigning sole monarch over the Assyrians and Babylonians,) and cast him into a dungeon. Solitude and suffering brought reflection and repentance, and he returned to the God of his father with his whole heart, who vouchsafed him a happy emancipation from his bondage. Upon his restoration to his kingdom, he cleansed it from the idolatry which he had introduced; repaired and fortified Jerusalem, and died in peace, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, after a long reign of fifty-five years.

Amon. He was succeeded by his son Amon, of whom nothing is recorded,
 A.M. 3363. but that he adopted the evil practices of his father, without sharing
 B.C. 641. his repentance. He was killed by his own servants, after having held the sceptre only two years. The conspirators were put to death by the people, who had taken no share in the rebellion; but when they had avenged the death of their murdered sovereign, placed his son Josiah, then a child of eight years old, upon the throne of his ancestors. No sooner did this amiable monarch arrive at an age when he could think and act for himself, than he effected a complete reformation in his kingdom. In the eighth year of his reign, and sixteenth of his age, he sought the Lord; and in the twelfth year of his reign, or twentieth of his age, he began to remove the monuments of idolatry, and ceased not until he had destroyed them: a work, however, which occupied him many years fully to accomplish. In the eighteenth year of his reign, he repaired the temple; and the book of the law was found, and read to the king; who, deeply affected at its contents, sent to Huldah, the prophetess, by whom the threatened judgments were confirmed; yet, she added, that on account of the piety of Josiah, he should be exempt from sharing them, and they should not take place until after he was gathered to his fathers. The youthful monarch assembled his people, and caused the law to be read to them; appointed a passover, and restored the services of the sanctuary. He then proceeded with renovated zeal to extinguish the remains of idolatry; in the prosecution of which holy service, he came to the altar of Bethel, and fulfilled a prediction delivered centuries before, in taking the bones of Jeroboam's priests out of their sepulchres, and burning them upon it, while the ashes of the man of God who had foretold its destruction remained undisturbed. In the midst of this active zeal, Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, warred against the king of Assyria; and Josiah, considering himself under some engagement to the Assyrian monarch, notwithstanding the Egyptian king endeavoured to dissuade him from meddling in the affair, withstood Pharaoh-necho, and was so severely wounded in the battle, that he died upon his return to Jerusalem, and was buried with lamentations, in which the prophet Jeremiah bore a distinguished part.

Josiah.

His early piety.

A.M. 3374.
 B.C. 630.

A.M. 3383.
 B.C. 612.

The reformation.

Jehoahaz.

His son Jehoahaz succeeded him, but reigned only three months;

a space sufficient, however, to show how unlike he was to his pious father. The king of Egypt, who had triumphed over Josiah, set aside Jehoahaz, and placed his brother Eliakim upon the throne; whose name he changed to Jehoiakim, taking the deposed monarch with him to Egypt, where he held him prisoner until he died. The monarchy of Judah was now fast hastening to extinction. Jehoiakim held his crown of Pharaoh-necho at a heavy tribute: but a new and illustrious opponent appeared in the person of NEBUCHADNEZZAR, who also rendered him tributary for three years, after which he rebelled, and in his resistance originated those calamities which terminated in the captivity of the Jews. After a reign of eleven years of misery and violence he died, leaving the sceptre in the hands of his son Jehoiachin, who held it only three months, during which he discovered the same evil tendencies with his father, and at the close of which he was displaced, and carried captive into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, who made Zedekiah, the brother of the deposed monarch, king of Judah. Even the terrible calamities he had witnessed had no influence upon the new sovereign, who followed the same evil course with his immediate predecessors. At length he also rebelled against the king of Babylon, to whom he had sworn allegiance, and who now sent and destroyed Jerusalem, slew the princes of the royal house in sight of their miserable father, whose eyes he afterwards put out, and thus finally overthrew the Jewish monarchy, which terminated in Zedekiah, whom he imprisoned in Babylon, where he died.

Such was the captivity of Judah, of which the following is a brief review, rendered necessary to bring together events which were drawn out through three reigns. It was commenced by Nebuchadnezzar, and completed by his general Nebuzar-adan. The interval between the first devastation of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and its total overthrow by his servants, was about twenty-two years. It was begun in the reign of Jehoiakim, 606 years before Christ. Nebuchadnezzar took the city on the 12th day of the 9th month, called *Casleu*, which answers to our *November*, and is still observed by the Jews as an annual fast, in remembrance of this event. Among the captives of this first invasion were DANIEL, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; called in Babylon, Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. The interval between the commencement and the consummation of the destruction of Jerusalem is crowded with important transactions; some of which are recorded by Jeremiah, and others by Daniel. The reading of the roll of Jeremiah pronouncing these judgments before Jehoiakim, who was not rendered sensible of his wickedness by the first desolation of his country, excited the most infuriate emotions, and, having first cut it in pieces with his own hand, he threw it into the fire. The Jews kept also the 29th day of *Casleu* a fast, in memory of the impiety of the monarch by whom this important writing was destroyed.

A.M. 3394.

B.C. 610.

Jehoiakim.

A.M. 3405.

B.C. 599.

Jehoiachin.

Zedekiah.

A.M. 3411.

B.C. 593.

Rebels
against the
king of
Babylon.

A.M. 3416.

B.C. 588.

Captivity of
Judah.

A.M. 3416. In the seventh year of Jehoiakim, and the second after the death
 B.C. 588. of the father of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel explained the first vision of
 the king of Babylon, which elevated him to the highest dignities of
 the empire.

Succession
 of events.

The other events recorded in the book of Daniel, to the expulsion
 of Nebuchadnezzar from society, follow in the order in which they
 are there narrated; and conduct us to the total overthrow of
 Jerusalem by Nebuzar-adan, in the reign of Zedekiah; which was
 accompanied with the most horrible circumstances of rigour and
 cruelty. The temple was spoiled of all its riches and furniture, and
 was burned, together with the royal palace. The slaughter was
 dreadful: the city was totally dismantled: and the whole of its
 inhabitants, who escaped the sword, were led into captivity, or
 reduced to slavery. This event took place in the year of the world
 3416, five hundred and eighty-eight years before Christ, and one
 hundred and thirty-four years after the destruction of the kingdom
 of Israel, and the captivity of the ten tribes.

The
 prophets of
 this æra.

While Providence was thus pursuing its solemn and irresistible
 march to punish a people so distinguished by its favours, so notorious
 for ingratitude, and who were hastening to fill up the measure of
 their iniquities, many eminent prophets arose, as the ministers of
 mercy to the penitent, or the heralds of impending ruin to the
 obstinately rebellious. This is a feature in the moral government of
 God too prominent, and the messengers were themselves too eminent,
 to be passed by unnoticed. The first circumstance is stated, with
 the most touching simplicity and pathos, by the sacred historian:
 "the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers,
 rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his
 people, and on his dwelling-place." The last will appear, when it
 is recollected that amongst those who were employed as prophets,
 during that eventful period, to the Israelites and other nations, the
 names of Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Joel, Zephaniah,
 and Habakkuk, are conspicuous; and may here, therefore, with
 propriety precede those of their more illustrious contemporaries or
 successors Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Jonah.

JONAH, the son of Amittai, was a Galilean, of Gath-hepher, in the
 tribe of Zebulun, and lived in the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam,
 (that is, the *second* Jeroboam,) kings of Israel. Some have con-
 jectured that he was the nameless prophet sent to by Elisha, to anoint
 Jehu: it is unnecessary to add, that this can be *only* conjecture, and
 of conjecture there is no end. We have never felt ourselves justified
 in indulging it, or we could amuse our readers with various plausible
 hypotheses respecting this prophet, of whom so little is known, some
 of which are destroyed by facts, and all of which must be necessarily
 uncertain.

The only history upon which any dependence can be placed, is that found in the book which bears his name, among the minor prophets; so called, not because they were later, for some of them were still earlier than their more distinguished compeers; not because they were less inspired, for their predictions received the full confirmation of Providence; but because their prophecies were less numerous than those of others.

We first become acquainted with Jonah, in the opening of his commission against Nineveh, whose destruction he was commanded to foretell; when more jealous of his own honour, than concerned for the glory of God, or the salvation of the people to whom his commission related, he was only anxious to relinquish, or escape his arduous and difficult office. He adopted a singular method to effect this purpose; in taking ship to Tarshish, "to flee from the presence of the Lord." The superstitious and irrational notions of the age in which he lived, which fancied gods of the mountains and of the vallies, the woods and the plains, the sea and the dry land; might almost induce us to suppose that he was willing to believe Jehovah to be a local deity; or did he imagine that, if he could shift the commission for a season, or evade it, by travelling abroad, it would be altogether relinquished, and so reluctant a messenger be exchanged for one more prompt to the service?

He had no sooner embarked, however, than a tempest arose, and he was in imminent danger of shipwreck. In vain the mariners implored their idols to pity and save them; the storm increased every moment. After casting overboard whatever might tend to lighten the ship, and employing all possible means to save themselves, the captain, having missed one of his passengers, found Jonah asleep in the body of the vessel, apparently unconscious of the hurricane; and being, with all the seamen, satisfied that an extraordinary judgment had overtaken them, they resolved to decide the question by the prevailing custom of the day, in every doubtful case, and particularly if it were a religious one; they cast lots, to ascertain on whose account this calamity had befallen them, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Closely interrogated on the subject, he now confessed his fault and folly; and, impelled by the spirit of inspiration, assured them, that their only safety consisted in consigning him to the waves. Unwilling to proceed to such an extremity, they laboured to subdue their difficulties and escape their peril: but, finding all human effort unavailing, and the fury of the tempest augmenting, at length they yielded to their sad circumstances, and threw their dangerous and offending passenger overboard.

It was then that a miracle was wrought which has amused infidelity, and employed its criticisms, in all ages. "Now Jehovah had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah: and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." We cannot admit that any vessel is intended by the term α in the Hebrew, or

A.M. 3416.

B.C. 588

Sent to
Nineveh.Embarks
for
Tarshish.Swallowed
by the fish.

A.M. 3416. *κητος*, which is employed by our Lord; because, although such a deduction is possible from mere verbal criticism, the result is at variance with the context in both cases, and can only be deduced by doing violence to the natural import of the expressions. The terms גדול דג and *κητος*, signify alike *a great fish*, without determining the species; although our translators have rendered the latter, in the New Testament, *a whale*. This fact removes the objection arising from the narrow passage of the throat of the whale, in comparison with his size, which, it is said, renders it impossible for him, to swallow a man. The fish, if of any natural species, might be of the *shark* kind, of whose voracity and ability to swallow so considerable a bulk as the human body we have other instances: but what is not affirmed in the narrative, we are not called upon to decide. It is further expressly said, that “Jehovah *prepared* a great fish;” it is evident, therefore, upon every possible interpretation, that a miracle was wrought in this case; and when once the ordinary limits of nature are exceeded, it rests not with man to fix the bounds of the operation. As if to anticipate the cavils of scepticism upon a history so brief, so simply narrated, and so replete with miracle, our Lord pledges his own character to its veracity, by two appeals to its circumstances, (not to mention other, and constant allusions to it, throughout the subsequent Scriptures;) the one, the repentance of the Ninevites, as a condemnation of the age and generation in which he lived—the other, the miraculous event just recited, as a sign of his own death and resurrection—precisely agreeing with the time he should occupy the tomb. It is not to be imagined that he would refer an event of such infinite moment that all Christianity rested upon it, as well in its principles as in its prospects, to any fact disputable in itself, or doubted by his countrymen: or that a Teacher of Truth, (and such even his adversaries have allowed him to be,) a man of unimpeachable veracity and integrity, should adopt a mere legend, or give any countenance to a fable. Yet the matter so stands, that the authenticity of the history of Jonah must be admitted in all its miraculous features, or the judgment, integrity, and authority of Jesus Christ impeached. It is further remarkable, that among the few fragments of antiquity remaining to us, this little history should receive from them larger confirmation than some others of greater extent and magnitude. The heathens have preserved the fact, but applied it to Hercules;

Heathen traditions of the facts.

Τρισπερα λεοντος, ου ποτε γυαθαις
Τριτωνος ημαλαψε καρχαρος κυων.

LYCOPHRON.

“That fam’d *three-nighted* lion, whom of old,
Triton’s *carcharian*¹ dog, with horrid jaws
Devour’d.”

Æneas Gazæus, recording the same event, which also he refers to Hercules, employs the very term *κητος*, adopted by the LXX.

¹ The *canis carcarias* is the *shark*.

and by St. Matthew. Ὡσπερ και Ἡρακλῆς ἀδεται, διαβραγεισης της νεως, εφ' ης επλει υπο ΚΗΤΟΥΣ καταποθῆναι και διασωζεσθαι. "As Hercules is also reported, when he was shipwrecked, to have been swallowed by a (κητος) whale (or great fish;) and yet to have been saved."—(*Aeneas Gazæus Theophrasto.*) That Hercules should have been substituted for Jonah can excite no just astonishment; since Tacitus himself acknowledges, that to advance the fame of this distinguished favourite, they do not hesitate to ascribe to him whatever is extraordinary or noble in history, to whomsoever the real praise is due. They plunder every other celebrated character, of whatever country, of all his merit, to adorn their fabled hero with the spoils stolen from truth, and honestly belonging to others.

Jonah was emancipated from his terrific and miraculous prison; and thus admonished, upon the repetition of the original command, advanced to Nineveh; to compass which required three days journey, it being, according to Diodorus Siculus, twenty-five leagues in circumference, and contained 120,000 persons "who could not discern between their right hand and their left," by which we may presume children to be especially intended; and as these are usually estimated at not more than one-fifth of the whole population, the result will be, that Nineveh contained 600,000 inhabitants—"and also much cattle." This is the compassionate argument used by the Father of mankind for sparing his creatures; and in his expostulation with the angry prophet, he showed that he "cared for oxen."

Preaches at
Nineveh.

At the awful message of Jonah, the Ninevites fasted and repented; and the threatening, being conditional, was repealed. The example of humiliation was set by the sovereign, who descended from his throne, clothed himself with sackcloth, and deprecated the Divine vengeance. Calmet supposes this king to have been the father of Sardanapalus, known in profane authors by the name of Anacyndaraxa, or Anabaxanis; and called Phul in the Scriptures. That he might have been the Phul of the Bible is not improbable; but, whether known by his scripture or his heathen name, he was the father of Sardanapalus, must remain a question, while it is even doubtful whether such a man as Sardanapalus ever lived; two persons of the most opposite qualities being called by that name, and both of those, perhaps, fictitious.

Jonah, having fulfilled his commission, retired to the environs of the city, resolved to wait the result, and seems rather to have chosen the destruction of the place than that his prediction should appear to fail. The climate of Nineveh was most trying—scorchingly hot by day, and intensely cold at night. He made a booth as a temporary shelter; and a gourd, a plant of the country, of remarkably rapid growth, (*kikajon*,) sprang up over his retreat, and afforded him a deeper shadow by day, and a better covering at night. As it was said to be "prepared," it was probably distinguished from ordinary plants, as well by the completeness of its

A.M. 3416. umbrage, as by the rapidity of its production. Jonah rejoiced in
 B.C. 588. its shadow: but a worm was also "prepared;" an insect devoured
 the root, and it perished in a night, so suddenly, so unexpectedly,
 that the prophet, finding himself exposed to the united action of a
 scorching sun and a parching east wind, was moved with anger and
 impatience. It was then that the noble reproof was given, already
 adverted to, which placed in so striking a point of view the selfish-
 ness of the man, and the compassion of the Deity. After this
 Jonah disappears. We read of him in another portion of the
 Scriptures, and on another occasion; when he foretold the second
 Jeroboam, that he should "restore the coast of Israel from the
 entering of Hamath, unto the sea of the plain," (2 Kings xiv. 25;) but
 whether this prediction were uttered before or after the events
 which we have recited, it is impossible to determine; and nothing
 further respecting him is known from any authentic record.

Amos.

AMOS also flourished about this time. His birthplace is unknown. He tells us himself that he was not educated among the sons of the prophets, nor was he the descendant of a prophet, but a man of no pretensions, and occupying a humble station in life. "I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people of Israel." He began to prophesy in the reign of Uzziah, two years before the earthquake. He was charged with a conspiracy against Jeroboam the Second, because of the sharpness with which he reprov'd the sins of his people; and was severely threatened by Amaziah, the high priest of Bethel—with how little effect, the fidelity of his plain, but pointed predictions will testify. He retired, however, into the kingdom of Judah, and dwelt at Tekoah. He foretold the invasions of Phul and Tiglath-pileser: and reprov'd the Israelites in language as distinguished for its energy as for its sublimity. The time and manner of his death cannot be ascertained. He lives only in his prophetic testimony—and this shall outlive the world.

Hosea.

HOSEA, whose predictions, from their extent and variety occupy a larger space among the minor prophets, does not appear more conspicuous than Amos on the page of history. He lived in the kingdom of Samaria, and his prophecies principally regard that state, then fast verging towards its ruin. He is said to have prophesied under the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; and must have been, therefore, contemporary with Isaiah, and not inferior to him in length of life. The most singular circumstance attending the prophecies of Hosea, is not that they are very pathetic and energetic, for his style is rather concise, sententious, and abrupt, nor that they were enforced by symbols, for this mode was also prescribed to, and practised by Ezekiel; but that he was permitted, nay enjoined, to

adopt a type which appears to the present age to involve an immoral connection. “Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord.” And it appears, from the whole account given, that this cannot be understood figuratively, but must signify a real transaction. The Baron de Tott illustrates this circumstance in the account which he gives of those temporary marriages, unknown to us, but common in the East. He says, “There is also another kind of marriage, which, stipulating the return to be made, fixes likewise the time when the divorce is to take place. This contract is called *cassin*; and, properly speaking, is only an agreement made between the parties to live together, for such a price, during such a time.” Such a contract is probably that mentioned by Hosea. Mr. Harmer observes, respecting contracts for temporary wives, from Sir John Chardin, and which are made before the *cadi*, that “there is always the formality of a measure of corn mentioned, over and above the sum of money that is stipulated.” These circumstances will serve to explain the whole transaction, and to prove, that however singular in itself that transaction was, it accorded with the customs of the country and of the age. “So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley. And I said unto her, thou shalt abide for me many days: thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man; so will I also be for thee.” That this transaction was intended to expose the idolatry and the iniquity of the Israelites, is fully shown by the prophet himself.

MICAH, the Morasthite, prophesied in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Moresa, or Marasha, of which place he is named, was a village in the south of Judah, in the vicinity of Eleutheropolis. His predictions relate to his native country, and to the kingdom which separated from it; since he expressly terms them “a vision concerning Jerusalem and Samaria.” Some parts of them were evidently, therefore, written before the captivity of the ten tribes; and it is supposed that he prophesied longer than Hosea. His style possesses great energy, copiousness, pathos, and sublimity; not without singular beauty and elegance. There are distinct predictions in the book bearing his name, not inferior in grandeur and eloquence to the most illustrious of the prophets, and which will bear a comparison, without injury, even with Isaiah himself. The substance of his prophecies agrees with those of his contemporaries: the iniquities of Israel and of Judah, which are reproved with sharpness and fidelity; the impending ruin of these monarchies, and by what nations it should be effected; the future restoration of them, according to the divine promise; and all turning upon that glorious centre of providence and grace, to which all prophecy hastened, and in which it terminated—the reign of the Messiah. Micah is

A.M. 3416. distinguished also for having fixed the birth of the Messiah expressly
 B.C. 588. at Beth-lehem, (Ephratah,) in language too distinct to be misunder-
 Mic. v. 2. stood, and allowed by the Jews themselves. There is an interesting
 Jer. xxvi. 11 circumstance respecting a prophecy of Micah, which was the means
 —24. of saving the life of the prophet Jeremiah, while the fearful Urijah was
 slain. The time of Micah's death is uncertain, and his sepulchre
 unknown; although it is conjectured that he was buried at Morasha.

Nahum. NAHUM, the Elkoshite, so called from a little village of Galilee, occupies a small, but splendid space among the predictions of those times. Josephus supposes him to have flourished in the reign of Jotham; and says that his prophecies were accomplished one hundred and fifteen years after they were delivered. But the best and most accurate chronologers place him in the reign of Hezekiah, and conclude that his predictions were delivered soon after the destruction of Samaria by Shalmaneser. Accordingly his book opens with a sublime exhibition of the power and goodness, the justice and compassion of Deity. He represents "whirlwind and storm" encompassing him; "clouds," scattered "as the dust of his feet;" the "sea" shrinking, and the "rivers" failing at his "rebuke." Then this storm subsides instantly into a calm; every attribute of terror is laid aside, as he turns to his people; and all his majesty and power are combined for the security of those "that trust in him." After this sublime exordium, he directs his prophecies chiefly against Nineveh, and foretels the destruction of the Assyrian empire. The time of the death of this prophet is unknown.

Joel. JOEL, the son of Pethuel, prophesied before the subversion of Judah, but when that event was fast approaching, in the reign, as some think, of Manasseh or, according to others, of Josiah; we cannot determine from his predictions themselves precisely the time or reign in which they were delivered. He is said to have been of the city of Betharan, in the tribe of Reuben. He is distinguished for the fervour, elegance, and sublimity of his style, and his short, but sublime work exhibits all those characters of energy for which the most illustrious prophets were celebrated; combined with a richness of imagery, seldom rivalled, and never surpassed. His description of the army of locusts, in the second chapter, and of the effusion of the Spirit in the third, have no equal. The substance of his predictions relate to the impending ruin of his country, and the final restoration of his people by the Messiah. We have no certain information further respecting the prophet himself.

Zephaniah. ZEPHANIAH, the son of Cushi, was supposed by Epiphanius to have been of the tribe of Simeon. He fixes himself the date of his prophecies in the reign of Josiah, and from some of their contents we must conclude, that he flourished in the early part of that reign.

His censures on the disorders of Judah would induce the conclusion, A.M. 3416. that the reformation by that pious prince, in the eighteenth year of B.C. 588. his reign, had not then been effected: and he predicts the destruction of Nineveh, which probably took place about the sixteenth year of Josiah. Judah is first mentioned, and then the enemies of Israel successively—the Philistines, the Moabites, Ammonites, Cushites, Phœnicians, and Assyrians. The predictions terminate, as usual, in the glory of the latter day, as connected with the restoration of the Jews. The circumstances and time of the death of Zephaniah are no where recorded.

HABAKKUK is supposed to have been also of the tribe of Simeon, Habakkuk. and to have lived in the reign of Jehoiakim. That he prophesied *after* the taking of Nineveh is inferred from his silence respecting the Assyrians, while he predicts the terrible judgments which threatened his country from the Chaldeans, whom he calls “a bitter and hasty nation;” and describes their ferocious character and unsparing cruelty with all the force and grandeur of oriental imagery. “Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the cunning wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.” The Chaldeans are threatened in their turn; and the book closes with a magnificent description of the majesty of Hab. iii. God, which exceeds, perhaps, in sublimity every other similar delineation even in the Scriptures themselves. The only genuine works of this prophet are those predictions contained in the book which goes under his name. Some singular incidents respecting him are recorded in the Apocrypha, but which being extremely doubtful, to say the least, if not absolutely fabulous, we do not recapitulate. So far as any probable history of his life can be at all collected, it is given in few words by Calmet, from Epiphan. et Doroth. de Vita et Morte Prophetarum, who says, “Observing that Nebuchadnezzar advanced towards Jerusalem, and foreseeing he would take it, Habakkuk escaped to Ostracin, in Arabia, near the lake Sirbonis, where he lived for some time; but the Chaldeans having taken Jerusalem, and returned to Chaldea, Habakkuk returned to Judea; while the Jews who escaped from being carried to Babylon, after the death of Jedaliah, fled into Egypt.”

These were the illustrious men who lived in the age to which this chapter of history relates, and who foretold the destruction that hung over their country. And although men were the instruments in producing the fearful scenes which they predicted, God was the adversary. Jeremiah unveils the cause of the calamities of Israel and Judah—those calamities which have now been seen reaching their climax. “The Lord was as an enemy: HE hath swallowed up Lam. ii. 5, 6. Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his

A.M. 3416. strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning
B.C. 588. and lamentation. And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle,
as if it were of a garden ; he hath destroyed his places of the assembly :
the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten
in Sion, and hath despised, in the indignation of his anger, the king
and the priest." A similar sentiment, expressed in language less
sublime, will be recollected by the classical reader in Virgil.²

² Æn L. II. v. 609—619.

CHAPTER X.

ISAIAH,

AND THE HISTORICAL EVENTS CONNECTED WITH HIS PROPHECIES.

FROM A.M. 3244, B.C. 760, TO A.M. 3306, B.C. 698.

RESPECTING this distinguished prophet little is known with any degree of certainty; but to supply the deficiency of genuine history with rabbinical tradition would afford little pleasure, and no instruction; and would be inconsistent with the plan of a scientific work, the object of which is to present truth always, and truth only. Under these circumstances, we must be satisfied to gather up the remaining fragments of his personal history, to state whatever is doubtful fairly as it stands, and to leave undetermined questions upon which we can collect no certain information. The most unimportant particulars of the life of such a man become interesting, from their connection with his writings; while the most magnificent circumstances that ever distinguished a mortal career (had they been certainly attached to him) could add nothing to the glory which surrounds ISAIAH as a prophet, and to a fame which is imperishable. He stands, perhaps, at the head of that celebrated class of ancient writers, the prophets of the Bible; and, in this view of his character, appears to us to belong to this period of our progress in the history of the world.

Our perplexities begin even with his birth. He is generally held to have been of the seed royal; his father being understood to be that Amoz who was son to Joash, and brother to Amaziah, kings of Judah. This opinion seems to have obtained upon good ground; and supposing it to be justly founded, Isaiah presents a wonderful and affecting spectacle of the close union sometimes subsisting between high distinction and severe affliction, and a memorable example of the reverses of human life; since he is seen as the grandson of one monarch, the nephew of another, and the martyr of a third.

He prophesied, as we learn from his own writings, during four reigns—in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. It is also supposed that his predictions extended to the reign of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, to whom St. Jerome says the prophet gave his daughter in marriage; while it is more generally thought that he was put to death by that prince, a death also of the most cruel kind, being “sawn asunder.” For this there

Isaiah's
family.

Length of
his ministry.

Opinion of
Calmet.

is only traditional evidence, and a supposed allusion of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; but, in reality, his death, like his birth and his life, is involved in much obscurity. Calmet concludes that he did not enter upon his prophetic office until the beginning of the reign of Jotham, and that he died in the first year of that of Manasseh. The first position appears to us to impugn his own declaration, that his visions opened in the days of Uzziah; but in the last he agrees with many other writers. And if it be conjoined with the general tradition of his death, it exhibits the unworthy son of Hezekiah as hastening to destroy, with an eager indecency, in the prophet whose admonitions he abhorred, his father's bosom friend; a circumstance which but too well comports with his blood-thirsty character. It is evident that Isaiah prophesied a long time; some writers have suggested a period of eighty-five years, while the representation of Calmet, which is the most moderate, allows to his public career but threescore years.

Separated
from his
infancy.

It is sometimes difficult in prophetic writings to ascertain with accuracy when the prophet speaks in his own person, and when he personifies another: this is particularly the case in predictions which refer to the Messiah, where the transition from one event to another, and from one person to another, is sometimes very abrupt, and at others almost imperceptible. We are disposed to think, from an expression in the first verse of the forty-ninth chapter of the book of Isaiah, notwithstanding the tenor of the argument evidently relates to the Saviour of the world, that an intimation is given of the separation of the prophet himself, from his earliest infancy, to the station which he afterwards filled with such pre-eminent majesty and fidelity. However this may be, it is very evident that he commenced his prophetic career very early; and continued it, with indefatigable assiduity and energy, to a remote period of life; that while he soared as on an eagle's pinion, like the eagle he appeared to renovate his vigour in his old age; and that his fine description of a servant of Jehovah most aptly applied to himself—"he ran without weariness, and walked without fainting."

Division of
his
prophecies.

His predictions may be arranged in the following order:—He has himself named four reigns under which he prophesied. Five chapters of the beginning of his majestic work relate to the reign of Uzziah. The sixth, containing the description of a magnificent vision, which occurred to him in the year of the death of that monarch, must be therefore referred to the reign of Jotham, his successor. Those which remain are divided between Ahaz and Hezekiah; nor is it easy to draw precisely the line between these monarchs, as to their share in the several predictions, from the prophecies themselves, until we arrive at the thirty-sixth chapter, when we find ourselves in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah. It should be noted, that the difficulty of distinguishing the predictions appropriated to the respective reigns of these four sovereigns, arises from the intersper-

sion of prophecies relative to the Messiah, which bore alike upon all, with those which were local, and arose out of circumstances peculiar to the times. Chronology alone can settle the division; and by its aid it may be done with tolerable precision. According to the general opinion as to the order in which this prophet delivered his predictions, the book of Isaiah may be thus classed. The first five chapters are assigned to Uzziah's reign; the sixth to that of Jotham, thence to the fifteenth the reign of Ahaz seems to be included, and all that remains must be referred to that of Hezekiah; perhaps extending into the opening of the tyranny of Manasseh. According to the chronology of Usher, which we have usually followed, Isaiah began to prophecy A.M. 3244, B.C. 760; and his last predictions were delivered A.M. 3306, B.C. 698; thus allowing space for the exercise of his arduous office of sixty-two years. The predictions relative to the Messiah occupy the largest proportion of his writings; and they possess a character of such precision as well as grandeur, that he has been styled, with one consent, in all ages, the Evangelical Prophet.

Time of his prophecies.

The Evangelical Prophet.

The predictions themselves conduct us to some important events in the Jewish history during the life of Isaiah, with which he was intimately connected. He appears to have had but two children; whose names were given as signs of certain prophecies which he had delivered. Shear-jashub—*the remnant shall return*—alluding to the restoration from the captivity of Babylon, which event had occupied a considerable place in the prophet's writings; and Maher-shalal-hash-baz—*making speed to the spoil, he hasteneth to the slaughter*—an appellation which too surely announced the approaching desolation of the kingdoms of Israel and Syria. His wife is called a prophetess; whether, according to the opinion of the Rabbins, that a spirit of prophecy rested upon her, or, as others have concluded, only because of her connection with Isaiah, cannot be easily determined. Some have also imagined that the father of Isaiah was a prophet, from the circumstance that his name is coupled with that of his son; and it has been said that the father of a seer was never mentioned, except he had been himself a partaker of the same inspiration; but it does not appear that such a sentiment can be borne out by facts. These are the only particulars suggested relative to Isaiah himself; and henceforward we learn his history only as it is associated with the public events of the times in which he lived.

His two children.

His wife.

His father.

The historical facts distinctly adverted to in his prophecies are four; The confederacy against Judah, by Rezin, king of Syria, and by Pekah, king of Israel, in the days of Ahaz; the invasion of the same country, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, by Sennacherib, king of Assyria; the alarming sickness of Hezekiah, and his miraculous recovery; and the complimentary visit, consequent upon it, of the ambassadors of Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon. These events gave rise to distinct prophecies, relating partly to the destiny

Confederacy of Israel and Syria.

of the Jews, and principally to the reign of the Messiah: and it will be discovered, by an accurate examination of the predictions of Isaiah, relative to other countries, which will be hereafter classed and enumerated, that they principally sprang from some historical facts, recorded in the chronicles of the empire, but not distinctly named by the prophet.

It must have been unspeakably more grievous to the king of Judah, that Israel should have been linked with Syria against him, than if two of the mightiest potentates of the age had been leagued for his destruction. But little more than two centuries had passed since they were one kingdom, under the glorious sceptre of Solomon. No political changes could erase from the bosom of each that they were brethren, descended from one grand ancestor, speaking the same language, originally heirs of the same promise, and embracing a common faith; the interposing rock had divided those streams, which were once one current, but the fountain of both continued the same. In private life, when animosities arise among brethren, there is an unusual bitterness attached to them. The affections being engaged in the first instance, when they become repressed and violated, alter their whole character; and there is no hatred so deep and irreconcilable as that which arises from wounded love and insulted friendship. It is usually found that this principle acts with tenfold force upon nations in this situation, who add political fervour to outraged affection and original union; and this was manifested in the most marked manner in the war carried on between Israel and Judah. We lose almost the part which the Syrians took in it in the unnatural hostility of the Israelites; and while Judah felt most deeply the assault from the ten tribes, they, on the other hand, having obtained certain advantages, set no bounds to their oppression; and it became necessary that the prophet Obed should be sent to them, to require them to be satisfied with the spoils which they had taken, and remanding the prisoners to their country; or the lamp of David had, at that time, been wholly quenched; and, to increase the calamity, would have been extinguished by the hand of a brother. These circumstances, not mentioned by Isaiah, constituted a part of that war to which he distinctly alludes, and which gave occasion to his predictions immediately before us. They were subsequent to this period, and were provoked by the idolatry of Ahaz, after he had been delivered from his immediate apprehensions.

Inveterate
hostility of
Israel to
Judah.

B.C. 742.

In the year 742 before Christ, this iniquitous league took place; a confederacy which joined the armies of Israel, the professed servants of the only and true God, with the host of Syria, a people distinguished, from time immemorial, for their idolatrous inventions; for an ingenuity in multiplying divinities, and improving upon the superstitions of other nations; and this, against the house of David, and the sceptre to which they had originally yielded obedience, proud of its greatness, and sheltered under its protection. Ahaz

was justly alarmed. The alliance against him was formidable in itself, and he had forfeited the only security which can deserve to be so called—the divine favour—by his idolatrous practices and infamous life. The apprehensions of the monarch, and of his people, are beautifully described. “And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim: and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind!” This little circumstance would be unworthy of notice, were it not that in this short sentence, which is also prosaic and historical, we have the figurative and commanding features of that style which distinguished the prophetic writings, and to which our attention must be directed, before we close this article. The Being who had been insulted with the impieties of an apostate monarch, and an ungrateful nation, was not forgetful of his people on this occasion. Isaiah was commanded to approach Ahaz, taking with him his son, Shear-jashub, then an infant; and to mark the precision of the fact, in connection with the prophecy, as one of those little, but irresistible circumstances, incompatible with falsehood, because so minute that mere invention would not think of them; the place of meeting is prescribed and mentioned: it took place “at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller’s field.” The alarm of Ahaz appears to have been twofold. He was afraid of the immediate consequences of this joint assault; and he apprehended that the dissolution of the Jewish monarchy was at hand. The prediction is therefore double; and it is necessary to observe this, in order to afford a solution of it, at once consistent with the existing circumstances, and the future aspect which it bore upon the Messiah. For want of this attention, commentators have plunged themselves into difficulties, which, as it appears to us, would not have existed, had they kept these simple facts in view. His immediate fears are allayed, by a time being fixed for the destruction of those invading monarchs, who were not so to prevail against him as to dispossess him of his throne; while they were themselves exposed to ruin which they did not anticipate; and it was revealed to him, that the throne of David should stand, until a greater than David came, whose miraculous birth is predicted, and in whose spiritual kingdom the temporal sovereignty of his house should be absorbed; in other words, to repeat the expressions of dying Jacob, “The sceptre was not to depart from Judah until Shiloh came.” As a sign of the sudden destruction of the confederate monarchs, Isaiah presented his *own* child. Ahaz having refused to ask a sign, God deigned to give him a double one, relative both to the monarchy and to his pressing dangers. “Before the child” (properly before *this* child) “shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.” There could be no possible reason for Shear-jashub to accompany his father, except for this purpose, to be a sign in the prediction. His immediate

The double prediction.

fears allayed, he was instructed as to the termination of the dynasty of David, as a temporal monarchy, and encouraged in the prospect that this extinction of worldly glory was only that absorption of a lesser light which must always take place in the presence of a greater; that, in truth, it was to be absorbed in the splendour of a spiritual and eternal kingdom. "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel: butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good." The application of this sign to the Messiah by St. Matthew, removes all doubt upon the subject of the propriety of this reference. The butter of the East was a sort of thick cream, and, mingled with honey, was considered a luxury of the first order. Such an image represents the actual prosperity of a dominion which had no external marks of grandeur, and refers to better blessings than this world could give, under a figure perfectly familiar to those to whom it was addressed. It was further considered a nutritious diet for children, which, by strengthening the body, would be likely to contribute to the soundness of the judgment; vigour of mind often depending much upon physical causes; and this fact forms an easy solution of the closing remark of the prophet. Although we have altered the order of the prediction, to render the argument clearer, it will be seen that such a transposition cannot affect the interpretation; which will be equally valid, whether the promise of the Messiah, or *that* of the overthrow of the kings of Syria and of Israel, stand first in the arrangement of a prophecy, which, evidently relating to two events, and embracing two signs, (viz. that of the prophet's son, and that of the miraculous conception,) must necessarily be divided into two parts.

Butter and honey.

The invasion of Judæa by Sennacherib.

The next event of importance in the life of Isaiah, as connected with his prophecies, is the invasion of Judæa by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. The monarchy of Israel had perished under the conquering forces of Shalmaneser, about ten years before this period. Hezekiah having failed to pay the tribute exacted by the kings of Assyria from the monarchs of Israel, the incensed and unprincipled tyrant invaded and subdued the defenced cities of Judah. He was appeased, for a time, by the submission of Hezekiah, and the payment of a very heavy annual sum. But after three years, inflated with the successes which he had obtained over several surrounding nations, once distinguished for their valour and consequence, without any pretext, but the mere impulse of wanton and arbitrary power, he sent Rabshakeh, his cup-bearer, from Lachish, which he was then besieging, to Jerusalem, with instructions to employ the most insulting language to Hezekiah; and to listen to no terms which did not include the most abject submission, without any correspondent guarantee, even for the life of the outraged monarch. The threat was immediately followed by an immense army, quite equal, in the opinion of the Assyrian monarch, to the execution of his unprincipled purpose. The pious king of Judah spread his case before Jehovah.

In this national emergency the prophet Isaiah again appears—and again in all that dignity and energy which always distinguished him. With characteristic force and beauty, he personified “the daughter of Zion, as laughing” her invader “to scorn;” he showed, with singular ability and propriety, the causes of the weakness of those nations whom Sennacherib had enslaved, in their idolatry; and he promised a miraculous and speedy overthrow of the large army which this imperious invader had sent against Jerusalem. Accordingly, it is said, “the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, 185,000 men,” in a single night. Whether this destruction were effected by a spiritual, or by a natural instrument, it is still miraculous: since the *prediction* of such a fact, and the *timing* of it, argue, beyond question, a divine and immediate agency. We dare not say, that this slaughter was not effected by an angel; more especially as we have learned always to respect the language of revelation; and never to depart from its simple import, excepting in cases in which the expressions are evidently figurative, and accord with the common forms of oriental metaphor. The most likely opinion, on the part of those who understand by the term “angel of the Lord,” only a delegated natural cause, is, that it was the simoom, or fiery blast of the desert, which surprised them; which often extends to the width of half a mile, which is peculiarly fatal to persons sleeping, and which affects those who survive with a languor and depression of spirits, that render them incapable of exertions, and overwhelm them with cowardice and despondency. The result was, that the army of Sennacherib was so diminished, that he was compelled to retreat; and, after his return to his kingdom, he was slain in the house of his idol, by two of his own sons.

The alarming sickness of Hezekiah happened so near this time, that it is not easy to determine absolutely, whether it occurred during the investment of Jerusalem by the army of Sennacherib, or after his defeat. The language of the prophet seems to decide in favour of the former; since, in promising the pious monarch an addition of fifteen years to his life, he adds, “and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city.” Such an indisposition, at such a moment, must have added to the distress occasioned by the invasion in an inconceivable degree. The whole history is very singular; the first annunciation of approaching death; then the rescinding the sentence at the supplication of the dying monarch; the addition of fifteen years to his life; the number of years being precisely specified; and finally, the miraculous sign by which this prolongation of his days was accompanied. We can add nothing to these facts, beyond the authority of the sacred writings, and the assurance that these things were well known at the time, as is evident from the embassy of congratulation from Babylon. But it is doubtful whether the dial of Ahaz were any thing more than a flight of steps in his

Isaiah's
prophecy.Destruction
of the
Assyrians.Sickness of
Hezekiah.His
recovery.Dial of
Ahaz.

Retrogression of the shadow.

palace, so constructed that the rays of the sun fell upon them during the day, throwing the shadow in different directions, which was noted in the different stages of its progress, and divided into spaces, sufficiently accurate to determine the larger Jewish divisions of time—since we read nothing of dials, constructed as such, in an age so remote as that of Hezekiah. As to the method of the performance of the miracle, there is no necessity to imagine a retrogression of the earth's motion, (which is, however, held by no less a man than Archbishop Usher,) since the inflection of the solar rays would produce all the results of this phenomenon. We held a different opinion relative to the miracle of Joshua, principally, because such a solution did not appear to us reconcileable with the Scripture narrative; also, that it seemed inadequate as a cause to the effect stated; in this instance, no contradiction of the sacred history is involved—the explanation is adequate to the phenomenon, and while it is unnecessary to multiply difficulties in the discussion of miracles, as to their mode, the event itself is no less miraculous for this interpretation, if we consider the occasion on which it was wrought, and the time at which it took place; on the recovery of Hezekiah, and as a confirmation of God's word, by the mouth of his servant.

Embassy of the Babylonians.

The mission of the Babylonians to inquire after the circumstances of the king's recovery, seems to indicate that they had only reached this people by report, and that their attention was not called to them by any astronomical observations, for the knowledge of which they were celebrated. It is merely said, that Merodach-baladan had *heard* that Hezekiah had been sick. Had there been a suspension of the earth's motion, the effect must have been universal, and could not have escaped the notice of such accurate students of astronomy as were the Chaldeans. Two things are, however, evident; and these are sufficient to the history and the occasion; it was a sign perfectly demonstrative of the divine mission of the prophet, and it was, on every hypothesis, a miracle wrought by the immediate interposition of God. We should not, however, omit to state, that some writers have thought that the astronomical effect of the miracle in question contributed to bring the Babylonian embassy to Jerusalem, to inquire more fully into the circumstances of the case.

This complimentary embassy from the king of Babylon became a snare to Hezekiah, and furnished an occasion for a prediction of the after ruin of his kingdom, which was then approaching; while it afforded, in the issue, a memorable example of his resignation to the Divine will.

About this time, ISAIAH received directions to walk naked and barefoot three years, as a type of the approaching degradation of Egypt and Ethiopia, by the hand of the king of Assyria. This circumstance illustrates a singular fact connected with prophecy.

The prophets accompanied their predictions, by divine direction, with certain signs attached to persons, or things, and chiefly to themselves, which were as strikingly expressive of the events signified, as their ordinary language was bold in figure, and accurate in description. Isaiah, who abounded in majesty of diction, sublimity of thought, and richness of imagery, seems, in this solitary instance, to have taken the typical mode of conveying his predictions; while Ezekiel employs chiefly this method of instruction. Both acted unquestionably under the direction of the same Spirit; it was the language of symbols, where that of words failed; and it is highly interesting thus to observe it used by some of the first writers of antiquity. Prophetical symbols.

We ventured to say, that the predictions of Isaiah would be found, upon close inspection, to bear respect to certain historical facts, connected with the age in which he lived, which were not, however, specified by himself. His prophecies principally related to Tyre, Edom, Babylon, Egypt, and the Messiah. This last and most numerous class of his predictions, must be considered as common property—the Saviour, like the air which we breathe, and the sun which shines upon us, is not the right exclusively of any nation, but, as he was declared to be, the wealth of the world—“a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.” With each of the other subjects the Jews had a peculiar relation, which was especially intimate at this part of their history. Tyre had furnished them with workmen to consummate that temple which was the wonder of the world; and Solomon had brought them into an alliance with that enterprising state, although the peculiar habits of the Jews restrained their intercourse with other nations. This bond of friendship was soon to be broken. “Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre? the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? The Lord of Hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.”—Edom, the possession of Esau, who ought to have felt sympathy with the posterity of Jacob, had exulted, with the most cruel malignity, in their misfortunes; and was not forgotten in the day of retribution. As the glory of Israel and Judah waned, this unnatural people aided in their oppressions. At this part, therefore, of the history of the Jews, we may judge of the force and effect of the prophet’s denunciations against the Edomites. Tyre. Edom.

Egypt had been always the resort of the Jews, when she was not their tyrant. An undue confidence had been placed in this power. It seems as though the impression of her strength and superiority, derived from the bondage of their ancestors, had remained from age to age; and this feeling was certainly strengthened by the rank which Egypt held, as well for literature as for military glory, among the nations. But her sun had touched the meridian; and that orb,

Babylon.

Personification.

which had illuminated the world, was now visibly on the decline, to have no future rising. His countrymen were to be warned of the folly of trusting in this powerful state, and the prophet cried, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help!" Babylon was then rising into distinction, as Egypt was veiling her glory. She was the morning, as Egypt was the evening star. Babylon was already seen by Isaiah in all the splendour of her victories, as she appeared under the sway of Nebuchadnezzar; although more than a century was to elapse before this scourge of his country should invade Judea, and strike the tabernacle of David. But while he foretold the captivity of his people, and announced the proud pre-eminence of Babylon, he foresaw the transient character of her empire, and predicted her utter ruin. It was then that the patriot mingled with the prophet, and, while he gave scope to the inspiration within him, all the grand faculties of a powerful mind were called into action; and the fall of the king of Babylon, recorded in one chapter with a precision that would almost induce the conclusion, that the prophet was an eye-witness to the scenes which he predicted, is anticipated in another with that boldness of personification, that force of description, that sublimity of conception, that torrent of eloquence, which find no parallel in all antiquity; and have ever stood, as they ever must stand, unrivalled in grandeur—the admiration of all ages, and the constant example of every writer on rhetoric, who intends to illustrate his subject or to charm his readers. The passage, in which the king of Babylon is introduced in his glory and his ruin, is too long to transcribe, but it is full of splendour. (Isa. xiv.) The cruelty of his oppression precedes his fall, in the delineation, to manifest its justice. In the peace which succeeds his tumultuous reign, and in which the whole earth participates, we share with oppressed nations their gratification at the defeat of his ambition—it is the stillness of nature after a hurricane. Not satisfied with making the inanimate creation exult with the intelligent, in this signal overthrow—the very cedars of Lebanon rejoicing because the axe no longer threatens their destruction; he draws the veil of eternity aside, and shows us the impression which such an event makes upon the invisible world. He represents the dwelling-place of separate spirits as agitated at his approach; he shows the solemn, yet shadowy state of departed monarchs, still retaining the semblance of majesty amidst utter weakness, and exhibiting a gratification in *his* humiliation to whom they once were tributary. The contrast between what he was, and what he is—the loss of empire, wealth, flattery, pleasure—the nakedness of the dispossessed and disembodied spirit—is very striking. This contrast is heightened by the repetition of his vain boasting, and visionary purposes. The threatening, that even death shall not terminate his degradation—that his body shall be denied the rights of sepulture—that his children shall never inherit the empire—that

with him the dynasty shall cease—terminates the majesty and terror of the delineation. Such are the leading predictions of the book of Isaiah, relative to the destiny of different empires; and it will be at once apparent to every reflecting mind, how closely allied these were with the events of his day, and the interests of his country, although certainly not influenced by them.

It remains to give a brief, but comprehensive view of the substance of his prophecies. As to the order, it is of little consequence to disturb the form in which they are presented, since it differs chronologically, in no important particular, from the course of the predictions. They shall, however, be stated in their actual succession, which will require an inconsiderable transposition of the chapters. The prophecies open in the year 760 B.C. with an affecting representation of the rebellions of Judah against God; a dignified remonstrance against their hypocritical forms of worship, while the power of religion was absent, and a lively contrast between the national ruin which impended, and their future restoration, together with the universal beneficence which should characterize the reign of the Messiah. These prophecies occupy five chapters, in the course of which he furnishes some curious illustrations of the dress and manners of oriental nations, in his description of the female ornaments which were to be taken away; and exhibits the care of the Deity and the ingratitude of the Jews, under the beautiful parable of an unfruitful vineyard.

Chronological order of Isaiah's prophecies.
B.C. 760.
Prophecies against Judah.

About two years subsequently he had the vision which is recorded in the 6th chapter, and the sublimity of which induced Saurin and his Continuators to give it the pre-eminence in his critical and theological discourses on the Bible; making it the centre around which all the remarks upon Isaiah and his prophecies revolved, in that laborious work. It is, indeed, an object of primary moment, whether we consider it as containing the credentials of the mission of this prophet to his countrymen, or whether we contemplate it as the point upon which the Evangelist fixed; thus ratifying its transcendent majesty, when he said of the Messiah, that "Esaias beheld HIS glory." And it may not be amiss to remark here, that *visions* and *dreams*, in prophetic communications, were perfectly distinguishable—the circumstances of the two being essentially and entirely different, and the impressions of the former being greatly superior to those produced by the latter. *Dreams* were inspirations imparted when the prophet was asleep, the character and congruity of which distinguished them from the romantic and heterogeneous combinations of the fancy. *Visions* surprised the prophet when he was awake, and without suspending the ordinary functions of the senses or the understanding, absorbed them wholly in visionary scenes, inaccessible to others, but so powerfully operating upon the mind of the prophet, as to abstract him from all surrounding objects. This was sometimes accompanied by an actual transportation of his

Isaiah's vision.

Visions distinguished from dreams.

person from one place to another, by rapid and almost momentary transitions. The description given by Ezekiel of his vision, in the 8th chapter of his prophecies, will fully illustrate the character of a vision, as distinguished from a dream; and the fears expressed by Obadiah to Elijah will confirm what we have advanced respecting the participation of the body in the impressions made upon the mind. "It shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me." For the same reason the sons of the prophets instituted a search of three days for Elijah, after his translation, supposing that "the Spirit of the Lord had taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley."

Prophecies
against
Syria,
Israel, and
the
Assyrians.
B.C. 738.

B.C. 725.

Tyre,
Ethiopia and
Egypt

Against
Babylon.

B.C. 712.

The
Edomites,
&c.

The three succeeding chapters, including also the 17th, are a series of predictions relative to Syria, Israel, and the Assyrians; and embrace a space of time extending from the 742d to the 738th year B.C. These are occupied with the apprehensions of Ahaz respecting the league of Israel and Syria against him. Moab is next threatened, conjointly with Ephraim, in the 15th, 16th, and 28th chapters of the prophecy, delivered in two succeeding years, the 726th and 725th B.C. Within three years from this period, Moab was to be so consumed as to leave a very "feeble remnant," while the hope of Ephraim, extinguished as to political existence, revived, never to be quenched, in the glories of the kingdom of Christ. Ten years afterwards, Tyre and Sidon were threatened, in the 23d chapter. The year succeeding, the sentence went forth against Ethiopia, Egypt, Babylon, Israel, and Assyria, including a train of prophecy, from the 18th to the 21st chapters. It is in this first denunciation against Babylon that all the events of that dreadful and memorable night in which she was taken are so minutely detailed. The scene of festivity turned into terror at the apparition of the hand-writing on the wall—the cry of the watchmen upon the towers of the city—the approach of the combined armies of the Medes and Persians, symbolized by the vision of a chariot, to which asses and camels, the distinctive animals employed by the two nations, were yoked—these circumstances are all described with the most astonishing precision. In the two years which followed, 713th and 712th B.C. the prophecy against Babylon is resumed, and associated with predictions against Assyria, Palestine, Judea, and Egypt, occupying the book from the 10th to the 14th chapter; the 22d again, from the 24th to the 27th, and from the 29th to the 56th. Predictions relative to the Messiah are interspersed with these several denunciations; but from the 40th to the 56th chapters they relate almost entirely to him, with sudden transitions to the capture of Babylon by Cyrus. We are then brought down to the 698th year before Christ, during which the Jews are severely reprov'd, and the Edomites included in the censure; and the miseries of mankind are

seen terminating in the distant, but true perspective, of the reign of Christ. The book is thus occupied from the 57th chapter to the end.

In reviewing these predictions, it cannot have escaped the observation of the most superficial readers, that the prophecies which relate to the MESSIAH have the pre-eminence. It is in these that the fullness of the genius and inspiration of the prophet manifest themselves; and we are at a loss which most to admire, the sublimity of his language, or the transcendent character of his conceptions. Isaiah has been considered a prophet of difficult interpretation; and if we consider the extent and variety of his communications, the conclusion is just; they relate to subjects which pass the limit of the finite, and lose themselves in the infinite; but if we regard them as relating simply to *facts*, detailed in prophecy and afterwards established by actual events, our astonishment springs from another quarter—and *that* the striking agreement between the representation and the thing represented. Whatever might be the immediate object of the prophet, whether the prosperity or the destruction of a state, he did not fail so to connect it with the moral government of God, as to merge it in the infinite blessings which should characterize the reign of the Messiah. He, therefore, enlarges, with singular satisfaction, upon the features of that dominion, which, while it shall ultimately absorb all others, shall educe from partial evil universal good. Thus referring all events to HIS government, “whose right it is to reign, and who must reign for ever and ever,” he reduced the inexplicable politics of this world to a simple standard; and passing over the decrees of monarchs who lived but for a season, showed their subserviency to his purpose who lives for ever. The prophet, in this point of view, had no equal, no rival. All men were absorbed in their present concerns and interests. But he, ascending the Eastern mountains, stood upon their lofty summit, as a point of light, illuminated by the glory of the yet unrisen sun: “darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people;” the plains and the vallies were enveloped in the gloom of midnight; but when the nations looked towards Jerusalem, he appeared as the harbinger of day, and scattered abroad that radiance which he alone had received. How insignificant, in comparison with his high destiny, do the achievements of conquerors appear! And he has a key to the cabinet of princes of which they have no suspicion; he is admitted, by the intelligence from which nothing is concealed, into their most secret councils; and not only declares things present, but points out consequences of which the wisdom of this world had no conception, and declares what should be the policy of nations yet unborn. This leads us to the great question of prophecy. So many attempts had been made, in the heathen world, to prejudge futurity, and so miserable were the shifts of oracles, by a perplexed and involved answer, to suit any circumstances which might possibly arise, that it behoved prophecy to have its credentials clear, in order to establish its claims. Accordingly,

The
Messiah.

Oracles of
the
heathens.

in the prophet before us, there are many striking appeals to the heathen world, not only as to the superiority, but as to the distinguishing characteristics of inspiration over the efforts of superstition. **Prophecy.** "I have not spoken in secret—from dark places in the earth"—is a testimony which sets heathen oracles at defiance, as to their structure. But when we consider the substance of prophecy, as compared, or rather contrasted with these, it is no longer a question of rivalry. The one presents only double meanings, uncertain conclusions, unauthorized presumptions; the other a cool, perspicuous, detailed representation of things not seen as yet. It should also be remembered, that the results stated by the prophets were the most unlikely, in the ordinary process of human events, that could well be imagined. For instance, the desolation of Egypt, never to be retrieved, at a time when she was the mistress of the world in arms, and the admiration of the world in literature. A train of political events may lead to a certain conclusion; and the political foresight of a man who has been accustomed to weigh consequences, and to connect effects with their causes, may enable him to arrive, with no small measure of conviction, at the fixed operation of given principles; but what shall we say when the conclusion is against all human calculations, all reasonable inferences?—when a train of prosperity is shown to issue in ruin, when unpromising beginnings are encouraged to anticipate a glorious termination, and when the prediction of the prophet bears equally against probability, against his country, against his prejudices, national and individual, and against his personal interest?—These are conclusions to which nothing could lead but inspiration, and which nothing could compel the man to deduce but a sense of duty.

Clearness of Isaiah's Prophecies. Upon this high ground stands Isaiah, the prince of prophets, as well for the clearness of his revelations as for the sublimity of his conceptions and language. It is difficult to select instances in a book full of evidence upon this important question. Shall we take the grand feature of his prophecies—his constant allusion to the Messiah? The 53d chapter of his unequalled work at once surprises and convinces us. Let any one look at that chapter and say, whether it be possible to alienate it from its object? A man may look at a portrait, and say, such and such features agree with those of this person or the other: he may, if he please, exercise his ingenuity in finding remote resemblances, and transfer that which is the actual likeness of one, to fifty, who in some particular feature may be allowed to answer to the comparison; but the question is, *whose* is the entire image? and if it be a faithful delineation, only one answer can be given to it. Such is the case with Isaiah. He was no inconsiderable portrait painter; nor were his likenesses doubtful. None could mistake the resemblance of the portrait to the original; and when Jesus came to "his own," it was not that they did not know him, but that, for reasons suggested by their

Example.

prejudices, and not by their understanding, they would not receive him. The Jews have acted the unworthy part of attempting to distort the fair and marked features of the Messiah, and to apply them to others than Jesus of Nazareth. They have fixed upon single and insulated resemblances, and have satisfied themselves to apply the predictions of this interesting chapter to Hezekiah, and to other distinguished characters. It is unnecessary to add, that this has been done with little success. The object was, not to discover the original of the portrait, but, if possible, to turn the eyes of the world from the original, that they might not perceive the likeness. But *we* have to do with facts, and to compare facts with prophecy; and in instituting this comparison, we shall find hardly any part of the Saviour's personal character, circumstances, or office, left undetailed. When the Jews set themselves, with an inveterate obstinacy, against the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, they were not aware that, by this very hostility, they were establishing his pretensions. The evangelical prophet opens his wonderful discoveries with this very circumstance, and complains, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" If they would overthrow the claims of the son of Mary, they ought to have met him with distinction, and surrounded him with prosperity; and he had been no longer Isaiah's Messiah. His unpretending character, his deep poverty, his unequalled injuries, the object of his sufferings, as an atonement for sin; the necessity of this sacrifice, as originating in human apostacy; the submission with which he bowed to his cruel oppressions; the violence of the procedure against him, defying all justice, and outraging even its forms, while it pretended to exercise them; the circumstances of his death, and his burial; numbered with malefactors, yet occupying a distinguished tomb with Joseph of Arimathea; the perfect innocence which submitted to all this injury; the reference of the whole to a plan of Deity, as unsearchable as himself, and subordinating all things to its benevolent intentions; the glorious effects of this sacrifice, extending themselves over the whole earth; looking to future ages yet for their development, and expecting their consummation in eternity: all these things, taken as a whole, demonstrate what each regarded separately must suppose; the sole and irrefragable reference of the prophecy to Jesus Christ.

Delineations
of the
Messiah.

But in questions of Theology we may be supposed to be biassed, and to lean to the convictions of our creed; for we are really old-fashioned enough to confess that *we have a creed*. We will, then, place the argument upon other grounds, and bring the predictions into contact with facts, which are simply the subject of history, and with which Theology has nothing to do. Take, for example, the prophecy relative to the destruction of Babylon. We say nothing of the memorable description of the night of dissipation and ruin, so powerfully presented in the 21st chapter, lest it should be imagined

Destruction
of Babylon.

Calling of
Cyrus.

Evidence
arising from
prophecy.

that the advantage of being able to compare the history with the prediction should have induced a fanciful interpretation; but what shall we say of the prophecy which calls *Cyrus* by his name, a century before he was born? which speaks of opening the gates of brass, before we are quite certain of their existence? It is well known that, in Isaiah's days, Babylon was a rising state; it is even uncertain whether the river was then walled, as the prophecy supposes it must be; it is indisputable that Nitocris, the queen, mother of Belshazzar, added greatly to its majesty; and that Nebuchadnezzar, who was, when the prophet wrote, unknown, if not unborn, so strengthened and embellished this wonderful city, that he arrogated to himself its creation, and said, "Is not this great Babylon that *I* have built?" But even supposing Babylon were what we are very sure it was not, and what it appeared a century afterwards, the circumstance that it was foretold that a deliverer of Israel should arise, *whose name should be Cyrus*, one hundred years before the birth of such a person, demonstrates the truth of ancient prophecy; which, as an argument in favour of revelation, does not depend upon the number of facts detailed, but upon the authenticity of them; and if it can be proved, in any one unquestionable instance, that any thing has been decidedly predicted, the argument is as conclusive, as to any application of it, as though we could produce ten thousand examples. But as it is very possible we might be deceived in any single instance, although the argument is conclusive from one only, the repetition of the case renders the principle indisputable, and the inference proportionally irrefragable. Accordingly, what has been stated relative to Babylon obtains in reference to the other states, whose destiny is pronounced by the prophet. In short, such is the variety of prophecy, as to its forms and its subjects, its principles and its application, that it is capable of being tried upon the largest possible scale; and Isaiah furnishes a just exhibition of his contemporaries and successors; while, representing all, he is inferior to none.

The investigation of this important topic cannot fail to convince every inquiring mind, that prophecy is not the conclusion of a penetrating and thinking intellect, calculating results from existing circumstances; far less, that it is the bold guess of a daring spirit which plunges into futurity at a venture, presuming that time may shape its conjectures, and give them a resemblance, if it cannot attach to them certainty; least of all can it be suspected to be a design to practise upon the credulity of mankind, by professing a knowledge not really possessed, and working upon the hopes and fears of the multitude, to bend them to any purpose, political or religious, which may be supposed to be in the contemplation of the prophet. Nothing of all this appears, or can be maintained, even with plausibility: but the prophetic pages are flooded with light; as though heaven would write its own truth only with its own sunbeams.

Our article must not be closed without adverting to the style which distinguishes this prophet. His language is as magnificent as his sentiments are elevated. It is such language as inspiration might be supposed to suggest; and leaves at an immeasurable distance all compositions merely human. It combines with argumentative force the loftiest flights of poetry: and while some critics, ancient and modern, have amused themselves in calling him the Demosthenes and the Homer of the Hebrews, we think every comparison instituted, where there is no actual equality, an injury offered to a man, the grandeur of whose expressions as far transcended the most illustrious poets and orators that ever lived, as the majesty of his thoughts surpassed their noblest conceptions. His style is evidently poetical; and while it has its own peculiar characteristic of sublimity, it participates all the singularities of Hebrew poetry. No one has been able to do full justice to this subject; but the writer who has most excelled in treating it is Bishop Lowth. The difficulty lies at the very threshold of every disquisition relative to it: since all men are not exactly agreed as to what *is* poetry; and every nation has its own forms of poetical composition, to which another nation, accustomed to other forms, can apply no correct standard. A marked difference subsists between the ancient poetry of Greece and of Rome, and the poetry of modern nations. The difference between the Hebrew and all other poetry is still greater. But if sublimity of conception, loftiness of style, richness and fulness of imagery and measured cadences, constitute poetry, these cannot be denied to Isaiah.

Style of
Isaiah.

Hebrew
poetry.

On the question of Hebrew poetry at large, besides its general cadences, its claims are rendered evident by artificial arrangements, adapted to poetry, but altogether unsuitable to prose. Such are the alphabetical divisions so frequent in the Psalms, and apparent in various parts of the prophetic writings. The visible difference between the style and form of Isaiah's usual compositions, and the few chapters in his book which record historical occurrences, seems to decide the question with respect to his prophecies. And here it must be remarked, that while inspiration allowed every man to retain his own characteristic style, that peculiarity is nowhere to be traced more distinctly than in the compositions of the different Hebrew poets. There is not a greater distinction between Isaiah and Ezekiel, as prophets, than subsists between them also as poets. When God made the prophet, he did not unmake the man. Hebrew poetry consists of every possible species of poetical composition, and these are all carried to the loftiest pitch of excellence. It is elegiac, and the lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan, stands unrivalled in this kind; it is didactic, and the Proverbs excel as much in this mode; it is pastoral, of which the Song of Solomon is a splendid specimen; it is devotional, of which the Psalms reach the highest elevation, while they furnish fine examples of the ode, in all

Pastoral
habits.

Isaiah's
excellence.

its varieties; nor must it be omitted, that the book of Job, as well as the Canticles, if not strictly speaking regular dramas, have evidently a dramatic form. But that which characterized the Hebrew poetry, and which the sages of Greece and Rome borrowed for their philosophy, was its parabolic form; as conspicuous in these compositions, as it is peculiar to the general style of the orientalists. The poetry of the Hebrews is founded upon their habits, and the features of their country. Arising from the former, it is chiefly pastoral, and borrowing from the latter, it surrounds us with the most awful features of grandeur. In every species of poetical composition, Isaiah excels, and specimens of almost the whole might be adduced from his prophecies. Encircled by the most sublime objects in nature, he transfuses their spirit and character into his own powerful style; sometimes rushing like his own mountain torrent, when he pours his tide of eloquence against the sins of his people; and at others, when assailed by the hatred of an incensed multitude, standing himself as immoveable as the rocks which surrounded Jerusalem. Majestic as the towering Lebanon; he is fertile as his own vallies by the river-side; as awful as the thunder-storm which desolated his native forests, and splintered the pinnacles of his mountainous country; as irresistible as the whirlwind of the desert, which sometimes swept over its surface. But, as though the sensible forms of being were all too mean to clothe his conceptions, and the boundaries of the creation too limited for his faculties, he passes beyond all space, penetrates into the invisible world, and embodies the most awful forms of spiritual being. We follow him, with astonishment, through unexplored regions; beyond the margin of created nature, and the lines drawn by the eternal Architect around the material universe; until losing sight of sun, moon, and stars, other light breaks in upon the soul, and like him, we see Jehovah upon his throne. But we must no longer indulge in these delightful contemplations, or expatiate on a theme so full of grandeur; we shall be gratified if we have done any thing like justice to a character which surpasses all eulogy; and especially if our cursory remarks shall induce our readers to consult his matchless compositions for themselves.

CHAPTER XI.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

FLOURISHED ABOUT A.M. 3399, B.C. 605, TO A.M. 3442, B.C. 562.

THE important name with which we have inscribed this page associates with it almost every thing that has been thought great in human destiny, and much that is obscure. This prince, in strict propriety of language, is the first of the Babylonian empire; the existence of which, although possibly more remote than that of most others, seems blended, until this time, with the destinies of the Assyrian monarchy, to which it was decidedly subordinate. The foundation of the Babylonian kingdom was laid, so far as can be ascertained, at Babel—the plain of Shinar, the land of Chaldea, being the ancient site of Nimrod's dominion; but, after his death, it is lost amidst mightier states, and the first great monarchy, the Assyrian, occupies, for ages exclusively, the attention of the world. And here the obscurity begins. The Assyrian monarchy is so completely involved in fable, as to perplex the historian in reference to each of its dependencies. All the records of these early nations, with themselves, have perished; and the Grecian writers, into whose hands some portions of them must have fallen, from an unaccountable indifference, or more criminal pride, neglected to avail themselves of them; preferring to supply their own scanty knowledge from the imagination, rather than to derive authentic information from any other people, all of whom they regarded as barbarians, whatever were their power, distinction, and science. The very few fragments which remain of these early historians, preserved to us in later works, establish a sentiment which we have distinctly avowed, and upon which we have unhesitatingly acted, that the Scriptures afford the only records of these remote periods that can be depended upon; for in none of the Greek writers, with the exception of Herodotus, can we venture to repose any confidence. This latter historian, however, we think, has been treated with as little justice, in some respects, as other Greek writers have been unduly estimated; and certain points of ancient history, which appeared most questionable in his narrative, have been rendered so far clear by subsequent researches, as to afford ground to conclude that he was influenced by a spirit of candour, to which his countrymen were generally strangers, and which induced him to avail himself, in many important instances,

Origin of the
Babylonian
and
Assyrian
monarchies.

Greek
historians
mostly
fabulous.

Fidelity of
Herodotus.

of that foreign intelligence which they despised. It is the more to be regretted that the Greeks should have been infected with the childish vanity of being supposed the first of people, and have either slighted or destroyed the literary monuments of other nations; since to them we owe (with the exception of the Bible) almost all that can now be collected of ancient history. The Chaldean records have perished; and those of Persia were destroyed by the Greeks, when they conquered that empire: the Egyptians alone seem to have excited their reverence; and they, in return, were very sparing in their communications. Diodorus Siculus prefers speculating himself, or adopting the fables of others, to using the information he might have acquired from Manetho and Borosus; and Ctesias, of all writers the least to be accredited, and the most palpably fictitious, seems to be the fountain whence the Greek historians generally derived their monstrous accounts. A few fragments of the ancient historians of other nations are preserved by Josephus, and some others; but these only serve to make us regret the treasures which we have lost, which Greece not only neglected, but of which, in certain instances, she was guilty of despoiling the world. We owe to Ctesias the fable of Semiramis; to whom are imputed many works and achievements utterly impossible to any individual, whatever resources were at her control, whatever enterprise was in her disposition, or however constant the prosperity which might attend her movements. We have admitted this celebrated name into our Biography,¹ because it seems scarcely possible wholly to deny her existence; or, at least, it has been so long admitted, that we could not be justified in wholly discarding her from the ancient list of heroines, however little credit we attach to her exploits. We have been obliged to give her history, as it came to our hands, from the Grecian historians; but we have not hesitated to state our doubts as to most of the events handed down to us as facts; and we repeat our conviction, that the majority of them are palpable fictions. There is a remark by Bryant, in the second volume of his *Ancient Mythology*, which appears to us to throw considerable light upon this obscure subject, and to furnish the only probable solution of certain incontestible facts, which, when confined to the reigns of Ninus and Semiramis, assume the character of fable, because impossible to have been effected by them. His observations are of the greater moment, as they accord better with the account given of those transactions by Herodotus; and as they are perfectly reducible within the space which must be assigned to them, if they took place at all, in conformity with the Scripture list of Assyrian kings, which has been already given under the article SEMIRAMIS. Bryant says, "the whole of those histories, in their common acceptation, is to the last degree absurd and improbable: but if we make use of an expedient, which I have often recommended,

Ancient records.

Diodorus Siculus.

Ctesias.

Semiramis.

Bryant.

Assumption that the Assyrian histories are allegories.

¹ See *Early Oriental History*.

and for a *person*, substitute a *people*, we shall find, when it is stripped of its false colouring, that there is much truth in the narration." Upon this principle, he proceeds to strike out the names of the earliest supposed founders of states, and to transfer from individuals, whom he accounts fabulous, historical exploits to an entire nation; and he thus explains and justifies himself: "It was a common mode of expression, to call a tribe, or family, by the name of its founder, and a nation by the head of the line. People are often spoken of collectively in the singular, under such a patronymic. Hence we read in Scripture, that *Israel* abode in tents; that *Judah* was put to the worst in battle; that *Dan* abode in ships, and *Asher* remained on the seacoast. The same manner of speaking undoubtedly prevailed both in Egypt and in other countries; and *Chus* must have been often put for the Cuthites, or Cuseans; *Amon* for the Amonians; and *Asur*, or the *Assyrian*, for the people of Assyria. Hence, when it was said, that the Ninevite performed any great action, it has been ascribed to a person, *Ninus*, the supposed founder of Nineveh. And as none of the Assyrian conquests were antecedent to Pul and Assur-Adon, writers have been guilty of an unpardonable anticipation, in ascribing those conquests to the first king of the country. A like anticipation, amounting to a great many centuries, is to be found in the annals of the Babylonians. Every thing that was done in later times has been attributed to Belus, Semiramis, and other imaginary princes, who are represented as the founders of the kingdom. We may, I think, be assured, that under the character of Ninus, and Ninyas, we are to understand the Ninevites; as by Semiramis, is meant a people called Samarim; and the great actions of these two nations are in the histories of those personages recorded. But writers have rendered the account inconsistent, by limiting what was an historical series of many ages to the life of a single person. The Ninevites and Samarim *did* perform all that is attributed to Semiramis and Ninus. They did conquer the Medes and Bactrians, and extended their dominions westward as far as Phrygia and the river Tanais; and to the southward as far as Arabia and Egypt. But these events were many ages after the foundation of the two kingdoms. They began under Pul, of Nineveh, and were carried on by Assur-Adon, Salmanassar, Sennacherib, and others of his successors." This learned writer here conducts us to safe ground, and the authentic records of these monarchs; at least so much of them as remains in the Scriptures, and are there preserved, from the connection of their conquests with the political and religious interests of the Jewish nation. He goes on—"Nineveh was at last ruined, and the kingdom of Assyria was united with that of Babylonia. This is the reason that we find these kingdoms so often confounded, and the Babylonians continually spoken of as Assyrians, and sometimes as Persians.²

Nineveh.
Assyria.
Babylonia.

² Βαβυλων Περσικη πολις. Steph. Byz.

This is probably alluded to in the supposed marriage of Semiramis and Ninus. Then it was that the Samarim performed the great works attributed to them. For, exclusive of what was performed at Babylon, *there are*, says Strabo, *almost over the face of the whole earth, vast mounds of earth* (these mounds were high altars, upon which they sacrificed to the sun. By Ctesias they are supposed to have been the tombs of her lovers whom she buried alive—Syncellus, p. 64,) *and walls and ramparts, attributed to Semiramis; and in those are subterraneous passages of communication, and tanks for water, with staircases of stone. There are also vast canals to divert the course of rivers, and lakes to receive them, together with highways and bridges of a wonderful structure.*³ They built the famous terraces at Babylon, and those beautiful gardens at Egbatana, after that city had fallen into their hands. They built Babylon itself; which, by Eupolemus, was said to have been the work of Belus and the giants."⁴ He proceeds to establish his position by further facts, and supports his inferences by a quotation from Clemens Alex. Strom. Lib. I. p. 364, and thus concludes—"The Samarim of Egypt and Babylonia were of the same family, *the sons of Chus*. They came and settled among the Mizraim, under the name of shepherds. The reason of their being called Semarim, and Samarim," having been already adduced under the article of Semiramis, from this writer, need not be here repeated. Upon the whole, we see no reason, after the most careful revision of the subject, to depart from the opinions expressed in that article; and without going all the lengths of this distinguished writer, and supposing that there were no such persons as Ninus, Ninyas, or Semiramis, we are disposed to adopt in general his principle, that the heroic achievements ascribed to those personages were, in fact, the exploits of a people named after them, or connected with them; and which are, demonstrably, the works not of a reign but of ages.

Nothing can be more difficult than to attempt to fix the precise bounds of any ancient empire topographically, as may be seen by any one who will try to define the boundaries of Syria and the Holy Land; and politically, as appears in the mixture of state with state, and the influence of one domination over another: the empire of the Assyrians is particularly difficult to ascertain, as it becomes, in some measure, confounded with the Syrians and blended with the Babylonians. Rejecting as fabulous the list of monarchs inserted by Ctesias, some of whose names, from their very construction, are not of Assyrian origin, we look to the celebrated canon of Ptolemy as supplying the next best information to that of the Scriptures; and the first name of eminence upon this authority is that of Nabonassar, probably a descendant of the first Assyrian monarch mentioned in

Ptolemy's
canon.

³ Strabo, L. XVI. p. 1071.

⁴ Euseb. Præp. L. IX. C. 17. p. 418. Quint. Curt. Lib. V. C. 1. Abydenus, apud Euseb. Præp. L. IX. C. 15. Syncellus, p. 44.

the Bible, Pul. This prince has been thought, with a high degree of probability, to have been afterwards worshipped by the Babylonians, who were well content to be considered as of Assyrian origin, under the name Bel, or Belus.⁵ We make no pretence to fix the date of the Assyrian monarchy; but, taking Pul as the earliest sovereign of eminence of whom we have any certain information, we shall find his first appearance in the formidable character of an invader, in the second year of the reign of Menahem, amidst the treasons, tumults, and usurpations which, in that age, oppressed the kingdom of Israel, about A.M. 3231, B.C. 773. Having now found land on which to set our foot, after being tossed upon an ocean of conjecture, we shall be able to trace rapidly, yet distinctly, the Assyrian succession, until it merges in the distinguished and united sovereignty of Nebuchadnezzar. To Pul succeeded Tiglath-pileser, who was contemporary with Ahaz, king of Judah, (whether he were the son of Pul or not, is a point which historians cannot determine,) and Archbishop Usher, who is in most cases to be relied upon, has fallen into the mistake of supposing him to have been Sardanapalus, in which he is followed by Prideaux and Rollin, but ably refuted by the writers of the *Ancient Universal History*; who justly observe, that Pul being, upon the most authentic records, supposed to be the founder of the Assyrian empire, as to its greatness, and Sardanapalus being generally admitted to have been the last of the Assyrian monarchs, it would, to adopt the learned primate's opinion, lead to the supposition, that this mighty monarchy began and ended at nearly the same time; nor could there be any space for the known reigns of sovereigns succeeding Pul, whose existence and exploits are by no means problematical. The alliance of this prince with the king of Judah, and the fatal consequences of it to that unhappy monarch, as it conducted still more to those idolatrous propensities with which he was already but too much infatuated, have appeared in their proper places in the history of Israel and Judah.

To Tiglath-pileser succeeded Shalmaneser, whose existence and power are not only to be gathered from indisputable ancient records, but must be considered as established beyond all doubt by the circumstance that to him the Israelites yielded their long-defended sovereignty; a blow from which they never afterwards fully recovered.

Sennacherib was the successor of Shalmaneser. Hitherto, from the days of Pul, Assyria, in the zenith of her glory, is evidently the mistress of surrounding nations, and of Babylon and the Medes among the rest, the last of whom seemed to have been the most impatient of the yoke, and the earliest disposed to shake it off. Upon these principles we may account for the haughty and insulting menaces of Sennacherib to Hezekiah, and his boast of having subdued the gods of all the neighbouring countries. The miraculous defeat of

⁵ The more common opinion is, that Nimrod was Belus. as we have formerly stated.

his army has its proper record in another place, under the article ISALAH; but his political influence was dreadfully weakened by this unexpected blow, and he himself soon after suffered assassination from the hand of two of his own children, who fleeing to escape the consequences of the murder which they had perpetrated, left the throne to be occupied by another of his sons, Esar-haddon.

Esar-
haddon.

This prince, whose name is also written Assarhaddon, and variously by some of the Jewish prophets, and by the LXX. succeeded indeed to the throne, but not to the power of his insolent and unfortunate predecessor. The Assyrian monarchy had long existed in obscurity, and amidst fluctuating circumstances, scarcely distinguished from surrounding nations, and divided into petty sovereignties. It had risen to eminence, under a succession of enterprising conquerors; Pul standing at the head of them; had assumed the most extensive domination over other states; and had spread its line of territory beyond its own power of control. Dominion acquired by violence, and by *rapid* conquests especially, must always be subject to fearful reverses; and what one adventurer can win, another excited by his exploits, may recover. The glory of Assyria was now waning, and the Medes, revolting from the sceptre of Sennacherib, could not be reduced by that of Esar-haddon. By some circumstances auspicious to his situation, but which are not distinctly explained in any quarter, he ascended the throne of Babylon, and soon found himself able to assume, like his predecessors, the attitude of a conqueror. He subdued both Egypt and Ethiopia, and having recovered to his crown its ancient lustre, he expired after a long reign, which became most distinguished as it drew nearer its termination.

Subsequent
silence of
Scripture
accounted
for.

With this monarch the light of sacred history is awhile withdrawn from us, and other lights but feebly serve to disperse the gloom. There is a chasm in the records of the Bible from Esar-haddon to Nebuchadnezzar; respecting which it will be sufficient to remember that the history of the Israelites is the object of the sacred historians, and that other nations occupy their pages only incidentally, and as they are, by events affecting the Jewish monarchy, brought into contact with that people. Hence appear the names of the Assyrian conquerors, from Pul to Esar-haddon, on these records; and, after a blank occasioned by the separation of the Assyrian interests from those of Judah, the mighty sovereign of Babylon, by whom the house of David was led captive and his throne overturned, arises, as it were, at once in the plenitude of power, and adding to his many crowns the sacred diadem of the Jews. The links of the intermediate narrative are supplied by parts of the Apocryphal books, by Herodotus and Ptolemy's canon; from which, unitedly, we gather that Esar-haddon was succeeded by his son Saosduchinus; by whom it has been conjectured Manasseh, king of Judah, was set at liberty, and during whose reign of twenty years Egypt resumed her independence. His son and successor was Chyniladan, supposed to be the

Saosduchi-
nus.

Nabuchadonosor of the book of Judith, to whose reign, therefore, those events recorded in that book, so far as they happened at all, must be referred. It appears, in general, that the Medes had acquired independency, and having conquered the Persians, were strong enough to threaten even the Assyrian empire; that in this emergency the Assyrian monarch called together his tributary provinces, some of whom refused to obey the summons. He mustered, however, an army of considerable strength, and marching against the Medes, defeated them, seized upon their capital, and slew their monarch. After his victory, the Assyrian monarch resolved to turn his arms against the nations who had refused to assist him in his war with the Medes, and setting no limits to his wrath, included the Jews among other objects of his vengeance. The tale of their deliverance, and the defeat of his general Holofernes, by the hand of Judith, is too long to insert here, especially as we are doubtful as to its authenticity in respect of the heroine, although the general facts themselves receive confirmation from other ancient historians. It will be sufficient to remark, that the expedition was unsuccessful, and the Assyrian empire considerably weakened.

Chyniladan,
or Nabuchadonosor.

Holofernes
and Judith.

Sarac is said to have succeeded him; and his character and fate seem to accord with the Sardanapalus of Ctesias, as Esar-haddon has been supposed by the writers of the Ancient Universal History to have been the heroic Sardanapalus of other profane historians: it being evident, from Suidas, that there were two persons of that name, said to have been kings of Assyria, the one as brave as the last (supposed to be Sarac) was effeminate. Nabopalassar having the command of his Chaldean forces, seized upon the throne of Babylon; and to strengthen his usurpation by a powerful alliance, he demanded and obtained for his son, Nebuchadnezzar, the hand of the daughter of Astyages, who was governor of Media. The Medes and Babylonians thus united, subordinated the ancient dynasties of Assyria to the rising empire of Babylon.

Sarac,
probably
Sardanapalus.

Nabopalassar.

Thus are we introduced to the illustrious object of this article; but before we enter upon his life, so far as we can gather its particulars, it is necessary still further to remark, that Babylon was long in subjection to Assyria; and that the Babylonians and Assyrians were two ramifications of the same family. It seems pretty evident that Nabonassar, who was the first king, or ruler, of Babylon, was a younger son, whose elder brother, Tiglath-pileser, was king of Assyria, residing at Nineveh, the ancient capital of that empire. Some writers have hence conjectured that Nabonassar was the Ninus of Ctesias, and that Semiramis (supposing her ever to have existed) was his wife; who, holding the reins of government for a short time after her husband's death, bestowed much attention to the beauty or strength of the rising city of Babylon. Nadius (not improbably the Ninyas of Ctesias,) succeeded, and reigned two years. Chinzirus, Porus, Jugæus, are undistinguished names that now appear in the

Nabonassar,
probably
Ninus.

Nadius,
probably
Ninyas.
Chinzirus,
Porus,
Jugæus.

Mardoc-empad, or Merodach-baladan.

Arkianus, Belibus, Apronadius, Regibelus, Mesessimordacus.

Nabocolassar, or Nebuchadnezzar.

Berosus.

Uncertainties.

line of succession. Mardoc-empad, the Merodach-baladan of the Scriptures, acquires some notice as the monarch who congratulated Hezekiah upon his recovery; and the first who held any intercourse with the kings of Judah. He had possibly some sinister intention to draw Hezekiah into a secret alliance with him, favourable to his ambitious designs against Assyria, whose yoke, although perhaps one of consanguinity, was not always light. Arkianus, Belibus, Apronadius, Regibelus, Mesessimordacus, in rapid and not regular succession, made way, after an interregnum of eight years, for Esarhaddon, to the throne of Babylon. Then followed the princes of Assyria and Babylon, unitedly, as we have stated, until Nabopalassar rent Babylon from Assyria, seized the crown of the former, and, allied with the Medes, finally overthrew that ancient monarchy in its distinct form, merging it in the empire of Babylon, and transmitting its condensed authority to his son, Nabocolassar, the Nebuchadnezzar of Scripture.

Important as is the character of this conqueror to different nations, it is far from being evident what was the nature of his exploits before he appears to us in the pages of the Bible; and even of those which are known, it is not possible to fix the date. On the authority of Berosus, he is said to have conquered Egypt, and to have been called thence, or from Judea, to the throne, upon the death of his father; a statement, which, however, neither accords with general probability, with the history of Egypt, nor with the necessities of the Babylonish empire, then beginning to establish itself in its independence. That Nebuchadnezzar in the event subjugated Egypt is an indisputable fact, repeatedly foretold by the Jewish prophets; but it was not at the time assigned by Berosus for the transaction. Egypt was, before the death of Nabopalassar, a more powerful state than Babylon. The father of Nebuchadnezzar required all the mighty genius of his son, combined with his own, to seat him firmly upon a throne which had recently asserted its independence. And whether Nebuchadnezzar were really ever associated with his father in the empire, or whether, as age and infirmity fell upon him, Nabopalassar resigned the reigns of government to his son, does not distinctly appear. It can only be our business, in conveying the best information upon the different subjects of this work which we can collect, to refer to all the remaining sources whence the most ample and authentic intelligence may be derived; and perhaps an Encyclopædia of reference alone would be found a desideratum in the literary world: but we may be permitted, in justice to our predecessors in these intricate paths, to observe, that on the very obscure topics, which we have introduced in this article as necessarily associated with the name of Nebuchadnezzar, more patient research, more learned criticism, and more impartial statements, are not any where to be found than in the pages of the Ancient Universal History, relative to the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchies.

We first hear of him with certainty after the death of his father; whose extensive projects he made it his business to complete. This was done by so reducing the Assyrian monarchy as to subordinate it to the Babylonian, and finally to blend both, as one sovereignty, in his own person. In conjunction with Cyaxares, the Mede, he crossed the Euphrates, rescued Carchemish from the usurpation of Egypt, overran Syria, and some years afterwards subjugated Egypt itself. He first appears in the Bible in the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, as invading that country; and although he did not wholly ravage it, but upon certain conditions restored the Jewish prince to his throne, he plundered the temple, carrying its spoils to the temple of Belus, and, at the same time, among other captives distinguished for their beauty and illustrious for their rank, he took with him Daniel and his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. It was at this period also that, having established and extended his empire, he applied himself to fortify and ornament his capital, and that Babylon first began to acquire that magnitude and splendour for which it has been celebrated in all ages.

Succeeds
his father.

Joins
Cyaxares,
Rescues
Carchemish.

Invades
Judea.

Daniel and
his
companions.
Fortifies
Babylon.

In the second year of his reign the king was exceedingly distressed, on account of a dream, which appeared to him to involve in it some important intimations, and which yet passed entirely from his memory. Of the terrified Chaldeans, who were the priests and the astrologers of the country, he made the extraordinary requisition, that they should not only give an interpretation of the vision, but recall its vanished circumstances to his mind; enforcing this arbitrary demand by threatening the destruction of themselves and families, in case of their non-compliance. There can be no doubt that these menaces would have been too surely executed, had not the insignificant captive, Daniel, undertaken, in reliance upon the God of heaven, to accomplish that which lay not within the compass of human ability. His faith did not deceive him; the sanguinary decree was suspended; the purport and circumstances of the monarch's dream were revealed to the prophet in a vision of the night; and by detailing the last, and explaining the first, he obtained, with the remission of the punishment threatened against the Chaldeans, the highest distinctions of the empire, under its absolute and impetuous master. As hasty in his gratitude as in his wrath, the tribute now paid by Nebuchadnezzar to the wisdom of this extraordinary young man was not less extravagant than his former displeasure against the sages who had forfeited his confidence. He prostrated himself before him; commanded that they should offer an oblation to him, "with sweet odours;" promoted his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to distinguished offices in the state; and made him chief of the wise men of Babylon. The vision itself is too important to be wholly passed over in silence, both on account of the great events which it foretold, and because it establishes certain facts connected with this biographical sketch. It presented to him a gigantic image,

His vision.

Interpreted
by Daniel.

The image
and its
significa-
tion.

of excellent brightness and appalling majesty, singularly composed of four metals. His "head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." While the attention of Nebuchadnezzar was fastened upon this object, from an unseen quarter a stone was launched at the image, and having smitten the incongruous materials of which it was composed, and crumbled them into dust, the stone itself increased, and became a great mountain, which appeared to fill the whole earth. Such was the dream; and the interpretation was as momentous as the vision was in itself extraordinary. It referred to the successive monarchies of the Babylonians, signified by the richest metal; the Persians, who next rose, typified by the silver; the Grecians, to whom these again were subjected in the days of Alexander, prefigured by the brass; and the Romans, by whom these last were subdued, symbolized by the iron; these, in their turn, losing their power, and having their dominion broken into various fragments by the incursions of the northern barbarians, represented by the debased and incoherent mixture of iron and clay, forming the *feet* of the image. The stone is explained by the prophet himself also to refer to the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, set up under the Roman domination, which alone can neither know change nor end, and which is to be as universal in its influence as eternal in its character. We observed, that Nebuchadnezzar might be considered as the first monarch of the Babylonish empire; since under him its ascendancy over that of Assyria was so complete as to immerge the latter in itself: and this fact is distinctly established by the address of Daniel to the king,—"*Thou art this head of gold.*"

Rebellion of
Jehoiakim.

While Nebuchadnezzar was thus occupied at Babylon, Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, rebelled the second time; on which occasion the various nations tributary to Nebuchadnezzar's crown were instructed to invade Judea; and Jerusalem was shortly after again plundered by the king in person. Yet the final blow was not struck; for after laying the country waste, he placed its barren sceptre in the hand of Zedekiah.

Egypt's
decline.

By one of those incidental, but important remarks, so frequently to be met with in the brief and simple narratives of the Bible, we learn the declining and diminished state of Egypt at this time. "And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken, from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt."

Zedekiah's
rebellion.

Nine years after this event, the infatuated Zedekiah rebelled against his conqueror, encouraged by Pharaoh-hophra, king of Egypt; and, at the same time, other nations began to show symptoms of impatience under his yoke. Nebuchadnezzar, with the promptitude and energy which characterised him, determined to march against all these revolvers; but, perplexed as to the quarter against which he should first direct his irresistible forces, he seems, from a singular

passage in the prophecies of Ezekiel, to have had recourse to a practice common in that day, of divination by arrows; a mode not confined to the Babylonians, but practised by the Greeks, and by the Arabs down to the very days of Mohammed. He determined to march against the Jews; and having rapidly taken their chief cities, he sat down before Jerusalem. In the meanwhile the king of Egypt attempted a diversion in their favour, but retreated upon the advancement of Nebuchadnezzar against him. The siege of Jerusalem occupied so long a time, that the monarch himself withdrew from it, leaving its conduct to his generals, by whom it was at length assaulted, and taken by night. The last king of Judah was deprived of sight, and sent to Babylon, and the city entirely dismantled; but the progress of this dreadful transaction will be noticed more particularly in its proper place. After this complete victory, he returned home enriched with the spoils of tributary nations, and more especially with the plunder of Jerusalem, to execute another absurd project of unlimited power, affording a fresh example of that intoxication of reason and justice almost inseparable from its possession.

Ezek. xxi.
21, 23.
Divination
by arrows.

Retreat of
Pharaoh-
hophra.

Jerusalem
taken.

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.” Grotius supposes that he has discovered the site of this idolatrous transaction, on the banks of the Euphrates, on a spot called Duraba by Ptolemy. St. Jerome notices a small difference as to the reading of this name among various writers, and remarks that the term *Dura* is rendered by the LXX. by a word which signifies *an enclosure*. An enclosed plain appears consonant with the structure of Persian temples, which consisted simply of a large court, surrounded by walls, but uncovered by any roof, in the midst of which the perpetual fire burned upon an altar. Supposing an enclosure at all, less compass than is implied by the term *a plain* could not admit the countless throngs who, impelled by the severe decree of the king, crowded to pay homage to the idol; and if it were set up on an open country, known by the name of Dura, the place will appear to be still better adapted to the innumerable worshippers than any imaginable enclosure.

Golden
image.

Plain of
Dura.

The image may either be supposed to have been consecrated to Belus, the principal idol of the Babylonians, or to the memory of his father, it being no unusual thing to deify a deceased monarch: or it might be a representation of himself—an excess of pride, folly, and impiety, not without its parallel in the records of human presumption. To determine this point is very immaterial, and must be to us absolutely impossible. The proportions of the image have greatly surprised and puzzled all writers upon the subject. A statue ninety feet in height, and only nine in breadth, is in altitude ten times its thickness; whereas, in the proportion of the human figure, a man's height does not exceed six times his breadth. To reduce the figure to a due proportion, and ascribe the remainder to the pedestal, as

Dimensions
of the
image.

is done by Dr. Prideaux, would be to make the pedestal exceed by ten feet the height of the figure; a violation of proportion not to be imagined, even in the rudest state of the arts. The ingenious editor of Calmet has proposed a much more probable solution in the fragments attached to the Dictionary of the Bible; and which fully agrees with the known forms of the statues of the same age. Although the specimens of that country have all perished, we have Egyptian examples of sculpture of an equal antiquity; and it is probable, from the high scientific renown of Egypt, as well as from the circumstance that he had despoiled Egypt of several of her cities, and was no doubt well acquainted with her public monuments of all kinds, that Nebuchadnezzar would prefer to form his idol after the pattern of her images. We may, at least, fairly presume, in the absence of other specimens of sculpture of equal date, that those which remain of Egypt may be considered as representing the taste of that age, and the proportions and attitudes then preferred. The idols of Egypt, of a date so remote as the age of Nebuchadnezzar, were uniformly carved in a sitting posture, and with a lofty ornament on the head, considered, by the Egyptians, as a mark of some divine attribute.

Egyptian
idols.

Let us suppose, therefore, the height of the figure to be described by Daniel, not as it was while sitting, but as it would have been if erect—that is, *proportionally*, not *perpendicularly*—and to this conjecture let the head-ornament, inseparable from statues of the gods of that age, and the pedestal upon which the image was placed, be taken also into the account, and the alleged disproportion will vanish. The original word, (רַב,) rendered *breadth*, may be translated either *depth* or *thickness*, as will best comport with the preservation of the due proportion of the figure.

Riches of
Babylon.

As we have already (under the article SEMIRAMIS,⁶) adverted to the immense wealth treasured up in the temple of Babylon, the image thus raised agrees with the testimony of ancient writers in general, both as to the inexhaustible riches of the Babylonish monarchs, and their appropriation to purposes of idolatry. Incredible as these may appear at first sight, it must be recollected, that we are very inadequate judges of the actual mines of the oriental world; and that it is indisputable that the overflowing affluence of the Persian monarchy was subsequently drawn from the spoils of the Babylonian empire; while it is equally evident that Nebuchadnezzar derived the immense resources which enabled him to effect this, and similar works of magnificence, from the plunder of subjected nations, among whom Judea was not the least, and from the treasuries of their respective monarchs, whom he either rendered tributary, or reduced to a state of captivity.

It was one of the strongest tokens of submission which he could

⁶ In Early Oriental History.

demand from the conquered nations, to require of them to worship his God. And while the remotest provinces of his empire were expected to present this homage, in the persons of their governors and representatives, the varieties of language among them rendered it necessary that a signal should be given, which all would comprehend. This was now made by all the then known instruments of music, some of which are now unknown to us; and when these were heard, all the people prostrated themselves before the idol.

There were three men, and only three among these multitudes, who had fortitude to resist the imperial decree, at least, so far as their personal homage was concerned, and who dared to be singular in order to be good. These were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, the illustrious companions of Daniel; who, from what elsewhere unequivocally determines his character, himself must have been absent at the time on the public business, or have been tolerated in his voluntary withdrawal, since he is not named on this memorable occasion. When the king heard of this refusal, his rage was unbounded, and he commanded them to be brought before him; but whether he felt some "compunctious visitings of nature," which rendered him unwilling to inflict so cruel a punishment as he had threatened upon any man; or whether he recollected, with any emotions of respect and gratitude, the services of men who had faithfully promoted the interests of his empire, in wonderful inconsistency, both with his general impetuosity of temper, and his excessive wrath at their presumption, he condescended to expostulate with them, to suspend their punishment, and to give them an opportunity of securing its remission, by affording another chance of obedience. But when their firm but respectful reply, absolutely refusing to worship his idol, met his ear, and they dared to justify, in the royal presence, conduct dictated by their consciences, and demanded of them by their God, his suppressed indignation broke forth in augmented and uncontrollable fury, and with an impotence of malice which defeated its own purpose, he ordered the furnace to be heated (the death to which the disobedient were doomed) seven times hotter than usual. They were then led forth to execution, and the fierceness of the fire was such, that the flames rushing upon the soldiers who were employed to cast them into the furnace, consumed them. The monarch himself was present to feast his eyes upon this cruel sacrifice to his superstition and tyranny, when a decisive miracle was wrought to preserve his victims. The fire appeared to have no power to harm the men, who fell down into the midst of it; but rising from their bands, (these only being consumed,) they walked unhurt amidst the flames, accompanied by a fourth personage, then first seen, of so glorious and majestic an aspect, that Nebuchadnezzar had no hesitation in deeming him a divine person. Struck with this miraculous deliverance, he now called them forth, and, in the presence of the whole court, it appeared

Shadrach,
Meshach,
and
Abed-nego.

Miraculous
deliverance.

that a hair of their head was not singed, their garments were not changed, nor was there even the smell of fire about them. With a temper as impetuous as before, Nebuchadnezzar now decreed that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, should not be subjected to any indignity among his numerous subjects, on the penalty of the utter extermination of the offending individual and his property.

The furnace into which these celebrated sufferers were cast is not to be identified with the structures so called in modern times. No certain form of building can be absolutely determined from the word (מִצְרָה) employed. The ancient furnace was probably an open enclosure for fire; such we know to have been the broad, but enclosed layer of fire, through which the superstitious passed in honour of Moloch; and this is sanctioned by the Apocryphal writer, who says, that the angel of the Lord descended, and smote the flame of the furnace by a current of air.⁷ Now, admitting the wind to have been the instrument in producing, or in assisting, this miraculous deliverance, it is evident, on the supposition of a furnace so constructed, that the very blast, which had sufficient power to abate the fury of the element within the enclosure, by driving it beyond its limits, would also, by that very act, urge it *upon* the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar, and cause it to scorch and to devour them. Calmet places this event at the close of the scriptural account of Nebuchadnezzar, and after his restoration from the insanity which seized him, (of which we are to speak hereafter,) but upon what authority it does not appear. It is placed in the order in which we have considered it, not only in the book of Daniel, but according to the chronology of Archbishop Usher, adopted in the margin of our Bibles, and by most other writers. Having followed this chronological arrangement hitherto, we have met with no arguments sufficiently conclusive to induce us to depart from it on the present occasion.

Three years after the destruction of Jerusalem, the most considerable of the neighbouring nations confederated against the king of Babylon, whose power was too formidable, and his empire too extended, to allow him to continue in repose, so long as any possibility of resistance to his authority remained to the conquered provinces. It is not impossible that they might have been stirred up with indignation against him, from the imposition of homage to his deities, which we have just noticed, and which was exacted in such rigorous terms, from all over whom his domination extended. A higher indignity could not be offered to any vanquished nation, as we have observed, than to oblige them to abandon their own deities, and receive those of their conqueror. Tyre and Egypt had been long threatened in the sacred prophecies with the Babylonish yoke; and the time was now come when Nebuchadnezzar was to be the

Ancient
furnace.

Calmet.

Usher.

Revolt
against
Babylon.

Tyre.
Egypt.

⁷ Song of the Three Children, ver. 26, 27.

unconscious instrument of carrying into effect these menaces of heaven. The arms of this mighty warrior were first turned against Tyre; but he found the city so strongly fortified, that its siege occupied no less than thirteen years; and when, eventually, he made himself master of the city, there were but few inhabitants, and no spoil. The wretched remnant he put to the sword; and razed the city to the ground. The Tyrians, anticipating the result, and being fully acquainted with the persevering character of the man with whom they had to deal; hopeless also of finally repelling, although they were able so long to keep him in check; gradually removed their effects, and the population of the old city, to an island belonging to them, about half-a-mile from the shore; upon which they founded a new state, and left the disappointed and exasperated victor to vent his fury upon the deserted houses, and the miserable beings who could not escape.

Siege of Tyre.

The city taken.

The prophet Ezekiel distinctly enumerates the difficulties and circumstances of this siege: the final success of the invader; the little profit accruing from his victory; and the recompense for his warlike toils awaiting him in Egypt,—“Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled; yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it. Therefore, thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and *it* shall be the wages for his army.”⁸ Accordingly, the Babylonish monarch, who was not idle during this long investment of Tyre, nor confined his operations to that object, (for he had punished by the hand of his general, Nebuzaradan, the remnant of the Jews who had been left in their native land, and who had assassinated Gedaliah, their governor; and chastised the Sidonians, Moabites, Ammonites, and Idumæans,) at length directed his energies against Egypt, already weakened by his former retrenchment of its empire, and now still more enervated by intestine divisions. A civil war was at this time carried on, with the animosity usual to such contentions, between Apis and Amasis, each striving for the sole sovereignty, and mutually laying open their devoted country as a spoil to the advancing destroyer. He succeeded in the subjugation of this renowned kingdom, and returned again to Babylon a victor, enriched with spoil. What arrangements he made in Egypt is not so certain as his success. The name of Amasis, however, is so considerable in the history of that people, as to induce a probable conclusion that he confirmed to him the crown in subordination to himself. Once more settled quietly in his dominions, Nebuchadnezzar set himself to perfect those works which we have already

B.C. 572.

Ezekiel's prophecy.

Nebuzaradan and the Sidonians, Moabites, Ammonites, and Idumæans. Egypt invaded.

Civil war.

Apis and Amasis.

Egypt subdued.

Amasis still considerable.

⁸ Ezek. xxix. 18, 19.

adverted to as commenced in an earlier part of his reign, for the embellishment and fortification of the astonishing city which was the boast of his empire. Into a detail of these it is unnecessary that we should enter further than has already been done, under the Article SEMIRAMIS, with whom they were fabled to originate. We venture to say *fabled*, because, even admitting her existence, and that she, or Belus, commenced the work, and drew the mighty outline, no more can be pretended, with any colour of probability, than that she laid the foundation of its future magnificence: *that* outline swelling under the enterprising genius of Nebuchadnezzar, until it reached an extent beyond human ability to fill it up; and although he accomplished his design in part, and was succeeded in his labour by his daughter-in-law, the Queen Nitocris, and the city thus actually reared was the admiration of the world—the Babylonish monarchy did not exist long enough to suffer the magnificent design to be carried into completion. With the circumstances of the destruction of this city, we have not at present any thing to do; they are connected with the overthrow of the monarchy itself. To Nebuchadnezzar we must assign whatever was most esteemed in Babylon; the fortifications, bridge, gardens, lake, and canals for draining the river—so confidently ascribed to Semiramis: and with this assumption agrees his own vaunt, as he looked down upon the city from the terraces of his palace:—“Is not this great Babylon that *I* have built for the house of the kingdom, *by the might of my power*, and for the honour of my majesty?” And before we pronounce, upon the almost incredible extent of these labours, a final sentence of doubt, if not of absolute denial, let us recollect that the vestiges of antiquity yet remaining of different nations, convey an irresistible evidence of the stupendous operations of the ancients; and that the materials of which the fortifications of Babylon were built, being of unburnt bricks, clay baked only in the sun, would render the monuments of its greatness most liable to the injuries of the seasons and the ravages of time.

We are now approaching the last scene of this monarch's life, of which we have any authentic record. Elated by conquest, and inflated with personal vanity, a signal punishment awaited his pride and presumption. It was declared to him in a vision of the night, and Daniel, as usual, was called in to interpret it. The whole is told with so much grandeur and simplicity in the Scripture narrative, that it is impossible to equal, and it would be injury to imitate, the language of the sacred historian. That heart must be made of singular materials, that is not affected by it; and we confess, that we never read the solemn, and even awful terms of the denunciation, conveyed through the medium of the most beautiful imagery, and connected with the event thus predicted, without feeling an unusual and indescribable awe stealing upon our spirits. It is thus related by the king himself. “I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of

Nitocris.

Babylon
owes its
splendour to
Nebuchad-
nezzar.Vestiges of
antiquity.His second
vision.

Related.

the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head, upon my bed, and behold, a watcher, and an holy one, came down from heaven. He cried aloud, and said thus—Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches. Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent 'that the living may know' that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." The prophet had no sooner heard this, than perceiving its import, he was filled with astonishment and dismay: "not fearing the wrath of the king," but anxious to impart to him so afflicting a message in the gentlest terms; and actuated, as it should seem, by the sincerest feelings of regard to the sovereign, Daniel "answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. The tree that thou sawest, which grew and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas, the king saw a watcher, and an holy one, coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it, yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him: This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen; and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven; and seven times shall pass over thee till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the

Interpreted.

stump of the tree roots ; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

Astonished as the king must have been by this interpretation, and affected by the singularity of the dream itself, no lasting impression appears to have been made upon his mind. The habits of such a man as Nebuchadnezzar, so flattered, so surrounded, and so absolute, were not likely to be permanently influenced by the most evident indications of Divine Providence. We have a singular demonstration of this in connection with these very transactions. Although he had proved more than once the inability of the Chaldeans and astrologers to make good their pretensions to read futurity, and interpret mysteries, yet from mere habit, or prejudice, and contrary to those convictions which one might have supposed him to have received, and which ought certainly to have arisen from his own observation and experience, he consulted them, and received another mortifying evidence of their insufficiency, before he sent for Daniel. But, as in the former instance, "the dream was certain, and the interpretation thereof sure;" and the purposes of heaven were not to be turned aside by human opposition or indifference; the mighty king of Babylon was to learn that he was subject to a mightier than himself, and as he gathered no wisdom from the menace, it was quickly put in execution. "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee."—"The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

It is by no means agreed in what this extraordinary change consisted, or how long it continued. The most probable interpretation of the matter is, that the king was seized with a species of insanity, not wholly unknown in the present day, under the term *lycanthropy*, (*λυκανθροπία*;) when, under the influence of a black melancholy, he imagined himself to be an ox, broke from the restraints of his guard, and, assuming the manners and habits of the beast he supposed himself, was suffered at length, as the only method of appeasing him, to roam in the park of his palace, in the circumstances stated by the sacred historian. As to the time during which this delirium raged, some have held it was no more than seven months;

Chaldeans
and
astrologers.

B.C. 570.

The dream
fulfilled.

A lycan-
thropy.

Time of his
deposition.

others, from the circumstance that the Persians divide their year into two seasons, winter and summer, conclude that three years and a-half is the time specified. Others have supplied arguments from their imaginations. The Scripture phrase is "seven times;" and the most natural, consistent, and usual signification attached to this expression is, seven years. It is not stated how this interregnum was filled. It has been assumed, that his son Evil-Merodach, who afterwards succeeded him, was regent, and acquitted himself so ill, as to incur the severe displeasure of his father, on the return of his reason and his restoration to his kingdom. Nor are the circumstances of the death of Nebuchadnezzar recorded; which, however, has been thought to have taken place the same year with his restoration, or about twelve months afterwards. He lived long enough to issue a decree, in which he gives God the glory of his recovery, and acknowledges with edifying humility, the sovereignty of the Eternal;—a decree, the spirit of which but ill agrees with the opinion of those, who suppose he set up the golden image in the plains of Dura, after this contrite confession. Abydenus⁹ represents the king to have fallen into an ecstasy, and to have foretold the destruction of the empire by the Medes and Persians; and adds, "immediately after uttering this prophecy, *he disappeared.*" The import of this expression is very doubtful. He might intend to convey by it an insinuation that the monarch was snatched away in a miraculous manner—a fable not unfrequent in antiquity among most nations, who preferred having it supposed that their favourite sovereigns were rather translated than that they died; an example of which we have seen in the story of the death of Romulus. Or, as Scaliger seems more judiciously to conclude, it may darkly intimate the disappearance of the monarch from his kingly authority and office, by reason of his disease. This event, however, is related by Josephus, and was never disputed or arraigned by any of his numerous opponents. In Ptolemy's canon, Nebuchadnezzar is said to have reigned forty-three years, eight of which are passed over in silence. It may be not unfairly inferred, that this chasm in the record of a life so active, and so public, was occasioned by his deposition from the throne, on the grounds stated by the sacred writer.

But apart from all conjecture, it is not credible, it is not even possible, that Daniel, who wrote at the time when those events took place, should have endeavoured to impose upon the world any circumstances not founded in fact, relative to such a man as Nebuchadnezzar. The conqueror is a character but too well known to history; and, hated and feared as he is, he is still known. The very scale of the mischiefs he inflicts, and the interest which all men unavoidably, however unwillingly, take in his movements, will not suffer any material occurrence respecting him to remain a secret;

⁹ Euseb. Præp. Evang. Lib. IX. Cap. 41.

and for these reasons such circumstances cannot be fabricated on the one hand, or greatly misrepresented on the other. Of all the things which Daniel records also, he professes to be an eye-witness. If, therefore, he misstates them, the deception practised could not originate in mistake, it must be wilful. And to this we must add, that throughout the life of this monarch we have found the sacred history the only record upon which we could place any reasonable dependence. In so far as we have arrived at any certainty, it is this clue which has hitherto guided us through the labyrinths of antiquity.

CHAPTER XII.

DANIEL.

FLOURISHED FROM ABOUT A.M. 3398, B.C. 606, TO A.M. 3470, B.C. 534.

DURING the captivity of the Jews in Chaldea, Daniel was raised A.M. 3398. up by providence to exhibit and to uphold the true religion; and it B.C. 606. cannot surely fail of striking the attentive observer, that whatever may have been the depression of truth, even in the worst of times, when its light had almost suffered extinction, God has never been without a witness; but, however deplorable the state of his cause, in the very crisis of its fate, he has interposed for its revival. The present history records such a period and such a manifestation, and while it is of so extraordinary a nature as to assume, in its principal circumstances, the appearance of fiction and the characteristic exaggerations of romance, it is nevertheless a tale of reality, and fraught with the most valuable instruction.

Daniel was no ordinary man; no ordinary prophet; it might even be added, that he was no insignificant confessor and martyr to the truth. The opportunities which occurred for the development and exhibition of the qualities of his mind were, moreover, no less rare and singular than those qualities themselves: his gifts and graces were not destined to be hid in a corner, but stood forth, in all their brilliancy and prominence, in one of the most conspicuous theatres of human action.

The birthplace of this eminent person is said to have been Upper Bethoron, in the territory of Ephraim, and his descent from the illustrious family of David. Epiphanius and others have indeed represented him as born at Batheber, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, which has, however, been deemed an improbable tradition. He was the relative, as well as intimate associate of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; and, like them, was transported as a captive to Babylon, at an early period of life, in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, about the year of the world 3398. He is thought at this time to have attained about the age of eighteen, or at the utmost twenty; a period when it required a peculiar elevation of character and force of mind, to obtain the distinguished notice which he attracted, to sustain those complicated trials, which he was so soon appointed to endure, and to merit those commanding and honourable stations which he was soon afterwards enabled to occupy.

Birth and
captivity.

A.M. 3398. His superior wisdom and great accomplishments of mind com-
 B C. 606. mended him, with three others of his nation, to the attention of
 Accomplish- Nebuchadnezzar, before whom he was called to occupy a con-
 ments. spicuous station, even in the days of his captivity. The persons
 alluded to have been already mentioned. In conformity with the
 established custom of the times and of the people by whom they
 had been transported from their native land, each of them received
 a new name. This was the constant practice of conquerors, espe-
 cially when their captives were designed to fill any office about the
 court, or to be in personal attendance on the sovereign. Daniel
 was henceforth named Belteshazzar, and of his companions in tribu-
 lation, *Hananiah* was called Shadrach; *Mishael*, Meshach; and
Azariah, Abed-nego. It has been justly noticed as remarkable,
 that the former names of these individuals related to the true God,
 and that all the new names which were at this time imposed upon
 the four Jewish captives, had some reference to Babylonish idols.
 Daniel, in Hebrew, signifies "God is my guide;" in Chaldee,
 Belteshazzar means "the treasure of Baal." Hananiah is, in
 Hebrew, "well pleasing to God;" Shadrach, in Chaldee, "the
 inspiration of the sun." In Hebrew, Mishael denotes "proceeding
 from God;" in Chaldee, Meshach is "belonging to the goddess
 Sheshach." Azariah is, in Hebrew, "God is my help;" Abed-
 nego, in Chaldee, "the servant of Nago," that is, the sun, or the
 morning star, which were Babylonian divinities. It is still the
 practice of the Mogul, derived from the ancient usages of Eastern
 nations, to distinguish his favourites, by conferring new names upon
 them when they are advanced to more elevated or honourable
 stations.

Refuses
 royal meat.

At this early period of his history we have a very remarkable
 indication of that greatness of character for which Daniel was
 distinguished, and which now began to appear. During three years,
 he and his companions already mentioned, were carefully and fully
 instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans, which consisted of
 natural philosophy, astrology, divination, the science of auguries,
 the worship of the gods, and other mysteries, and from the pro-
 ficiency in these departments of knowledge which Daniel ultimately
 discovered, it is obvious that he prosecuted his studies with the
 most laborious attention. What, however, particularly claims our
 notice is, his conduct, at the time in question, with regard to the
 food with which he and his companions were supplied from the
 palace. It appears that they had a daily allowance of meat and
 wine from the royal table; but as this provision often consisted of
 the flesh of unclean creatures, as it was, perhaps, bestowed not
 merely as an expression of the king's munificent favour and patron-
 age, but for the insidious purpose of alienating their minds from
 their own country, and inducing them to transfer their affections to
 the land of their captivity; as, moreover, it was incompatible with

the temperance, approaching to abstemiousness, which these Jewish worthies deemed most suitable, both to their circumstances and their religion, and as it was first, according to their custom, blessed in the name of their idol Bel, Daniel solicited the principal eunuch that they might be excused from eating it; and this he did both with a firmness and respectfulness of manner that won upon the chief officer's regard. Two objections, however, were mentioned; the one that the king might take offence, and being an absolute monarch, his own head would most likely be endangered by his compliance; the other, that the abstemiousness proposed, in only partaking of pulse to eat and water to drink, would produce a bad effect upon their appearance, and this was of material consequence, because the Eastern monarchs were uniformly desirous of having beautiful and healthy-looking persons in immediate attendance upon them. They imagined that nothing but a sordid and corrupt soul could reside in a meagre and disagreeable body. Daniel then made the same proposal to Melzar, who seems to have been next in rank, who was appointed to superintend the Hebrew youths, desiring him to make an experiment for ten days, which would be a sufficient time for determining whether the alteration of their diet produced any change of appearance. This being accordingly done, they were permitted to adhere to their own scrupulous abstemiousness. Thus happily, in this instance, were the sacred rights of conscience pleaded with success. At the expiration of the period of three years allotted to their studies, Daniel had become remarkable for his "understanding in all visions and dreams," and he had soon an opportunity of displaying his characteristic superiority. Being brought before the king at the expiration of their studies, he and his companions were examined with regard to their attainments, and the skill they displayed induced Nebuchadnezzar instantly to place them in the situation for which they had been preparing. He could not avoid discovering how much they excelled all the magicians and astrologers of the empire, nor did he suffer any prejudices that might have existed against their country to disparage their eminent qualifications.

Advance-
ment.

An opportunity occurred, after the advancement of Daniel, of putting his powers to the test, and the result, as we have already seen, was such as not only to fulfil the early promise of his character, but to demonstrate that he was honoured with an inspiration infinitely exceeding all the attainments of mere human science. With a piety truly characteristic of this eminent man, he prefaced the disclosure of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream, which had passed from his memory, by the declaration that it was the God of heaven from whom he had received the secret which the astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers, in vain attempted to discover, and that, consequently, it was not to be imputed to any superior sagacity of his own, nor was the circumstance of his being intrusted with it

Interpreta-
tion of the
king's
dream.

A.M. 3401.
B.C. 603.

A.M. 3401. in preference to others to be imputed to him as a merit, it being
 B.C. 603. communicated solely, he said, "for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart." Josephus imputes to Daniel the following speech on this critical occasion, which, to say the least, is certainly in unison with his character, as represented in the inspired page. "It is not any high conceit of my own wisdom, as if I understand more than the Chaldeans do, or any designed reproach upon them for not being able to resolve a question which I am able to unriddle, that I engage in this matter; for I am not a person that pretends to more skill and knowledge than my neighbours; but it is purely the work of God, in pity to the miserable, and in mercy to my prayers for the life and safety of myself and my friends, that has now laid open this dream to me, and explained the meaning of it. Nor have I been so solicitous for the safety of myself and my companions under your displeasure, as for your honour and glory, lest you should tarnish them by putting to death, contrary to all right and justice, so many worthy men, merely because they were not able to do a thing that is impossible for flesh and blood to perform."

Daniel's advancement.

The exact coincidence between his forgotten dream and Daniel's representation, and the authoritative manner in which the predictions of future times were delivered, filled Nebuchadnezzar with the utmost astonishment and admiration. He was ready to pay him divine honours as a god, commanding an oblation and sweet odours to be presented to him, which the pious Jew no doubt declined as a piece of insufferable idolatry; but he did not refuse the presents of great value which the king gave him, nor the station of high dignity and honour to which he was immediately advanced. Daniel was accordingly made ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and superintendent over all the wise men, or magicians of the empire. While exalted to distinction himself, he did not forget the interests of his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who, at his request, were placed under him, in stations of distinguished importance and trust, probably as deputy-governors. De Dieu is of opinion, from the use of the term in the Chaldee language, and from the corresponding word in the Arabic, that these men had the superintendence of agriculture, and of the revenue arising out of it.

A.M. 3424. It has been already observed, that the name of Daniel is not
 B.C. 580. introduced in the account of the remarkable preservation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. That he was one in spirit with the three worthies who sacrificed (in purpose, at least) life to the claims of duty and of God, cannot for a moment be doubted; and that both his firmness and the king's displeasure would have been equally manifest as in the instance recorded, is unquestionable. How then does it arise that he is wholly overlooked in the affair? The chasm of information here cannot easily be filled up; we must be satisfied

with conjectural probability, and perhaps shall not materially err in A.M. 3424. supposing that he was absent on some important affair of state, in B.C. 580. a remote province of the empire; the peculiar sagacity which he had already displayed, and the confidence reposed in him, rendering it natural that he should have been so employed.

Daniel again becomes prominent in the inspired story, on the A.M. 3434. occasion of another dream of the king, which, although Nebuchad- B.C. 570. nezzar could distinctly remember, he was unable to interpret. As in the former instance, the astrologers and magicians of every class who were regarded as constituting the learned body of the empire, were again summoned into the royal presence; but they were utterly confounded; when recourse was had to Daniel. This faithful servant of the living God was so struck with awe and terror at the judgment indicated by the dream, that he stood in silence for an hour: but upon being encouraged to expound its meaning, he at length explained it as we have already detailed; and, having given the interpretation, he dismissed the character of the mere expositor of mysterious prognostications, and assumed that of the counsellor and the friend. With a faithfulness which may well excite our astonishment, while it cannot fail of securing our approbation, he proceeded to admonish the king to abandon his iniquitous courses, to practise a holy life, and especially to manifest compassion to the poor; of which, probably, he had been notoriously negligent; and thus to secure prosperity and peace. After the delay of a year, which, it may be supposed, was given as a space for repentance, the ambition and vanity of this monarch occasioned the infliction of the threatened chastisement of seven years' deposition from his imperial dignity, and from the exercise of his reason; after which, at his restoration, he published a decree, expressive of the reverence he felt for the God of heaven, and the just sense with which adversity had inspired him of his own insignificance and guilt.

Daniel interprets a second dream.

The death of Nebuchadnezzar occurred soon after his restoration, A.M. 3443. and he was succeeded in his dominions by his son Evil-Merodach, B.C. 561. whose reign was marked with wickedness, and was of short duration. Neriglassar, who was the head of the conspiracy by which Evil-Merodach died, took the vacant throne. This latter perished in battle against Cyrus, nephew to Cyaxares, the king of Media, who came out of Persia with 30,000 men, to afford assistance to his uncle. Laborosoarchod, the son of Neriglassar, sat upon the throne only nine months; his odious character having excited a conspiracy against him; when Belshazzar, probably the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, took the reins of government, which again introduces us to the story of Daniel. With regard, however, to the succession in question, it may be proper previously to state the sentiments of the intelligent chronologist Dr. Hales, which occur in the second volume of his Analysis. This writer does not admit that Evil-Merodach was cut off in a conspiracy, but slain in battle by Cyrus, when commanding

Death of Nebuchadnezzar.

A.M. 3443. the armies of Cyaxares, whose territories he had prepared to attack.
 B.C. 561. He was succeeded by his son Neriglassar, the *Belshazzar* of Daniel, and grandson of Nebuchadnezzar; and it was Belshazzar, or Neriglassar, the cruelty of whose government was so insupportable to his subjects, as to provoke them to a conspiracy, in which he was slain. The inquiry may be pursued by consulting Dr. Hales, already mentioned, and Prideaux's *Connection*, anno 555.

Reign of
Belshazzar.

It was in the reign of Belshazzar, whoever he was, that Daniel, who still continued to occupy his extraordinary rank, had his two celebrated visions of the four beasts; and the ram, and the he-goat; the one in the first year of his reign, and the other in the third. By the former was signified the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires; and in the latter, Darius Codomannus, the last of the successors of Cyrus, by the emblem of the ram; and Alexander the Great, by that of the he-goat.

Cyrus.

A.M. 3466. Cyrus, the founder of the Persian monarchy, had frequent engagements with the armies of Belshazzar, and at length succeeded in shutting him up in the city of Babylon, against which he commenced a regular siege. While in this situation, so inappropriate to merriment, a great festival was celebrated, which, since, according to Xenophon and Herodotus, it was foreknown by Cyrus, was, most likely, an anniversary feast; either, perhaps, in commemoration of the king's birthday, or in honour of his gods. The *Sachæan* feast, or one celebrated in honour of the god Shach, is more than once alluded to by the prophets, and might possibly be the very festival in question, as, during its observance, the utmost licentiousness was practised: every one, in short, did as he pleased.

Belshazzar's
feast.

The courtiers, and principal persons of the empire, to the number of a thousand, were, it appears, present upon this occasion; and Belshazzar, in the excess of his revelry and impiety, commanded the vessels of gold and silver which his grandfather had taken out of the temple at Jerusalem, to be brought into the hall of festivity, in order that he, his nobles, and his concubines might drink out of them. This seems to have been intended as a profane defiance of the God of Israel, and to throw contempt upon the religious services of the Jews; it was therefore probably accompanied with many blasphemous jests, and certainly with praises of the different gods of silver and gold, of brass, wood, and stone, whom they were addicted to worship. But the delirium of intoxication was soon at an end; and by a very remarkable, and yet simple interposition of his power, the God of heaven, whom these inebriated sensualists ventured to ridicule, changed their merriment into sadness; a sadness which was the prelude of a tremendous calamity. The fingers of a man's hand were distinctly perceived upon the wall, writing upon the plaster a brief sentence of condemnation. The characters, however, were foreign and unintelligible, and the king, in the utmost trepidation, immediately summoned together his astrologers and sooth-

sayers, to furnish him with an interpretation of the mysterious sentence. The excessive terror of his mind, and which, as he was unable to read the writing, nothing but the power of conscience could have occasioned, is apparent in the great promises he made to any interpreter of this sentence, declaring that he should be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and be the third ruler in the kingdom. None of the wise men, however, could read the inscription, or comprehend its purpose; and the king continued in a state of extreme agitation.

In this dilemma, the queen-mother entered, and after pronouncing the highest eulogium upon the sagacity of Daniel, to whose former interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream she particularly adverted, recommended him to be called for upon this difficult and distressing occasion; to which the king eagerly consented. Belshazzar now offered to bestow upon Daniel the distinguished rewards which he had promised in vain to his own magicians, in case of his giving the interpretation he required. The latter disclaimed any views to such marks of royal favour, saying, "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another;" but assured him of his readiness to explain the mysterious inscription, which had produced so much uneasiness. But to do so was no easy task, since it materially affected the king himself, and contained a most awful denunciation. Daniel, however, was unmoved by any sense of personal danger, in discharging his duty to God and man, and having introduced his interpretation, by reproving the king for his ingratitude and profanity, he added, "This is the writing that was written; Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. This is the interpretation of the thing: *Mene*; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. *Tekel*; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. *Peres*; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." It seems not a little remarkable, that notwithstanding the terrible aspect of this statement, and the pointed appeal against the king's conduct, with which it was introduced, Daniel should immediately receive all the promised tokens of distinction that awaited the successful interpreter. Yet such was the case, the apparel and the proclamation of his advancement were at once, and without hesitation, bestowed.

Daniel
interprets
the writing
on the wall.

Every circumstance of the prediction was soon verified. The city, which had been so long besieged, was taken. When Cyrus was informed of the approach of the great Babylonish festival, he determined upon a measure of surprise, and having ordered a body of troops to the point where the river ran into the city, and another to the place where it issued out, they were to attempt the passage as soon as they should perceive the river fordable; in the mean time others were employed to turn the stream into another direction. This was accordingly done, and the gates being open, no doubt, in consequence of the carelessness superinduced by the excessive fes-

Cyrus takes
Babylon.

A.M. 3466. tivity of the time, Cyrus marched his army into Babylon, and took
 B.C. 538. possession. Belshazzar was slain, and the kingdom transferred to
 Darius. Cyaxares, denominated in scripture, Darius the Mede. Xenophon, in the *Cyropædia*, (Lib. VII.,) states, that the king was slain in the following manner: two deserters named Gadates and Gobryas, having assisted some of the Persian army to kill the guards, and seize upon the palace, they entered into the room where the king was, whom they found standing up in a posture of defence, but they soon despatched him, and those that were with him.

A.M. 3467. According to the usual policy of the Medes and Persians, with
 B.C. 537. regard to conquered nations, it appears from Berosus, that the victorious Mede appointed a Babylonian nobleman, of the name of Nabonadius, as viceroy of Babylon, and a hundred and twenty princes as superintendents of the different provinces of the empire. Over these were placed three presidents, of whom Daniel, for obvious reasons a favourite of the conqueror, was the principal. He was naturally supposed to have contributed to the success which he had predicted, and the reputation he had acquired by his sagacity and discretion, together with his long acquaintance with the affairs of the government, pointed him out as a proper person to occupy the very highest station of trust and influence.

Daniel
 envied.

Ordinary minds easily admit and cherish envious sentiments, and cannot endure the good fortune of others, even when it is most merited. The favourites of great princes are indeed certain of incurring considerable obloquy, either in the discharge of their official duties, or on account of some private peculiarity. So it happened to Daniel, whose character, however, shines with the more glory and brightness in consequence of the infamous machinations of his adversaries. No sooner did he come into power, than every engine was set at work to degrade him, and by those who hoped to acquire the ascendancy on his removal. He appears to have been accused long before they were able to fix upon him any charge which seemed likely to accomplish their purpose. In his administration of public affairs he was unimpeachable: his capacity and integrity were alike conspicuous, and the utmost vigilance which malice was able to exercise could not discover any thing upon which to found an indictment that should operate his ruin. After conferring with each other, therefore, upon the subject, the presidents and princes determined that the only method of proceeding against "this Daniel" was, to impeach him for his religion, which he maintained with great scrupulousness, notwithstanding the very peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, and the innumerable temptations to idolatrous compliances with which he must constantly have been surrounded. Having laid the snare, they resolved upon a plan to lead him into it, and their arrangement was certainly not destitute of political sagacity. A solemn deputation was sent to the king, in the name of all the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and

the princes, the counsellors and the captains, to solicit the establishment of a royal statute, by which it was to be enacted, that whoever should ask any petition either of a god or of man during the period of thirty days, excepting of the king himself, should be cast into the den of lions. The Persian monarchs were extremely tenacious of their honour, and the people universally held their persons in the same degree of veneration as they cherished for their gods. Darius, conceiving this application as intended to do him honour upon his accession to the sovereignty, most readily granted their request, taking no time to reflect upon its absurdity.

A.M. 3467.
B.C. 537.

Daniel was perfectly aware of the stratagem which the princes had adopted to effect his destruction; the vigilance of his administration being such that it must have been scarcely possible for so daring a conspiracy to elude detection. But infinitely more concerned for the glory of his religion, and the honour of God, than distressed at the apprehension of personal suffering, he did not, even for a moment, desist from those devotional exercises to which he had conscientiously addicted himself through all the period of his captivity, and by which he maintained a total separation, both of spirit and practice, from the heathen impieties of Chaldea. As soon as he was informed of the royal signature being given to the decree, he retired into his house, and, according to his usual custom—a custom, too, which was always observed by the Jews in any distant situation—he prayed with his face turned towards Jerusalem. This he continued, as usual, three times a-day, with his chamber window open in the direction of the Jewish capital. This was not a mere caprice or formality; it was founded upon the consideration of the blessings which were connected with such a proceeding, and which were pleaded distinctly by Solomon at the dedication of the temple: “If thy people sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives into the land of the enemy, far or near; yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and *pray unto thee toward their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name*: then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven, thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause.”

Cast into the
den of lions.

1 Kings viii.
46—49.

The enemies of Daniel soon discovering that their plot had succeeded, and that he was, as they had reason to expect, a resolute adherent of the divine religion of his country, hastened to Darius to acquaint him with the disobedience of his subject, and to demand the enforcement of his decree. They endeavoured to aggravate his

A.M. 3467. conduct by misrepresentation, intimating that Daniel was guilty of
 B.C. 537. disaffection to the royal person; for, said they, "He regarded not thee, O king, nor the decree which *thou* hast signed." The king now found himself in an extreme difficulty, and, dismissing the accusers for a time, devoted several hours to devise some expedient, if possible, to evade the execution of a law which affected the life of a favourite and most meritorious servant. He felt excessively grieved at his own folly in so suddenly adopting a suggestion which drew in its train such fatal consequences; and, as the sacred historian records, "laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him." His courtiers, however, were determined, representing to him, that the law of the Medes and Persians, when once passed, was absolutely unalterable; and to this urgency he felt himself at last obliged most reluctantly to yield. The object of their malignant persecution was accordingly delivered up to them, and with all the impatience that characterizes successful guilt, they issued instant orders to seize and convey him to the den of lions. A stone was rolled against the mouth of the den to prevent escape, which was sealed both with the king's own signet, and that of the different nobles and princes: upon which Darius withdrew to his palace in a very disconsolate state of mind, probably having perceived the manœuvre of his courtiers; but finding himself incapable of resisting their will, he had sacrificed a favourite servant to their baseness, and one whose public character had excited a confidence proportioned to its merit—a character against which the tongue of calumny dared not to utter a sentence. The night was spent in fasting and sleeplessness; and all the instruments of music were discarded. Whether the king, however, at the moment of executing his decree, had any presentiment of his deliverance, we cannot tell; it appears that he said to him, "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." If this were the conviction of his mind, it no doubt originated in his knowledge of the innocence and integrity of Daniel, and from an impression of his piety and peculiar intercourse with heaven, arising out of the prophetic character he had displayed on more than one occasion. It might, indeed, have been only an ardent desire for this purpose, dictated by his partiality for the sufferer; and is, indeed, susceptible of the rendering, "May thy God deliver thee."

His
 deliverance.

However this may be, the king's anxiety brought him to the mouth of the den of lions at an early hour in the morning, where he inquired, in a doleful and desponding tone of voice, whether he was possibly alive: to which he had the inexpressible satisfaction of hearing Daniel reply in the affirmative. He informed the king that his God had sent his angel, and shut the lions' mouths, that they could not do him any injury; thus miraculously attesting his perfect innocence of the alleged crime of disparaging the royal authority. Darius immediately issued orders that he should be extricated from

his melancholy situation, which were also immediately followed by A.M. 3467.
 the command to cast his accusers, with their wives and children, into B.C. 537.
 the den, where they were speedily torn to pieces: a cruel measure,
 but perfectly according with the custom of the age, which always
 visited the offence of the father upon his family. A decree was then
 issued, which recognized the extraordinary providence apparent in
 this deliverance, and desired all men to reverence the God of Daniel.

As the period which the prophet Jeremiah had assigned for the
 captivity drew near its termination, Daniel offered solemn supplica-
 tions to heaven for the accomplishment of the prophetic intimation,
 accompanied with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes; after which
 the angel Gabriel appeared to him, to give him assurance that his
 prayers were heard, and should be answered, and to inform him, in
 repeated visions, of some of the most wonderful events of a far
 distant futurity, and, in particular, of the redemption of mankind
 from the captivity of Satan, of which the Babylonian was antitypical
 and illustrative.

Daniel's
 prayer.

After Cyrus had obtained a full possession of the empire, he
 issued a decree, in which he gave permission to the Jewish captives
 to return to their own country, and to accomplish, if they pleased,
 their favourite purpose of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem.
 Nothing, indeed, could be more entirely consonant to their wishes
 than this royal edict, and they most readily availed themselves of
 the long anticipated opportunity of quitting a foreign land, where
 they had hung their harps upon the willows, and been afflicted by
 the sight of idolatrous observances. It seems, to say the least,
 highly probable that Daniel instigated Cyrus to this acceptable
 measure, since he had the release of his fellow-countrymen much
 at heart, and since he possessed every advantage of benefitting
 their cause by his eminent situation and extensive influence. We
 have seen that Cyrus was not insensible of his merits, but, as soon
 as he had secured the government, raised him to the most elevated
 rank, as minister of state. This ascendancy gave him free access,
 and great influence at court; and as his prayer, recorded in the
 ninth chapter of the book which passes under his name, indicates
 his solicitude for the restoration of the children of the captivity, it
 cannot be questioned that he would introduce the subject to his
 sovereign, and probably plead earnestly on their behalf. We find,
 from the decree itself, which is recorded in the book of Ezra, and
 from the testimony of Josephus, that Cyrus was well acquainted
 with the Jewish prophecies; and nothing can be more likely, if,
 indeed, it ought not to be considered as absolutely certain, than
 that his prime minister should have pointed out to him these predic-
 tions, and especially the passages relating to himself, and distinctly
 mentioning him by name in the prophecy of Isaiah; a minute
 specification of his actions which had been perceived at the distance
 of upwards of two hundred years.

Decree of
 Cyrus.

A.M. 3468.
B.C. 536.

A.M. 3468. Although, however, Daniel was accessory to the publication of
 B.C. 536. the decree of Cyrus, it does not appear that he availed himself of its proffered benefits; which may perhaps be imputed partly to his advanced age, for he must have been approaching the extraordinary period of ninety years, but principally to the conviction that by retaining his present situation, he should be better able to subserve the interests of the Jews, than by accompanying them on their return. If, as is likely, his royal master urged his continuance, it would tend still further to enhance his influence, and promote his patriotic views.

Death of
 Daniel.

A.M. 3470.
 B.C. 534.

The death of this illustrious individual may be assigned to near the period of his last vision, concerning the succession of the kings of Persia, which happened in the third year of the reign of Cyrus, or about A.M. 3470. At this time he must have attained his ninetyeth year. Epiphanius, who is followed by the generality of historians, supposes that he died in Babylon, where it is affirmed that his sepulchre was afterwards to be seen in the royal cave. This, however, cannot accord with fact, because the sepulchre of the Persian kings was near Persepolis, and Strabo states that Cyrus was interred there, and that his monument was observed by Alexander; besides, his last vision was apparently revealed to him in Persia, as it is dated by a Persian æra. It is certain that he resided some time at Susa, or Sushan, the capital of Elam, or Persia Proper, which a more probable tradition represents as the place of his death and burial. Benjamin Tudelli, in his *Itinerarium*, mentions that the reputed tomb of Daniel was pointed out to him at Tuster, on the Tigris, which was the ancient Susa. Josephus states,¹ that Daniel built a magnificent edifice in the form of a tower, at Ecbatana, (or rather Susa, as Jerome writes it, who professed to copy his account,) which was finished with the most consummate taste and skill, and retained all its beauty unimpaired in his days. It was used as a sepulchre for the Persian and Parthian kings, and was committed to the superintendence of a priest of Jewish extraction.

In reviewing the life and character of Daniel, to whose superiority of moral and intellectual qualities the testimony of inspiration is given in the most unequivocal terms, the circumstance, first mentioned in the detail of his actions, respecting his being educated as an astrologer, is apt to strike pious minds with astonishment, and to impress them with some feelings of disrespect and repugnance; detracting, in their view, very materially from his excellence. It cannot but be recollected, that the law of Moses not only denounced immediate death upon all the professors of magic, but on every one who resorted to them. Soothsayers, diviners, observers of times, and interpreters of dreams, are uniformly represented in

¹ Antiq. Lib. X. C. 12.

Scripture as an abomination to Jehovah, and yet Daniel is peculiarly commended by the Babylonish monarch for his remarkable proficiency in astrological studies. To this it may be justly said in reply, that the learning of the Chaldeans, in which he excelled, included a very considerable knowledge of astronomy, in the modern acceptation of the term, and also architecture, (of his skill in which art we have seen he left a memorial,) and of the art of war. It is not necessary to suppose that Daniel pursued insignificant or criminal studies, or addicted himself to the superstitious practices of those amongst whom he was educated. The history has already recorded his objections against the meat which was accustomed to be dispensed from the king's table; and the same scrupulousness, founded in *principle*, which induced him to refuse such sustenance, would unquestionably influence his conduct on still more important occasions. He and his companions might be permitted to follow such studies as were most congenial to their taste, most consonant to their religion, or most adapted to qualify them for official situations in the state;—as, the niceties of language, the arts of war, the plans of civil policy.

A.M. 3470.
B.C. 534.
Daniel's
astrological
education
considered.

In further illustration of this topic, we may be permitted to introduce the judicious remarks of Dr. Gleig, in the notes to his edition of Stackhouse's History of the Bible. "That he (Daniel) was taught, even by the astrologers, much useful knowledge, can hardly be doubted; for those men could not have pretended to foretell future events from the conjunctions or oppositions of the stars or planets, without acquiring great knowledge in the useful and sublime science of astronomy, which the agricultural life of the Jews, and the perfection of their law, deprived them of almost every inducement to study. No Chaldean astrologer can have employed himself in more frivolous pursuits than were those of the alchemists, in the dark ages of modern Europe, in quest of the philosopher's stone; and yet to the alchemists we are in a great measure indebted for the origin of the science of chemistry, which has, within these thirty years, been carried to such perfection, and contributed so much to the comfort and elegance of civil society.

"Even in the interpretation of dreams something might be learned from the Chaldean wise men. Neither the gods of Babylon, indeed, nor the conjunctions of the stars, could reveal any thing to the astrologers or soothsayers; but no man, who admits the divine origin of any part of the Scriptures, can doubt but that the true God occasionally revealed his will to the prophets in dreams and visions: and when he did so, he must have made use of such symbols, or such language, as were generally employed to denote the thing intended. The narrowness of original languages, and the practice of hieroglyphical writing, which seems to have prevailed in most nations, especially in the East, during some period of their existence, rendered it almost necessary to express occasionally one thing by another to

A. M. 3470. which it was supposed to have some resemblance or analogy. In
 B. C. 534. visions or dreams, whether sent by God or not, some *symbols* or *language* must have been employed; and the business of the oneiro-critic, or interpreter, was to ascertain the import of such symbols. The interpreter, who practised by art, could only guess at that import, and in nine instances out of ten was likely to guess erroneously; but he who interpreted by inspiration was in no danger of falling into error, though each symbol, or word, taken by itself, must have had some meaning generally understood by those among whom such symbols and words were in general use, as well as by the prophet.

“ ‘The early interpreters of dreams,’ says Bishop Warburton, ‘were not juggling impostors; but, like the early judicial *astrologers*, more superstitious than their neighbours, and so the first that fell into their own delusions. However, suppose them to have been as arrant cheats as any of their successors, yet, at their first setting up, they must have had materials proper for their trade; which could never be the wild workings of each man’s private fancy. Their customers would look to find a known analogy, become venerable by long application to mysterious wisdom, for the groundwork of their deciphering; and the decipherers themselves would as naturally fly to some confessed authority, to support their pretended science. But what ground or authority could this be, if not the mysterious learning of *symbolical characters*? The Egyptian priests, the first interpreters of dreams, took their rules for this species of DIVINATION from their *symbolic* riddling, in which they were so deeply read; a ground of interpretation which would give the strongest credit to the art, and equally satisfy the diviner and the consulter; for it being generally believed that their gods had given them *hieroglyphic writing*, nothing was more natural than to imagine that those gods, who, in their opinion, gave *dreams* likewise, had employed the same mode of writing in both revelations.’²

“ When the true God gave revelations by dreams, he, of course, made use of the symbols that were most likely to arrest the dreamer’s attention, and, at the same time, were generally understood; and in different countries he would make use of different symbols, according to the practice of the people for whose information the dream was sent. Thus, in Pharaoh’s two dreams, the symbols made use of were, in one, *seven kine*; and in the other, *seven ears of corn*. In the hieroglyphics of Egypt the ears of corn denoted its fertility; and the kine, its great tutelary patroness, *Isis*. Thus far Pharaoh seems to have understood the dream without an interpreter; and hence arose his anxiety to understand the rest, as a matter that concerned the public. Accordingly, when Joseph comes to decipher the dream, he does not tell the king that the two *sevens* denoted seven years in

² Div. Leg. B. IV.

Egypt, but simply *seven years*; the *scene* of the famine needing no A.M. 3470.
deciphering. In Nebuchadnezzar's second dream he saw a *fair and* B.C. 534.
high tree, of which the height reached to heaven; and this being the
symbol of majesty in *general*, very naturally made the proud monarch
anxious to know what *particular* monarch it signified; and therefore
the prophet Daniel begins his interpretation with saying—"The tree
that thou sawest is THOU, O king!" But if Daniel was intended by
God, as he certainly was, to be an interpreter of the dreams sent by
him to the king of Babylon—the scourge by whom he chastised
sinful nations—it is obvious that a knowledge of the symbols by
which events were supposed to be represented in Chaldea, was a
species of preparatory knowledge absolutely necessary to him. The
symbols employed for this purpose by the Chaldean magi may have
been different from those in use amongst the priests of Egypt; but
whether they were or not, it seems evident that *hieroglyphical writ-*
ing, and all kinds of *symbolical representations of God and his attri-*
butes, were absolutely prohibited by the Mosaic law. Daniel, there-
fore, must have been taught the import of the Chaldean symbols, to
fit him for an important part of the office he was destined to fill;
and as God appears not on any occasion to work miracles for an
object which can be attained by natural means, it is to be hoped that
the deist will permit Christians to believe that Daniel might, without
sin, be taught the meaning of the mysterious symbols of Chaldea, by
those wise men of that empire, among whom they were best under-
stood. The sciences of *astronomy* and *chemistry* furnish many illus-
trious proofs of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator and
Governor of the world; these sciences have been successfully culti-
vated by philosophers in France, who seem not to acknowledge the
moral attributes of the GREAT FIRST CAUSE—if, indeed, they allow
any cause to be *first*; but surely an intelligent Christian clergyman,
of a mind tolerably firm, might take lessons in astronomy and
chemistry from such men, not only without incurring guilt and
danger, but with great advantage to himself."³

As a *man*, and as "an Israelite, indeed," Daniel was truly pre-
eminent: so much so, that on one occasion he was addressed by a
celestial messenger in these extraordinary terms of affection, "O man!
greatly beloved, fear not." At an early period of his life we have
seen him manifest a conscientious scrupulousness, and subsequently,
an inflexible adherence to his religion, amidst circumstances of
extreme danger and powerful temptation, which have conferred upon
him immortal renown. It was by no idolatrous compliances, no
creeping meanness, that, during the various changes which occurred
in the government, he retained, nevertheless, his elevated situation.
His worst enemies, too, acknowledged the integrity and singular
wisdom with which he conducted the affairs of the kingdom intrusted

Character
as a man and
saint.
Dan. x 19.

³ Hist. of Bible, Vol. II. p. 504—506.

A.M. 3470. to his management, and devised a method of bringing him into
 B.C. 534. trouble, which, from proving successful, as they had probably anticipated, was itself a memorable testimony to his worth as a man, and his piety as a saint. In chafing and rubbing the gold, they only burnished it into greater brightness, and exhibited more conspicuously its substantial value.

Compared
 to Joseph.

Daniel has been compared to Joseph, perhaps with some propriety, as there are unquestionably points of resemblance, and a coincidence of circumstances to be traced in these two illustrious individuals. Each of them was removed at an early period from his native country into a land of strangers; the one sold as a slave, the other seized upon and borne away as a captive. Each was elevated by a marvellous train of events to similar stations of dignity and influence in a foreign court; by means, indeed, which demonstrated, in either case, the interference of a particular providence in their behalf. Each preserved his fidelity to God, amidst the most embarrassing circumstances; and notwithstanding the corruption of manners and of religion with which they were encompassed; and it is by no means easy, without being placed in somewhat of a similar situation, to estimate, properly, the strength of principle, the heroic fortitude of character required to sustain, not only the outward attacks of adversaries, but the nameless and numberless efforts of a more insidious, more secret, and more constant kind, which, in such cases, are employed to shake fortitude and refrigerate zeal. The conduct both of Daniel and his three companions furnish a very fine specimen of religious firmness. It may be asked, indeed, whether, instead of incurring so much danger by their inflexibility, they might not have evaded the decrees which threatened their destruction: whether, for instance, Daniel could not have desisted for a month from the usual exercises of his religion, without any material departure from his principles; and whether life was not too precious, and his influence too important, to be risked upon a mere scruple of conscience? Might he not have closed his windows, and have been more private in his devotions; or might he not have availed himself of some business of state, to have withdrawn into some remote and secluded part of the empire? It is true, this might have been done; and thousands, and tens of thousands, would have adopted such an expedient; but Daniel justly appreciated the entire circumstances of the case, and no sooner saw the consequences which would result from any thing like evasion or artifice, than he determined, at every hazard, to maintain his integrity, and do honour to his religion and his God. It was not an affair of trivial moment; it was no part of his character to sacrifice conscience to convenience or personal safety; and he plainly foresaw that such a conduct would be pleaded hereafter as a disparagement to religion; that evasion, in such circumstances, would in reality be tantamount to renunciation; and that he should be justly exposed to be censured as cowardly and hypocritical.

The true cause of his boldness must be traced to an origin which illustrates another very remarkable trait in his character. He was a man of *ardent devotion*, and, no question, the flame of his piety, vigorous as it was, and bright as it appeared, was kindled from above, and perpetually recruited from the altar of heaven. Nothing can be more interesting than his humility and unremitted intercourse with God, amidst the weighty cares of state, and in defiance of all the machinations of wickedness. That his sedulous attention to secret duties, prepared him for public action, is obvious, and worthy of imitation: for, whoever derives his support from the same quarter; whoever derives his means and motives to conflict from the same armoury, will, by consequence, be able to encounter similar difficulties, and come off victorious from the same field.

A.M. 3470.
B.C. 534.
A man of
ardent
devotion.

The book which passes under the name of Daniel, in the inspired record, was certainly of his composition, although some Jewish writers maintain that prophecies were never committed to writing out of the limits of Judea, and that the book in question was composed by men of the great synagogue. In many passages, however, he represents himself as the author, in the most express and unequivocal terms. This composition was admitted into the Hebrew canon as his, and its authenticity, as such, is confirmed by the references of the New Testament.⁴ Josephus, moreover, affirms, that Daniel himself committed his prophecies to writing.⁵

The style of Daniel is not in general so remarkable for its poetical and figurative cast, as that of most of the other Jewish prophets, but possesses more of the simplicity and ease of historical narration; though the visions which he records are in themselves highly figurative and emblematical. The whole book comprises a detail of regular history and remarkable prophecy; and this intermixture gives it a very novel and interesting complexion. The first six chapters are principally historical, with the exception of the second chapter, which contains the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream, respecting the successive establishment and decay of the chief kingdoms of the world, till the introduction of that which was finally to obtain unrivalled power and universality. There is such an air of truth, and such a justness of colouring in the different accounts of the miraculous deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, from the fiery furnace, to which they were consigned by the persecuting intolerance of Nebuchadnezzar; in the unhallowed and sacrilegious festivity of Belshazzar, with the awful consequences that ensued; in the story of Daniel's commitment and deliverance from the lions' den; and in all the minute details of these transactions, that the reader is transported to the very spot, and has his passions infallibly engaged in every scene. The alternations of terror and of delight agitate

His style.

⁴ Comp. Mat. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14.

⁵ Antiq. L. X. C. 22.

A. M. 3470. the bosom, while sentiments of the sublimest nature are incidentally
 B. C. 534. communicated. It is, indeed, a tale of wonder, divested of all fictitious adornments; but a tale of great political and moral importance, and of most evident practical utility. The events of the sixth chapter belong to the time of Darius the Mede: in the seventh and eighth the reader is carried back to a previous period, namely, to the first three years of the reign of Belshazzar. The last six chapters consist of prophecies, which, though manifestly connected, were delivered at different times.

His rank as
 a prophet.

As a *prophet*, Daniel must be allowed a very high rank, whether we consider the magnitude and glory of the events themselves which he describes, or the explicit minuteness and exactitude of his delineations. "The prophecies of Daniel," observes Dr. Gray, "were in many instances so exactly accomplished, that those persons who would otherwise have been unable to resist the evidence which they furnished in support of our religion, have not scrupled to affirm that they must have been written subsequently to those occurrences which they so faithfully describe. But this groundless and unsupported assertion of Porphyry, who, in the third century, wrote against Christianity, serves but to establish the character of Daniel as a great and enlightened prophet; and Porphyry, by confessing and proving from the best historians, that all which is included in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, relative to the kings of the north, and of the south, of Syria, and of Egypt, was truly, and in every particular, acted and done in the order there related, has undesignedly contributed to the reputation of those prophecies of which he attempted to destroy the authority; for it is contrary to all historical testimony, and contrary to all probability, to suppose that the Jews would have admitted into the canon of their sacred writ, a book which contained pretended prophecies of what had already happened. And indeed it is impossible that these prophecies should have been written after the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, since they were translated into Greek near a hundred years before the period in which he lived; and that translation was in the possession of the Egyptians, who entertained no kindness for the Jews, or their religion. Those prophecies also, which foretold the victories and dominion of Alexander, (ch. viii. 5, xi. 3.) were shown to that conqueror himself by Jaddua, the high priest, as we learn from Josephus,⁶ and the Jews thereupon obtained an exemption from tribute every sabbatical year, and the free exercise of their laws. Many other prophecies in the book have likewise been fulfilled since the time of Porphyry.

"Daniel not only predicted future events with singular precision, but likewise accurately defined the time in which they should be fulfilled, as was remarkably exemplified in that illustrious prophecy

⁶ Lib. X. Cap. 12. Lib. XI. Cap. 8.

of the seventy weeks, in which he prefixed the period for 'bringing in everlasting righteousness by the Messiah,' as well as in giving the mysterious predictions which probably mark out the time or duration of the power of Antichrist, and, as some suppose, for the commencement of the millennium, or universal reign of saints, which they conceive to be foretold; for the explanation of which we must wait the event."

CHAPTER XIII.

JEREMIAH.

FROM A.M. 3362, B.C. 642, TO A.M. 3418, B.C. 586.

A.M. 3362. THE life and character of the Jewish prophet Daniel were so
B.C. 642. evidently associated with the changes of the Assyrian empire, that we slightly anticipated the regular order of events in placing our record of them in this work immediately after the life of Nebuchadnezzar. We now return to the contemplation of one of the last amongst the series of prophetic lights that adorned the darkest ages of the Jewish commonwealth, in the character and predictions of JEREMIAH, who was also the earliest prophet of the Babylonish captivity itself, and connected with the several stages of its completion.

Jeremiah
and
Cassandra.

It was the fate of this prophet, like that of Cassandra, always to speak the truth, and never to be believed; and, in the clearest exhibitions of impending judgment, to find that, according to the ancient adage, "whom God will destroy, he first deprives of understanding." One could be ready to conclude, that the poets of antiquity had copied the character of their celebrated prophetess from that of this illustrious man, so entirely do they agree in temper and in circumstances. In both we find an inflexible integrity, never yielding to threatenings and penalties; in both a high spirit of patriotism, pouring out its illimitable griefs—

Cry, Trojans, cry! lend me ten thousand eyes,
And I will fill them with prophetic tears!

in both a participation in the sufferings which they foresaw, but could not ward off; and a large personal share in the miseries of a captivity ever before their own eyes, but never to be impressed upon others. In whatever sense the ancients might have used their adage, it is employed here only to illustrate the position, that the obstinate unbelief of the Jews, relative to their approaching destruction, undoubtedly accelerated its accomplishment, and rendered its consequences inevitable. A melancholy illustration of this position will appear as we detail the leading features of the life of this prophet; which will also furnish some additional circumstances accompanying the fall of the empire of Judah.

His birth.

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests of Anathoth, in Benjamin. He affirms himself to have been set apart from his

birth to his difficult and glorious office, and his pretensions are well supported by the fact, that he began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, when he could have been only about fourteen years old. Terrified at so awful and hazardous a commission, at an age so immature, in times so dangerous, he would have excused himself from his arduous task; but his appointment was ratified by new charges; and, sustained by correspondent promises, he entered upon his office, which he exercised until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, through a space of more than forty years. It is generally thought that he died in Egypt, about two years after the captivity. Of his private history little can be ascertained as apart from the public affairs of his country; and that which is blended with them presents us only a series of privations and persecutions.

A.M. 3362.

B.C. 642.

Early
election and
ministry

B.C. 628.

Private
history.

Privations.

Persecu-
tions.

The privations of the prophets extended over all their circumstances, and reached to the most endearing relations of human life. They were obliged to conform in their diet and manner of living to such severities as might best prefigure the horrors of famine, the straitness of a siege, and the miseries of war—of all of which they were appointed as tokens—and were often required to sacrifice to their prophetic duties and station their domestic and social ties and comforts. Thus Jeremiah not only shared the horrors of war and captivity with his people, but yielded many indulgences yet within his power, as a type of impending judgment, and was even forbidden to marry. We have already seen, in the account of Hosea, *that* prophet's choice directed by the circumstances to be symbolized rather than by his inclinations; when that which was allowed by his country was strictly enjoined upon him—a temporary marriage with a woman of loose character. And we shall hereafter see Ezekiel suffering the severest domestic loss—a wife of his choice, “the delight of his eyes, taken away at a stroke,”—as a sign of the sudden disruption of all social ties, about to be produced by the calamities hanging over the Jewish nation. These, and similar circumstances, rendered the prophetic office not an enviable distinction; and fully account for the reluctance with which it was generally undertaken, of which Jeremiah is an example. A post of so much difficulty and danger, and the distinctions of which, purely of a spiritual kind, were hid in the midst of so much peril, could have no fascinations for an ambitious spirit, and would effectually repress every attempt at deception, since no impostor could be willing to hazard so much for an uncertain renown. Some men can better encounter perils than endure privations—they will brave danger, but cannot practise self-denial. The prophets were inured to both; they were prepared for persecution by habitual poverty, restraint, and resignation; they had been taught, by repeated and painful trials, to submit their will wholly to the will of God, to relinquish, without murmuring, their dearest interests, and to sacrifice private

B. C. 628. feeling to the public welfare. These privations were followed by persecutions as bitter as they were unmerited. Jeremiah was premonished as to the character of his glorious but painful career, and encouraged to meet its severest afflictions. He who called him to the field girded him for the fight, but did not conceal from him the sharpness of the conflict. "Behold, I have made thee, this day, a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land"—"and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." After such a premonition, we are prepared for a life of suffering and sorrow on the part of the individual to whom it is addressed; we expect to find great mental qualities and distinguished virtues develop themselves in situations of unequalled peril, and finally triumphing over calumny and calamity. Such conclusions are fully justified in the chequered life of this eminent servant of God.

Predictions. The prophecies of Jeremiah turn upon two points—the sins of Judah, and their captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. These are the great incidents, presented in a variety of forms and an amazing amplitude of detail; the other subjects of his predictions are incidental and collateral. They were conveyed partly by preaching, and partly in writing; before the captivity, he delivered them himself, from his own lips, at different times, before all ranks, in various places—after that event they were propagated by writing exclusively.

Vision of the almond tree. His commission opened with a vision of "a rod of an almond tree"—the rod, a symbol of punishment—the tree, of which it was made, a signal of its near approach: the almond tree, being the most forward of all trees, is called, in Hebrew, *the hasty tree*, and became a proper and impressive sign of impending and swift destruction.¹ This was instantly followed by the vision of "a seething-pot," with its aspect "toward the north:" the boiling vessel prefiguring the internal commotions which should arise in the state, or the circumstances under which the Jewish nation should be melted and consumed; and the direction of the face of the pot towards the

Of the seething-pot.

¹ The wood, blossoms, and fruit of the almond tree, have each been made emblematical of scripture truth. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* Lib. XVI. Cap. 25, says, *Floret prima omnium amygdala, mense Januario, Martio vero pomum maturat*; and Dr. Shaw, in his *Travels*, speaks of it as the most early bearing fruit in Barbary. Its Hebrew root שקד, signifies to watch or waken; and when the prophet Jeremiah was first commissioned to deliver the will of God to the Jews, he was shown "a rod of an almond tree," for שקד אני על, "I am hastening," it was said, or am watching, or waking over "my word to perform it." The rods of the chief of the tribes seem each to have been

made of this wood, as emblematical of the vigilance required in their duties, Num. xvii. 6—8, and Aaron's rod distinguished him as God's peculiar servant, by miraculously bringing forth this fruit. Solomon, alluding perhaps both to its early appearance and white blossom, describes the approach of old age by the phrase, "the almond tree shall flourish." "The almond tree flourished around Smyrna," says Hasselquist, in his *Travels*, "February 12, on bare boughs." The bowls of the golden candlestick were made of the graceful shape of this fruit, and here the light was never to be suffered to decline.

north, distinctively pointing out from what quarter the affliction B.C. 623. should come. Thence he proceeded, as he was inspired by prophetic impulses, to reprove the inhabitants of his country for their idolatry; and to show them that they not only had broken the ties of gratitude arising out of their peculiar relation to the Deity, but that they had committed an outrage unknown to the heathen world, by an act of religious infidelity never practised among the nations towards their idols. “For, pass over the isles of Chittim, and see: and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing: hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit! Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord!” This short, but glowing passage, will serve to show the mingled ardour and tenderness, fidelity and compassion, which characterize the predictions of this writer. Among other things, he threatens them, that they should be ashamed of Egypt, in which they had hitherto placed so much confidence, as they had been before disappointed in Assyria. The power of Chaldea was collecting itself gradually to overwhelm that once proud and flourishing empire with a blow from which it has never since recovered. He describes the idolatry of Israel, under the strong image of whoredom; and warns Judah, that as she had partaken of the crime, she must share the punishment: yet the penalty is pronounced with reluctance and infinite pity, and is qualified by many unexpected mitigations. The Father of the families of the whole earth, when he rises to punish his guilty children, never forgets his paternal character; and teaches his prophets to mingle promises with threatenings, mercy with judgment, and lamentations with accusations. This is a spirit pervading Scripture prophecy, but never more conspicuous than in the predictions of Jeremiah.

Reproves idolatry.

While the prophet was pleading with his apostate and profligate B.C. 610. country, foretelling its dangers, urging it to repentance, and blending all the affections of a patriot with the fidelity of a prophet, that ungrateful country was plotting his destruction: his very relatives were engaged in the conspiracy; and, in his native place, the town of Anathoth, one of the possessions of the priesthood, they threatened to make him the victim of the universal resentment. He was unaware of this perfidious purpose, until it was divinely revealed to him; and his enemies were, at the same time, threatened, that, in consequence, they should be themselves utterly destroyed when the day of visitation should come.

Threatened by his relatives.

These predictions having been delivered in words only, were followed by fresh symbols. The prophet was commanded to gird his loins with a linen girdle; then to divest himself of it, and to hide it “in a hole of the rock” by the river Euphrates, where, when the tide flowed, it would be wet, and when it ebbed, would be left dry,

Symbol of the linen girdle.

B.C. 610. and by this alternation would more speedily decay. After many days, he was commanded to take it out of the place where it was concealed, and display it before the people. He found it utterly spoiled. The girdle, being an ornamental part of oriental dress, was chosen as the symbol of the glory of the Jews, and its decay became, therefore, the image of the destruction of their prosperity. "Thus saith the Lord; after this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem." Further, by the figure of bottles filled with wine, either chosen as a proverbial expression of plenty, or as a reproof of their debauchery, he was commanded to foreshow the excess of their approaching misery.

Followed by
a famine.

These indications of divine displeasure were followed by a grievous famine, described with even fearful accuracy, yet in language truly poetical. "Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up. And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with the vessels empty: they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the ploughmen were ashamed; they covered their heads. Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it, because there was no grass. And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass." About this time also, Jeremiah received the command that he should not marry, which seems, in this instance, to have been to him a merciful prohibition, while it was a signal to his countrymen that this terrible dearth, under which they languished, was but the beginning of sorrows. "Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons and daughters in this place. For thus saith the Lord concerning the sons, and concerning the daughters, that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land; they shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented, neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth." The repetitions in the opening of this prediction, which sound so unnecessary to an English ear, are consistent with the genius of Hebrew poetry, which should be judged by its own character, and not condemned because of the apparent langour of reiteration in a mere prose translation. The painful circumstances which demanded this relinquishment of conjugal charity, are further enforced by a strict injunction, that no one should bemoan or lament the dead—a prohibition the more striking because of the loud and public mourning which characterized oriental nations, and the Jews among others: but the reason was as affecting as it was apparent, the impending calamities of the

Commanded
not to
marry.

Jews would be so multiplied as to leave neither time, nor opportunity, nor inclination, for such external tokens of sorrow—even when their greatest men fell—so common would affliction become, and so nearly would it touch every individual. “Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them.” On the same principle, all festivity and hilarity are forbidden to the prophet. Those who rejoiced, were insensible of their danger; but he, the messenger of evil tidings, before whom futurity was unveiled in all its appalling features, could have little inclination to join in assemblies of mirth; indeed they were absolutely proscribed, so far as related to himself. The reason for this privation is also given; “For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.”

These predictions and others, contained in the first seventeen chapters of this prophet, were delivered in the reign of Josiah, king of Judah; those which immediately follow, it has been thought, were given in the reign of his successor, Shallum, as he is called by Jeremiah and in the Chronicles, but the name by which he is better known is Jehoahaz. Josiah having died in battle against the king of Egypt, Archbishop Usher thinks he was chosen by the people in haste, lest Pharaoh-necho should surprise them before they had made their election; but that they first changed his name, considering that of Shallum unfortunate, the only king of Israel of that name having been slain in the first month of his reign. Jehoahaz reigned, however, no more than three months, when he was deposed by the Egyptian conqueror. In this short space, some important predictions were communicated by the prophet. They also opened with a type. He was commanded to go down to the potter’s house, and watch the process of his work. As the prophet looked on, one of the clay vessels became broken before he had completed it, and he re-moulded it. Jeremiah was instructed to employ this image in explaining to the house of Israel the absolute sovereignty of God over them; at whose entire and exclusive disposal they were as clay in the hands of the potter; and further, that the breaking of the vessel, and the formation of another of the same clay, was a signal of the rejection of the Jews, because of their iniquities, and the substitution of another people for them. To render the figure the more impressive, and to give it due publicity, he was commanded to take an earthen vessel, and having assembled the priests, elders, and people in the valley of Hinnom, to declare the impending destruction of the nation, and to dash the vessel in pieces, as a sign thereof, before their faces. Having discharged this commission, he returned to the temple, to confirm yet more publicly what he had just predicted. It appears that a new plot had been

Shallum, or
Jehoahaz.

Type—a
broken
vessel.

B.C. 610. formed against his life; and this renewed testimony against the vices of his countrymen, together with the unwelcome repetition of their danger, added fiercer fury to their displeasure, and furnished occasion to Pashur, the governor of the temple, to gratify his malice, by striking the prophet and confining him in the stocks. In an evil hour he obeyed the impulse of his passions! When he came the next day to release the persecuted seer, he received the fearful tidings that he should witness the death of all his dearest friends by the sword; that he should go himself into captivity with all his family, never more to return; that he should die in Babylon, and be buried there—in token of which he was named, by Jeremiah, *Magor-missabib—a terror round about*; “For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends.”

Pashur's
violence.

Pharaoh-
necho and
Jehoiakim.

Pharaoh-necho, now returning from his successful expedition against Carchemish, imposed a tribute upon the Jews, and deposed Jehoahaz, placing upon the throne Eliakim, his brother, whose name he changed to Jehoiakim; and taking with him the dispossessed monarch into Egypt. Early in the reign of the new sovereign, Jeremiah took occasion to exhort his countrymen and their nobles to repentance, and to remind them of the alternative. These admonitions had no influence over the youthful monarch or his degenerate court. The prophet then proceeded to declare, that the lot of the dethroned prince, his brother, was more to be lamented than that of his ancestors, who had been carried to the grave, or even of his father, who died almost in battle; for that his captivity should end only with his life, and that he should see his native land no more. Jehoahaz accordingly died in Egypt. Jehoiakim himself was threatened for his oppression, luxury, and unbelief, with an unlamented death; and the sentence was extended beyond him to his successor, Jehoiachin, called by the prophet also Jeconiah, or Coniah, (a word of the same signification, and Hebrew names were all significant,) whose captivity by the Chaldeans was foretold. It was also further declared, that no prince of his family should inherit the throne; a series of solemn and severe predictions which is closed by the impassioned appeal—“O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!”

Danger of
Jeremiah.

It was about this time that the occurrence took place to which allusion has been made in the Historical Chapter including the captivity of Judah, in speaking of the character of MICAH. Jeremiah, declaring these unwelcome truths publicly in the temple, was seized, and by the priests and time-serving prophets sentenced to die. Happily their power did not reach so far as to an execution of their decision, otherwise the prophet had undoubtedly perished at this time. But it was necessary to consult the princes of the empire; who, after patiently and impartially listening to the accusation, and to the various circumstances upon which it was founded, agreed with the people that the sentence was unjust and unmerited,

and revoked it accordingly. This righteous decision ~~was~~ further B.C. 610. confirmed by some of the elders, who explained to the assembly that Micah had prophesied distinctly to the same purport. The indignation of Jehoiakim was, however, roused; and as it was not prudent, in his situation, and in defiance of such a just and public determination, to wreak it upon Jeremiah, he selected another victim, and persecuted Urijah, the son of Shemaiah, of Kirjath-jearim, whose predictions accorded with those of Jeremiah, and who fled into Egypt upon the first intimation of his danger. Thither the implacable malice and the political influence of the Jewish monarch reached him; and, lest these should fail, by a ruffian stratagem, not unknown to modern times, he sent a chosen band to surprise the seer in his retreat, and to bring him by force from his foreign asylum into the royal presence, where he was basely slain. In the midst of tumults and factions, and at the moment when this outrage upon justice and honour was committed, Jeremiah found a friend in Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whose powerful influence protected him alike from popular and princely fury.

Before the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, the prophet had foretold the subjugation of other nations besides Judah to the power of the Chaldeans, and the astonishing victories of Nebuchadnezzar. These predictions are contained in that portion of the book bearing his name, which comprises the 46th chapter up to the 49th, both inclusive, and is directed against the Egyptians, (a plain proof that they were not subdued before Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne of Babylon, as we have intimated in his life,) also against the Philistines, Tyrians, Phœnicians, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites; against Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, and other states and cities. The auxiliaries of this devoted empire are described by their characteristic warlike qualities, while their defeat is distinctly foretold: and the pride of Egypt itself is represented under the fine image of the overflow of its own Nile.—“Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? *Egypt* riseth up like a flood, and *his* waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city, and the inhabitants thereof. Come up, ye horses, and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow. For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord of hosts hath a sacrifice *in the north country*” (plainly the Chaldeans were to be conquerors of this people, and the instruments of divine indignation) “by the river Euphrates.”

Predictions
respecting
Nebuchad-
nezzar.

Against
several
nations.

It was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, that the event so long B.C. 606. threatened, so clearly predicted, and so pathetically described, com-

B.C. 606.
Jerusalem
plundered.

menced, and Nebuchadnezzar besieged and plundered Jerusalem, taking away with him Daniel and his companions, but generously giving liberty to the monarch whom he had in his power: the reign of Jehoiakim was extended three years further; but nothing could open the eyes or soften the heart of this infatuated prince. The forbearance exercised towards him produced no reformation in his conduct; and the important predictions and admonitions by the mouth of Jeremiah, with which this short interval was crowded, served but to exasperate him whom they might have saved. To render permanent the prophecies that had been delivered from the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, up to this period, the fourth of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah was instructed to commit them to writing; but not merely to answer the end of perpetuity, important as it was; the intention was, also, that they should be before the eyes of the sovereign and his people constantly; and the only reason assigned is so benevolent and so characteristic of all that is revealed of Deity in the Scriptures, that we cannot withhold it. "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." The predictions were accordingly dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch. It seems that the prophet was at this time in prison; yet, anxious that the benefit should not be withheld from the people, he commissioned Baruch to take the earliest and fittest opportunity of giving them publicity, by reading them to his countrymen at their first solemn convocation. On the day of expiation, in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, this injunction was carried into effect—the roll was publicly read; tidings of this circumstance were carried instantly to court, and Baruch was summoned before the assembled princes, to read the book a second time. His illustrious audience appears to have been much struck and affected by those awful admonitions; and they thought it behoved them to lay the whole before the king. At the same time, aware of the cruel disposition of Jehoiakim, and rightly judging that he would be deeply incensed, they took the precaution of commanding the prophet and his amanuensis to conceal themselves, and then presented themselves with the important writing before the monarch, who was sitting in the winter palace, with a fire burning before him. He commanded Jehudi to read the writing; but had scarcely patience to listen to three or four columns of it, when he cut it with a pen-knife, and notwithstanding the entreaties of Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah, consumed it in the fire. It is mentioned, as an instance of the general insensibility of those who surrounded the rash prince, that they appeared to be totally unaffected by this bold and atrocious act. At the same time, orders were issued for the apprehension of Jeremiah and Baruch; but they were already concealed, and so effectually, that they escaped the present danger. After this occurrence, the prophet was enjoined to take another roll yet larger,

The roll
publicly
read.

Burnt by
Jehoiakim.

Re-written.

and to dictate to Baruch the whole of the former writing, together with many additional predictions, closing with a severe sentence against Jehoiakim, threatening him that he should be himself cut off, and deprived of burial; and that his posterity should be disinherited of the throne of David. B.C. 606.

At the close of these three years, Jehoiakim rebelled against his formidable conqueror, who, when he spared him, had rendered him tributary; and the enraged king of Babylon returned with irresistible force against Jerusalem. The Rechabites, who had been bound by their father Jonadab, the son of Rechab, to some singular observances—among which were these, that they should neither drink wine, nor dwell in houses, but in tents, to signify that they were but strangers in the land—were compelled, by the extremity of the circumstances, consequent upon this invasion, so far to relinquish this latter stipulation, as to retreat into the city, and dwell within the walls of Jerusalem, to escape the fury of the Chaldeans, who overspread the country. Jeremiah availed himself of this occurrence, which, from its singularity, could not but be generally known, once more to admonish the king and the people by the example of these Rechabites. In order to do this more effectually, he collected all the house of Rechab, and, in presence of many witnesses, in the house of the Lord, set before them wine, inviting them to drink; but they resolutely refused, assigning their father's injunction as a reason, and not deeming their constrained abandonment of one part of their vow a reason for the voluntary neglect of that which was within their power. The prophet took this occasion to reprove the Israelites for their breach of God's commandments, to whom they owed such infinite obligations, while these Rechabites held so sacred the precept of their father. To mark this admonition yet more strongly, while a wicked king was threatened with the extermination of his family, and a rebellious nation were about to be carried into captivity, the obedience of the Rechabites was rewarded with the promise—"Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." Immediately afterwards occurred the death of Jehoiakim, who was slain by the Chaldeans, and his body cast into a common sewer. Jehoiachin, who is also called Jeconiah and Coniah, ascended the throne, but kept his seat only three months, at the close of which period he was taken away captive by the Chaldeans; and with him the princes, nobles, officers, and principal population of Jerusalem, besides its treasures—no mean spoil, frequently as it had been before plundered. The king of Babylon did not, however, utterly destroy the place, but thought proper to place Mattaniah, the uncle of the last monarch and brother of the preceding, by the more commonly-known name of Zedekiah, upon the throne, who was suffered to reign eleven years. The Rechabites.

Zedekiah, unmoved by the mingled judgment and severity of the measures which resulted in this event, which plundered, without Death of Jehoiakim.

B.C. 599. wholly impoverishing him, and, while it retrenched his resources, spared him his life and his royalty; unawed by all the predictions of impending indignation, which he had heard, and by the calamities which he had partially shared; continued the same ruinous career of evil which had distinguished and successively destroyed his predecessors. In the beginning of his reign, Jeremiah was shown two baskets of figs; the one ripe and good, the other utterly worthless. By the first were intended those of the captivity, whose heart should be softened by affliction, and to whom the promise of restoration to their country was given. By the latter the inhabitants of Jerusalem who remained; both the king, the princes, and the general population, who were unchanged and unaffected by the judgments which they had witnessed, and were threatened that by sword, and pestilence, and famine, they should be driven out, and "consumed from off the land." Soon afterwards he was instructed to make yokes and bonds, and, after putting them upon his own person, to send them to the respective sovereigns of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, by the hand of their ambassadors then at Jerusalem; and to tell them that, unless they submitted to the king of Babylon, they should be subdued by force. The same unwelcome message he himself carried to his own sovereign, assuring him that no way remained to save himself and his people but by submission. To enforce this injunction more strongly, and to keep it in constant remembrance, the prophet continued to wear upon his own person those badges of slavery, until Hananiah, a false prophet, taking the yoke from his neck, broke it in the temple, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, affirming, that within the space of two full years, the prisoners who had been carried into Babylon should be restored, together with their captive prince Jeconiah, and all the spoil. Jeremiah was, in consequence, commanded to say to Hananiah, that in place of the yoke of wood which he had broken, Nebuchadnezzar should impose upon the nations a yoke of iron: and that as a punishment for having deceived the people by a lying prophecy, he should die that very year, which happened accordingly, in the seventh month.

Type of figs.

Hananiah's contradiction,

And sentence.

B.C. 596. In the fourth year of Zedekiah, Seraiah having been sent to Babylon on the part of that prince, or having accompanied him, to negotiate some political measure with Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah wrote his prophecies against Babylon, which form a considerable part of the book bearing his name, and which testified that the cup of blood which that empire had put into the hands of all other nations, she should herself drink in turn, even to its dregs. These he now gave to Seraiah, charging him first to read them to the captive Jews, to animate them with the prospect, although distant, of their restoration to their country, and then to bind them to a stone, and sink them in the river Euphrates; at the same time apprising them, that by this act was typified the fall of Babylon,

Jeremiah sends his prophecies to Babylon.

never to rise again. It is possible that besides the sanguine temperament of man, which induces him, unless hope be wholly extinguished, to antedate the termination of his calamities, that these predictions operated powerfully upon the minds of those Israelites to induce them to expect a speedier deliverance than was intended; especially as these anticipations were encouraged and strengthened by the false prophets, who, like Hananiah, flattered their wishes, and who had been carried away with them into captivity. However this might be, Jeremiah found it necessary to write to them a letter by the hands of Elasah and Gemariah, sent by the king of Judah on some mission to Nebuchadnezzar, to show them that they must not cherish the hope of a speedy deliverance, and that the vials of wrath upon his devoted country were not all yet emptied. He advised them to marry and settle in the land of their captivity, that "they might be increased, and not diminished" in the interval that must elapse before their restoration. He had before declared that their state of subjection should last during the reign of "Nebuchadnezzar, of his son, and of his son's son," and he now precisely fixes the term "seventy years." Of the two false prophets, "Ahab, the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, the son of Maasseiah," he predicted that they should be the victims of their own deception, and that it would become a proverbial form of malediction, "The Lord make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire." In answer to this letter, Shemaiah, who was at Babylon, wrote to Zephaniah, who was the chief priest remaining at Jerusalem, reproving him for suffering Jeremiah to proceed without punishment, and this letter the priest read to the prophet. In consequence, he was ordered again to send to them of the captivity, and to pronounce sentence against Shemaiah, that neither he, nor any of his family, should be restored to their native country.

B.C. 596.
His letter to
the captives.

His sentence
against
Zedekiah
and Ahab,

And against
Shemaiah.

Thus Jeremiah continued to prophesy, with inflexible fidelity, in defiance of dangers and privations, sometimes announcing the approaching completion of the woes of his country, and at others its eventual deliverance, until the ninth year of Zedekiah, in the tenth month of which Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem to besiege it. Struck by a momentary remorse, the king of Judah sent to entreat the prophet to pray for them. This emotion did not long continue; and Zedekiah having found means to prevail upon the king of Egypt to make a diversion in his favour, the Chaldeans drew off from the siege of Jerusalem to attack the Egyptians. The prophet was enjoined to represent to Zedekiah and his countrymen, that this stroke of policy would prove no more than a temporary expedient, and the message was delivered in the characteristic language of prophecy. "Deceive not yourselves, saying the Chaldeans shall surely depart from us, for they shall not depart: for though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chal-

B.C. 590.
Jerusalem
again
besieged.

B.C. 590 deans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should *they* rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire." Yet wearied of always prophesying, without "his report being believed," and feeling his own exposure to the calamities which hung over his devoted country, he availed himself of the temporary absence of the Chaldeans, when they marched against the king of Egypt, and attempted to withdraw from the city, and to retire to Anathoth, the place of his nativity. He was arrested, however, by Irijah, a captain of the guard, at the gate of Benjamin, as a deserter to the Chaldeans, and brought as such before the princes, who struck him, and, after treating him with great indignity, imprisoned him "in the house of Jonathan the scribe." After a considerable time, the king sent for him privately, to inquire if there were any prophecy touching him; when Jeremiah, answering in the affirmative, assured him that he should be certainly "delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon." He availed himself of this opportunity to point out to Zedekiah the falsehood of those prophets who had prophesied that the Chaldeans should not come against the city, implying, from this failure of their predictions, the truth of his own, which had always pointed to this event; he complained of the injustice and cruelty of the treatment which he had received; he pleaded his perfect innocence of any crime against the monarch or the state, and entreated that he might not be remanded to his former prison, stating that it would be at the peril of his life to continue there. The king was so far either touched with remorse for the oppression which he had permitted, or melted by the affecting representation of the prophet, that, although he did not think proper to give him his liberty, he softened the rigour of his confinement, and commanded "that they should commit him into the court of the prison," and afford him a daily allowance of food until the bread in the city failed.

Jeremiah attempts to flee; is arrested and confined.

Sent for by the king.

Pleads his innocence.

Is confined in the court of the prison.

Purchases the field of Hanameel.

While he was thus incarcerated, a legal occurrence demanded his attention, and his conduct in it marked the implicit confidence which he himself placed in the revelations made to him respecting the restoration of the Jews to their own land. His cousin Hanameel visited him, apprising him that he wished to sell his field, and that, according to the provisions of the Mosaic law in similar cases, the right of redemption and of inheritance was with the prophet; who did not scruple, notwithstanding the unpromising aspect of public affairs, and his own predictions of the entire subjugation of the country to the Chaldeans, to purchase this land, fully assured that the inheritance should return to himself or his family, in the restoration of his people to their rights after the Babylonish captivity: but he took the precaution to have witnesses of the whole transaction, and to deliver the writings, properly signed and sealed, to Baruch, charging him to envelope them in an earthen vessel, which might preserve them from injury, and to keep them carefully,

until the time of restitution should arrive, when they would be evidence of the right of his family to the possession. B.C. 590.

A transaction had also occurred during the siege, which marks strongly the character of the people with whom he had to do, evincing their total dereliction of principle, and which called forth the severest censures of the faithful and unintimidated prophet. The sabbatical year having arrived, at the instance of Jeremiah, who urged upon them the command of God in the law, the king, princes, nobles, and people, liberated their slaves: but in this interval, while the Chaldeans were withdrawn, and pursuing the Egyptians, they recalled their emancipated brethren, and reduced them to their former state of servitude. Sabbatical year violated.

Nebuchadnezzar, having shut up the Egyptians within their own boundaries, and rendered them tributary, returned to the investment of Jerusalem; and Jeremiah, continuing his prophecies against his countrymen, was demanded of the king by the princes, as a seditious man, and a traitor to the state, who discouraged the people by his predictions, and merited death. Zedekiah gave him over to their power, to dispose of him as they thought proper; and, in virtue of this authority, they cast him into a dungeon, or well, without water, but the bottom of which was mire, in which he must have been suffocated but for the good offices of Ebed-melech, one of the king's attendants, who apprized him of the perilous situation of the prophet: the monarch authorized him to draw him out of this pit, and remanded him to the court of the prison-house. After this deliverance, Zedekiah sent again for him, to a private audience; when Jeremiah urged the necessity of his appeasing the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar by an unqualified submission, in order to the preservation of himself and his country from the destruction which awaited both, in terms so solemn and so convincing, that the king confessed himself almost persuaded to do as he recommended, but expressed his apprehensions both of his nobles and of the people, and strictly enjoined Jeremiah, in the event of their interrogating him, not to reveal the subject of this interview. Nebuchadnezzar returns. Jeremiah consigned to a dungeon. Released, and brought to the king.

The time now came when repentance on the part of the nation and of the monarch was as unavailing as the remonstrances of the prophet had hitherto been. Jerusalem was taken on the 9th day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah; and with it that miserable monarch, who was first permitted to witness the slaughter of his children, and then deprived of sight, bound in fetters, and carried into Babylon. Amidst the dreadful slaughter that ensued, Nebuchadnezzar gave particular charge that no injury should be inflicted upon Jeremiah; and the day of the slavery of his country, was that of his personal deliverance. He was carried, with other captives, to Ramath; but when he arrived at that place, he had his choice given him, whether he would go into Babylon, or return to his native land, or prefer any other place, since he was at Jerusalem taken. Jeremiah released and carried to Ramath.

B.C. 590.
Comes to
Gedaliah.

liberty to go where he pleased. He preferred staying in Judea, and went to Mizpeh, to Gedaliah, a Jewish prince, whom Nebuchadnezzar had constituted governor of the cities of Judah, and from whom, in former instances, the prophet had received protection. Here he resided in peace, with the remnant of the Jews, for some time. But a conspiracy was forming against Gedaliah, which disturbed this tranquillity, and terminated the life of the governor. One of the unworthy princes of Judah, Ishmael by name, had escaped the general destruction by flying to the king of Ammon; and after the settlement of the Jewish remnant under the just administration of Gedaliah, either moved by envy of his station, or instigated by the monarch with whom he had found protection, he resolved to compass the death of this good governor. Gedaliah had received notice of this conspiracy from Johanan, and others of the dispersed captains, who came in to him after the establishment of his government, and repeatedly urged that they might prevent the meditated evil by cutting off the traitor. The governor was too just to allow this latter measure; and, as the event proved, too secure to take the proper precautions against his insidious adversary. Unwilling to think so ill of a man upon whom he had conferred distinguished kindness, he suffered Ishmael to have constant access to him; availing himself of which, he found occasion to assassinate Gedaliah, and the friends who surrounded him.

Ishmael's
conspiracy.

Gedaliah's
death.

Ishmael's
further
treachery.

This cruel piece of treachery and rebellion was followed by another. Two days after this nefarious transaction, fourscore men approaching the desolated sanctuary, in habiliments of mourning, with incense and offerings, to lament the ruin of their country, the city, and the temple, were intercepted by the hypocritical murderer, who, mingling his tears with theirs, offered to conduct them to Gedaliah; and, after leading them into the midst of the city, he brought them to a pit, or subterraneous excavation, which had been made by Asa, king of Judah, as a hiding-place, when he was threatened by Baasha, king of Israel, and killed them there, filling up the cavern with the carcases of those who had fallen by his treachery. He then compelled the remnant of the people, among whom were some princesses who had escaped the captivity, to follow him, and was returning to Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, with whom this infamous plot seems to have originated, when Johanan, and other officers, who had in vain attempted to awaken the suspicions of the too confiding Gedaliah, having received information of these acts of violence on the part of Ishmael, pursued, and overtook him in Gibeon, rescued his prisoners, and compelled him to flee for his life, with only eight men who escaped with him.

His defeat
and flight.

The Jews
fear the
Chaldeans.

Notwithstanding this atrocious murder of Gedaliah was an act of treason unsanctioned by the remnant of the Jews, and so promptly revenged by Johanan, neither did that chief, his companions in arms, or the people, judge it prudent to return to the heart of their

country, until they could ascertain what representations on the subject might be made to Nebuchadnezzar, and how that monarch might be disposed to receive them. They turned, therefore, aside to the borders of Egypt, and dwelt on the confines of Judea, near Bethlehem. They had greater cause for apprehension, because not only the deputy appointed by the king of Babylon had fallen, but the Chaldeans who remained with him had been also put to the sword; and their fears so far prevailed, that they began to think of seeking shelter in Egypt. This step, however, they would not take without consulting Jeremiah, and, through him, seeking counsel at the hand of God; at the same time promising that they would abide by whatever decision he should make by inspiration. The prophet accordingly received, ten days afterward, an answer to their solemn appeal to him; and assured them, in the name of Jehovah, that if they continued in their country, he would give them favour in the sight of Nebuchadnezzar, and deliver them from their fears of the Chaldeans; but that if they persisted in going down into Egypt, they should their perish by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. At the same time, he added, that they had dissembled before him, in sending to inquire after his will, for that they had already made up their minds, and would disobey his injunctions. So it proved; for Jeremiah had no sooner delivered his message, than they accused him of conspiring with Baruch to deliver them into the hands of the Chaldeans, and of thinking so to intimidate them by this prediction, which they pronounced false, as to bend them to his purpose. They, therefore, gathered the people, and took them into Egypt, compelling Jeremiah and Baruch to accompany them. They had no sooner come to Tahpanhes, or, as some write it, Taphnes, than the prophet was commanded to "take great stones, and hide them in the clay in the brick-kiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; and say unto them, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them." He then proceeded to state his entire conquest of Egypt, and the destruction of those Jews who had fled thither, contrary to his express command, for protection. In this constrained sojournment in Egypt, Jeremiah wrote several distinguished prophecies, principally against the Jews and the Egyptians; and if, as is the best founded opinion, his book of Lamentations were composed on occasion of the ruin of his country by the Chaldeans, that work was also probably written here. Some have conjectured that they were framed on occasion of the death of Josiah: it is certain that he wrote some elegiac piece or pieces then; but the character of this book seems best to suit the melancholy extinction of the national glory and even existence. They are the longest specimens remaining of that kind of Hebrew

B.C. 590.

Meditate a
return to
Egypt.
Consult
Jeremiah.Are forbid
to go.

Disobey.

Force
Jeremiah
and
Baruch to
accompany
them.
Type at
Tahpanhes.Book of La-
mentations.

B.C. 590. poetry, and are pre-eminent for beauty and pathos. They justify the judgment of those who have pronounced the characteristic style of Jeremiah to have been tenderness. No man could so have written who did not deeply feel; and no man could so have felt, who was not involved in the calamities which he describes. Of his style, Bishop Lowth says, "Jeremiah, though deficient neither in elegance nor sublimity, must give place in both to Isaiah. Jerome seems to object against him a sort of rusticity of language, no vestige of which, I must however confess, I have been able to discover. His sentiments, it is true, are not always the most elevated, nor are his periods always neat and compact; but these are faults common to those writers, whose principal aim is to excite the gentler affections, and to call forth the tear of sympathy or sorrow. This observation is very strongly exemplified in the Lamentations, where these are the prevailing passions; it is, however, frequently instanced in the prophecies of this author, and most of all in the beginning of the book, which is chiefly poetical. The middle of it is almost entirely historical. The latter part, again, consisting of the six last chapters, is altogether poetical; it contains several different predictions, which are distinctly marked, and in these the prophet approaches very near the sublimity of Isaiah. On the whole, however, I can scarcely pronounce above half the book of Jeremiah to be poetical." He conjectures that the 53d chapter belongs properly to the Lamentations, to which it serves as an exordium.

A M. 3418. Jeremiah has been said to be the author of the 137th psalm; and
 B.C. 586. to him, with Ezekiel, has been also ascribed psalm 65th. Some have
 His other supposed that the prophet terminated his days in this involuntary
 works and death. exile, and that he was put to death by the Jews, irritated by his
 threatenings and reproaches at Tahpanhes. They have even con-
 2 Macc. xv. 13. jectured that he was stoned, and suppose that he was one of those
 to whom the author of the epistle to the Hebrews alludes. (Chap. xi.
 37.) Others affirm that he died in Babylon. Some rabbins assert
 that he returned to Judea: but the time, manner, and place of his
 death, are altogether uncertain. Other circumstances have been
 added, as little to be depended upon. The apocryphal writer affirms,
 that he appeared in company with Oneas, after his death, to Judas
 Maccabæus, gave him a sword, and encouraged him to fight for his
 country. The Alexandrian chronicle speaks of predictions which he
 delivered to the Egyptian priests, foretelling the overthrow of their
 idols by an earthquake at the birth of our Saviour; and that
 Alexander, visiting his tomb, and learning the prophecies which he
 had delivered concerning his person and conquests, caused his body
 to be removed to Alexandria, and a magnificent mausoleum to be
 erected over him. The apocryphal writer before alluded to states,
 2 Macc. ii. 4, 5, 6. that he took the holy fire and concealed it in a cistern; that the Jews,
 upon their return, found in this receptacle only muddy water, which

became, however, inflamed, when poured upon the altar. He also A.M. 3418. tells us, that Jeremiah removed the tabernacle and the ark to mount B.C. 586. Nabo, and concealed them in a cavern, where they remain to this day. Some of these things are palpably fables, and all of them uncertain. The only authentic account of this illustrious prophet is that which we have given, collected principally from his own writings, and from other parts of the sacred Scriptures.

CHAPTER XIV.

EZEKIEL.

FLOURISHED ABOUT A.M. 3409 ; B.C. 595.

THE prophet Ezekiel, the third of those who have acquired the greatest distinction amongst the Jews, was a descendant of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, consequently of the sacerdotal order. His father's name was Buzi; and he is said to have been a native of Sarera. With regard to other particulars generally deemed interesting in the early history of distinguished men, Scripture has left no record, because they are of minor consideration compared with his great character as a prophet, and because they have no immediate connection with his predictions.

Scene of his
prophecies.

The time of his appearance and the drift of his writings evince a marked and most merciful interference of Providence on behalf of the Jewish nation. They were now in a state of depression and captivity; and our prophet, who was destined to console them amidst their sorrows, was himself a participator of them, being carried away captive to Babylon with Jeconiah, or Jehoiakim, king of Judah, about A.M. 3405, B.C. 599. In this condition, he dwelt with his countrymen on the banks of the river Chebar, in Mesopotamia, which flows into the eastern side of the Euphrates, at Circesium, the modern Carchemish, two hundred miles, or thereabouts, to the north of Babylon. It is called by Pliny, (Lib. I. C. 26,) Cobaris; by Ptolemy and Strabo, Chaboras, or Aboras. There is no account of Ezekiel's having prophesied at any earlier period of his life; but upon his going into Mesopotamia, he was favoured with the spirit of inspiration, and became the appointed minister of consolation to his afflicted compatriots. They had entertained the idea, so natural to those in a state of bondage, that those who remained in Judea were much more happily circumstanced than themselves, in which supposition they were confirmed by the studied misrepresentations of false prophets. They were, however, now undeceived, by being informed of the calamities which were about to overspread their country, and the ultimate destruction which awaited Jerusalem itself with its celebrated and beloved temple, in consequence of the universal apostacy that would occur.

The commencement of his prophetic office is to be dated in the fifth year of the captivity, about eight or ten years after Daniel, and

in the thirtieth year of his age; so, at least, it has been usually calculated; but Usher, Prideaux, Calmet, and several other chronologists, consider the thirty years mentioned in the beginning of the first chapter of his writings, ("Now it came to pass in the *thirtieth year*, in the fourth month," &c.) as rather to be referred to the covenant made with God in the reign of Josiah; others again maintain it to signify the thirtieth year of his age, or of Nebupolasser's reign; and others, the thirtieth year from the Jubilee. We follow the more received opinion, by assigning his assumption of the prophetic character and office to B.C. 595. This was about four and thirty years subsequent to the period when Jeremiah was first favoured with the revelations of the divine will: consequently, the last eight years of Jeremiah correspond with the first eight years of Ezekiel.

The name given to our prophet was indicative of his future character, as a person eminent for his fortitude and trust in God. These noble qualities were displayed in the temper which he evinced during seasons of adversity, and in the unhesitating firmness and resolution with which he reprov'd the idolatries of Israel. It is derived from the Hebrew word *אֱזֵקִיאל* "fortitudo Dei."

The book which contains the prophecies of Ezekiel, and to which his name is universally attached, seems to be unquestionably of his production; such is his own statement at the very commencement of it, and no other person has advanced, or been supported by any plausible pretence, in a claim upon its composition. It has been frivolously maintained, that as the connective particle is used at the beginning of the book, it constitutes only a fragment of some other and, perhaps, larger work; but this is a very common style with the historical writers of Scripture, and the form of expression does not, in fact, require a translation that should imply a reference to any previous publication. "Now" is, therefore, the word properly used in this and other parts of Scripture in our English translation. Josephus, indeed, affirms¹ that Ezekiel left two books on the subject of the captivity of Babylon; and the opinion seems to have been entertained by others; but as no intimation of the kind occurs in any part of the inspired volume, and as, moreover, the prevalent notion appears to have rested upon the sole authority of Josephus, who has given no evidence of its truth, and left no trace of whence he derived the information, it may fairly be rejected as groundless. The Talmudists assert that some of the rabbis were desirous of rejecting the writings of Ezekiel from the sacred canon, as containing certain heterodox passages, and such as were contradictory to the law of Moses; particularly the statement in the eighteenth chapter, that the son should not bear the iniquity of his father, whereas the Jewish legislator himself declares, in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children to the

State of his works.

¹ Antiq. Lib. X. C. 6.

third and fourth generation. This, together with some objections arising out of the extreme obscurity of many parts of his prophecies, induced the sanhedrim to deliberate long and gravely upon their total suppression; but Ananias succeeded in removing the difficulty, and convincing them of their mistakes. It may be proper to say, in passing, that the passages in question are, in fact, by no means contradictory, except in the view of those who are unwilling to take the trouble of investigating the drift of the prophet, and admitting into the account the intention of the legislator. The latter intimates a general fact in the history of the divine government, under the Mosaic economy, the former speaks of a principle of that government in estimating personal character. It was the evident and frequent fact, that the children bore the iniquity of their fathers; in certain cases, this consequence still obtains from the natural result of sin and peculiar constitution of man: and it cannot be otherwise, where privations and sorrows follow from imprudence and folly through a long and mournful succession. But, in reality, the people referred to by Ezekiel suffered for their personal transgressions: the captivity they endured was unquestionably deserved by their persistence in wickedness, and because their *own* character had become so notorious, that "the son could not be said to bear the iniquity of the father," their peculiar sufferings were not, nor could they be made appear to be hereditary and entailed; for they had enough of responsibility on their individual account, and enough of misery entailed for their own delinquency. The prophet distinctly specifies and obviates the alleged difficulty himself, declaring that, according to the general practice of the divine government, though it were true that the son bore the iniquity of the father, it was nevertheless equally true that repentance would frequently avert the threatened calamity, and that "when the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all God's statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live."

Contents of
the book of
Ezekiel.

The first three chapters of the book of Ezekiel contain God's appearance to the prophet, and instructions for his conduct in the discharge of his prophetic office. The wickedness and future punishment of the Jews are then described in parables and visions, as far as the twenty-fifth chapter. Thence, to the thirty-second, the prophet treats of those nations who had insulted the Jews in their captivity. He predicts, in particular, the destruction of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Philistines, which was effected by Nebuchadnezzar, and describes the ruin of Tyre and Sidon, the fall of Egypt, and the degeneracy of its people. Between the thirty-second and the fortieth chapters he censures the discontented disposition and hypocrisy of the Jews, and adduces various considerations calculated to incite them to patience and resignation. In the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters he foretels the final return of the Jews from their dispersion, under the type of the victories to be

obtained over Gog and Magog. The nine last chapters contain a vision, representing a new temple and city; a new religion and government, typical of an universal church, which is commonly believed to be the description of a temple of corresponding construction with the celebrated temple of Solomon; but it is most obvious that the prophet has also some further reference, and really delineates a spiritual edifice, which shall be filled, as he expresses it, with "the glory of the Lord."

The circumstances recorded in the fourth chapter of the prophecy have furnished occasion to infidelity to proclaim a premature triumph. The prophet, having been commanded to shut himself up in his house, was to take a tile and delineate upon it the city of Jerusalem as in a state of siege, with all the appropriate engines of attack—to set up an iron pan to represent a wall between him and the city, and to continue for the space of three hundred and ninety days to lie upon his left side, signifying the iniquity of Israel; and forty days on his right side, signifying the iniquity of Judah. The accomplishment of this sign is to be looked for in the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the period of the captivity of the ten tribes. After this, Ezekiel was commanded to take wheat, barley, beans, lentiles, millet, and fitches, and make as many loaves with them as should correspond to the number of days in which he was lying on his right side, and to bake them with human excrements. Having expressed some reluctance to the latter part of the requisition, he was allowed to substitute cow dung. This act was, like the preceding, emblematical, and designed to prefigure the melancholy and reduced condition of the Israelites during the siege of their capital. It has furnished, as we before intimated, an occasion of objection to the enemies of revelation, which is thus briefly stated and refuted by the judicious Harmer. "M. Voltaire seems to be extremely scandalized at this circumstance, for he has repeated the objection over and over again in his writings. He supposes somewhere, that denying the providence of God is extreme impiety; yet, in other places, he supposes the prophetic intimation to Ezekiel—that he should prepare his bread with human dung, as expressive of the hardships Israel were about to undergo, could not come from God, being incompatible with his majesty. God, then, it naturally follows, never did reduce by his providence any poor mortal into such a state as to be obliged to use human dung in preparing their bread; never *could* do it; but those that are acquainted with the calamities of human life will not be so positive upon this point as this lively Frenchman. To make the objection as strong as possible, by raising the disgust of the elegant part of the world to the greatest height, he, with his *usual ingenuousness*, supposes the *dung was to be eaten with the bread* prepared after this manner, which would form an admirable confection. '*Comme il n'est point d'usage de manger des telles confitures sur son pain, la pluspart des*

Objection of
infidels.

*hommes trouvent ces commandemens indignés de la Majesté Divine.*¹ The eating bread baked by being covered up under *such embers*, would most certainly be great misery, though the ashes were swept and blown off with care; but they could hardly be said to eat a *composition* of bread and human excrements. With the same kind of liberty he tells us, that cow dung is sometimes eaten through all Deserta Arabia, (*Lettre du Traducteur du Cantique des Cantiques*), which is only true as explained to mean nothing more than that their bread is not unfrequently baked under the embers of cow dung; but is eating bread so baked eating cow-dung?

Answered.

The testimony of enlightened travellers is very important and illustrative upon this subject. They assure us that the dung of asses and camels is very commonly used for fuel in Eastern countries, and that, having collected and mixed it with cut straw, it is formed into cakes, which are suspended in some sunny situation to dry. Tournefort particularly says, respecting Georgia in the Persian dominions, that all that fine country yields not one single tree, and they are forced to burn cow dung. "Oxen are very common here, and they breed them as well for their dung as for their flesh; they will yoke fourteen or fifteen pair to one plough, to turn up the ground; each pair has its man to drive it, mounted like a postilion; all these postilions, who yawl and roar like sailors in a storm, make together a most intolerable concert; we had been accustomed to this noise ever since we left Erzeron." Of the latter place he states, that "besides the sharpness of the winters, what makes Erzeron very unpleasant is the scarcity and dearness of wood, nothing but pine-wood is known there; and that, too, they fetch two or three days' journey from the town; all the rest of the country is quite naked—you see *neither tree nor bush*, and their *common fuel is cow's dung*, which they make into turfs. But they are not comparable to those our tanners use at Paris, much less to those prepared in Provence of the husks of the olive. I do not doubt better fuel might be found, for the country is not wanting in minerals; but the people are used to their cow dung, and will not give themselves the trouble to dig for it. It is almost inconceivable what a horrid perfume this dung makes in the houses, which can be compared to nothing but fox-holes, especially the country-houses; *every thing they eat has a stench of this vapour*; their cream would be admirable but for this *pulvilis*, and one might eat very well among them, if they had wood for the dressing their butcher's meat, which is very good."²

Daily observation in our own country corresponds with the above statement of the celebrated traveller. It is by no means uncommon to see the peasantry of Britain collecting the same materials for their winter fuel, and exposing them to dry and harden in the air and sun in a similar manner. Another traveller is still more express

¹ *La Raison par Alphabet*, Art. Ezekiel.

² Tournefort, Vol. III. p. 95 and 137.

upon the point: "Wood is very dear in this country, (Persia,) and sold by weight; they give you but twelve pounds of it for fourpence or fivepence, and the same it is with regard to coals. Whence it is they are obliged to make use of turf made of camel's dung, cow dung, sheep's dung, horse dung, and ass dung. The chief Armenians of Julfa do so as well as the rest, or else the fire would cost more than the victuals, whereas they give but thirty pence for two hundred and twenty or two hundred and thirty pounds weight of this turf. They use it more particularly for *heating of ovens*, in which they bake most of their meats in this country, without trouble and at a small expense. *They even apply human dung this way.*" (Le Bruyn.) According to the preceding statements, the command issued to the prophet to prepare food in the manner specified, would not be likely to excite the surprise which is apt to be felt upon reading the account of the requisition, in countries generally unaccustomed to such practices. However unintelligible elsewhere, in the times and places referred to, it would be perfectly natural and consonant to common use. The prophet, indeed, expresses some dislike of the preparation with human excrements, as *he* probably had not been accustomed to it, and as it certainly betokened the extremity of wretchedness and misery; but his request, and the permission to make the exchange recorded, perhaps were intended to represent the feelings of the Jewish nation whom he typified, and the alleviation which would be granted of their severest calamities.

Next to the allusions to the particular affairs of the Jews, the predictions which relate to the fall and desolation of Tyre and Sidon, and the war conducted by Nebuchadnezzar against Egypt, are the most remarkable. These subjects are exhibited in the clearest and most forcible manner, with great strength of colouring, much minute delineation, and with an accuracy which the subsequent pages of history enables us fully to appreciate. Isaiah, upwards of one hundred and twenty years previous to the threatened destruction, had intimated, in general terms, that the city was to be captured and overthrown by the Chaldeans; but Ezekiel enters into greater particularity, and affirms distinctly that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was to be the very person employed by Providence to execute this vengeance, that he should slay the people, and level the fortifications to the dust. Even the hardships to be endured in consequence of the protracted period of the siege, are noticed in the expression, "every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled." Both the prophets alluded to also predicted the flight of the inhabitants across the Mediterranean into the adjoining islands and countries, where they were still unable to obtain a secure and peaceful retreat. As the Phœnicians were the best navigators of antiquity, and had spread themselves in different directions by planting various colonies, they would naturally repair to their friends in the season of danger, and accordingly Jerome testifies, on the authority

Prophecies
relating to
Tyre and
Sidon.

Prophecies
relating to
Tyre and
Sidon.

Ezek. xxix.
18, 19.

of the Assyrian histories, that when the Tyrians were besieged, after they saw no hope of escaping, they went on board their ships and fled to Carthage, or to some islands of the Ionian and Ægean sea, carrying with them all the precious things in gold, silver, clothes, and articles of furniture which they could collect, so that the conqueror found little else than bare walls to repay his toils. In consequence of this disappointment, Ezekiel was directed to promise him the conquest of Egypt for a reward, where he was to obtain the spoil and the prey as the wages of his army. It is further predicted of Tyre, that the city should be restored after seventy years, and return to her gain and merchandize—should be again taken and again destroyed—the people, forsaking their idolatry, should embrace the true religion—and at length the city should be finally destroyed, and its subversion so complete, that its ancient site should be occupied only by the tents of fishermen. These particulars were literally fulfilled in the subversion of the Babylonian empire, by Cyrus, at the end of seventy years, when the conquered nations were restored to their liberties, or, according to Newton, the seventy years in question may be computed thus: Tyre was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, in the thirty-second year of his reign, and in the year before Christ 573. Seventy years from that period will bring us to the year 503 before Christ, and the nineteenth year of Darius Hystaspes. At that time, the Ionians had rebelled against Darius, and the Phœnicians assisted him with their fleet; it is therefore reasonable to infer, they were now restored to their privileges. In the succeeding reign, they, in conjunction with the Sidonians, furnished Xerxes with several ships for his expedition into Greece; and, by the time of Alexander, the Tyrians were advanced to such a pitch of greatness, that they stopped his progress longer than any other part of the Persian empire. This relates to Insular Tyre, which flourished long after the old city, and subsequently to the time of Nebuchadnezzar; but was destroyed by Alexander after a siege of seven months. It recovered, however, from this disaster in a few years, and afterwards withstood a siege of fifteen months, before the fleets and armies of Antigonus could subdue it. The conversion of the city from idolatrous worship to that of the true God was effected by the residence of some Jews and proselytes among them. This happy change is recorded in the New Testament, and the Tyrians afterwards furnished some illustrious martyrs to Christianity. This celebrated town received a severe blow from the conquest of Alexander, who not only demolished its edifices, but transferred a considerable portion of its trade to his new city of Alexandria, in Egypt. More recently, it changed its masters several times, sometimes being in the hands of the Ptolemies, and sometimes of the Seleucidæ, kings of Syria, till at last it fell into the hands of the all-subduing Romans. It was taken by the Saracens, B. C. 639; retaken by the Christians in the

time of the holy war, A. M. 1124; taken again by the Mamalucs of Egypt, in 1289; and again retaken by the Turkish emperor Selim, in 1516, under which dominion it continues, such as it is, a heap of ruins and a picture of desolation! Nothing can be finer or more affecting than the description contained in the twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy, of the original glory and subsequent downfall of this noted city; and modern travellers have illustrated the prophetic statements by the recital of melancholy facts. We quote the language of Maundrell: "This city, standing in the sea, upon a peninsula, promises, at a distance, something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the prophet Ezekiel describes, chap. xxvii. 26, 27, 28. On the north side it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; besides which, you see nothing here, but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire house left: its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing, who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, namely, that it should be 'as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.'"

Prophecies
relating to
Tyre and
Sidon.

The predictions of Ezekiel, and of the two other principal prophets, who uttered their inspirations on the subject of the kingdom of Egypt, are distinctly verified by the profane historians. Nebuchadnezzar is expressly named as the agent of this mighty overthrow, who was to "make the multitude of Egypt to cease;" and with his people were "to draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with their slain." Two heathen historians, Megasthenes and Berosus, testify to the fact; the former, in direct terms, saying that Nebuchadnezzar conquered the greatest part of Africa; and the other by alluding to the captives whom he had taken, and the affairs which he arranged after the decease of his father. Josephus also corroborates this statement. The representations of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with regard to Pharaoh-hophra, the king of Egypt, are fully illustrated by the history of Herodotus, who has given him the name of Apries; and, in his Euterpe, recited a number of particulars respecting his misfortunes. The character of this prince, as pre-eminent for arrogance, is alluded to in remarkably striking terms by our prophet: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself;" upon which the historian furnishes a striking comment by representing Apries as most presumptuously boasting, that he was so firmly established, it was not in the power of any god to dispossess him of his kingdom. The words are *Απριω δε λεγεται ειναι ηδε η διανοια, μηδ' αν θεον μιν μηδενα δυνασθαι παυσαι της Βασιλειης· ετω ασφαλεως αυτω ιδρυσθαι εδοκει.* Hero-

To Egypt.

Ezek. xxix. 3.

dotus goes on to say, that, notwithstanding this idea, he was conquered (by Amasis, one of his officers who rebelled against him, and ultimately succeeded to the sovereignty) and taken prisoner; after his captivity he was conducted to Sais, to what was formerly his own, but then the palace of Amasis, where he was confined for some time, and treated with much kindness and attention. But the Egyptians soon began to reproach Amasis for preserving a person who was their common enemy, which induced him to deliver up Apries to their power. They strangled, and afterwards buried him in the tomb of his ancestors, which stands in the temple of Minerva.

Gog and
Magog.

The prophecies concerning Gog and Magog, in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters, have excited considerable attention, and not a little perplexed learned commentators and theologians. Calmet remarks, that Gog is the name applied to the king of the country which is denominated Magog. Pliny informs us that Scythopolis and Hieropolis were always called by the name of Magog, after their capture by the Scythians; and the ancients have commonly represented Magog as the father of the Scythians, or Tartars, which has furnished occasion for numerous writers to trace these names in the provinces and cities of Great Tartary. Some imagine that the Persians descend from Magog, and affirm that this is the name under which they continue to pass in their own country; while others represent the Goths as the descendants of Gog and Magog, believing that the wars which the prophet Ezekiel describes as undertaken by the former against the saints, were those carried on by the Goths, in the fifth century, against the Roman empire. Similar descriptions are to be found in the other prophets, and in the twentieth chapter of the book of the Revelations distinct mention is made of Gog and Magog. Some interpreters, among whom is Mede, consider these two inspired writers as having different allusions, while they employ the same descriptive terms; and that the prophecies, of John in particular, have a distant reference to some of the unconverted heathens, who, it is supposed, will manifest a vehement opposition to the true church, at the closing part of that illustrious period which is designated the millennium. Calmet, however, in a dissertation prefixed to the prophecies of Ezekiel, advocates the sentiment that Gog is Cambyses, the monarch of Persia. The safest, and perhaps the truest method of interpretation, is to conceive that Gog and Magog, both in the prophecy of Ezekiel and in the Revelations of John, are allegorical personages, designed to indicate generally those potentates who should hereafter prove the most formidable opponents both of the Jewish and the Christian church. The predicted victories over these foes point to the future restoration and return of the Jews from that dispersion which is in its character so unique, in its duration so protracted, and in its consequences so disastrous. Both Jews and Gentiles are looking forward with eager anticipation to this movement of Providence; the former regarding

it as the most splendid æra of their existence as a nation, the latter as the completion of the triumphs of Christianity, and the consummation of human felicity.

Josephus relates that Zedekiah, king of Judah, thought the prophecy of Ezekiel at variance with the prediction of Jeremiah, importing that "Zedekiah should behold the king of Babylon, and go to Babylon." Ezekiel declared that "Zedekiah should not see Babylon, though he should die there." Each of these prophecies was, however, accomplished; for Zedekiah saw the Babylonish monarch at Riblah, where his eyes were put out, and whence he was conveyed to Babylon, the place of his death. Jeremiah's prophecies were sent to his countrymen who resided in Babylon, as appears from his own writings: (chap. xxix. 1:) it is probable, also, that Ezekiel's prophetic denunciations were transmitted to Jerusalem. The Talmudists suppose, from this intercourse and communication between Babylon and Judea, that the prophecies of Ezekiel were arranged in their present form, and placed by the elders of the great synagogue in the canon of Scripture.

Coincidence
of Jeremiah
and Ezekiel.

With regard to the *style* of Ezekiel, Bishop Lowth, in his Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, finely observes: Est atrox, vehemens, tragicus; in sensibus, fervidus, acerbus, indignabundus; in imaginibus, fecundus, truculentus, et nonnunquam pænè deformit, in dictione grandiloquus, gravis, austerus, et interdum incultus; frequens in repetitionibus, non decoris aut gratiæ causâ, sed ex indignatione et violentiâ. Quicquid susceperit tractandum id sedulò persequitur; in eo unicè hæut defixus a proposito rarò deflecteus. In cæteris, a plenisque vatibus fortassè superatus; sed in eo genere, ad quod videtur a naturâ unicè comparatus, suinirum, vi, pondere, impetu, granditate nemo unquam eum superavit: *i.e.* "He is deep, vehement, tragical; the only sensation he affects to excite is the terrible: his sentiments are elevated, fervid, full of fire, indignant; his imagery is crowded, magnificent, terrific, sometimes almost to disgust; his language is pompous, solemn, austere, rough, and at times unpolished: he employs frequent repetitions, not for the sake of grace or elegance, but from the vehemence of passion and indignation. Whatever subject he treats of, that he sedulously pursues, from that he rarely departs, but cleaves, as it were, to it; whence the connection is, in general, evident and well preserved. In many respects he is, perhaps, excelled by the other prophets; but in that species of composition to which he seems by nature adapted, the forcible, the impetuous, the great and solemn, not one of the sacred writers is superior to him." "His diction is sufficiently perspicuous," Dr. Lowth continues; "all his obscurity consists in the nature of the subject. Visions (as, for instance, among others, those of Hosea, Amos, and Jeremiah) are necessarily dark and confused. The greater part of Ezekiel, towards the middle of the book especially, is poetical, whether we regard the matter or

Style of
Ezekiel.

the diction. His periods, however, are frequently so rude and incompact, that I am often at a loss how to pronounce concerning his performance in this respect. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, as far as relates to style, may be said to hold the same rank among the Hebrews, as Homer, Simonides, and Æschylus among the Greeks. There are some Elegies in Ezekiel, which are actually distinguished by the title of Lamentations, and which may, with the utmost propriety, be referred to the class of Elegies. Among these, are the two Lamentations concerning Tyre, and the King of Tyre." Dr. Blair, in his Lectures, observes of Ezekiel, "in poetical grace and elegance, he is much inferior to them both (Isaiah and Jeremiah); but he is distinguished by a character of uncommon force and ardour." Another writer remarks that Ezekiel "may be compared to the Grecian Æschylus: he displays a rough but majestic dignity; an unpolished though noble simplicity; inferior, perhaps, in originality and elegance to others of the prophets, but unequalled in that force and grandeur for which he is particularly celebrated. He sometimes emphatically and indignantly repeats his sentiments; fully dilates his pictures; and describes the adulterous manners of his countrymen under the strongest and most exaggerated representations that the license of the Eastern style would admit." It has been said, also, "that his style" is generally very bold and majestic. It is a peculiar species of the sublime, to which some have given the name of the *terrible*. From the nature of his visions, however, more than from his language, he is often obscure, especially towards the beginning and end of his book. On this subject the celebrated German, Michaelis, is entitled to be heard, though it may be premised, that, however great as a general critic, he has few pretensions to that peculiar talent which, in judging of the merits of poetry, consists in the possession of an inspiration somewhat analogous to the spirit that dictated the original composition itself. In a sentence preceding the paragraph from Lowth already cited, the bishop has said that Ezekiel is much inferior to Jeremiah in *elegance*; in *sublimity* he is not even excelled by Isaiah; but his sublimity is of a different kind, upon which Michaelis remarks—"I must confess that I feel not perfectly satisfied with myself, when, in a matter entirely dependant upon taste, I can by no means bring myself to agree with our author. So far from esteeming Ezekiel equal to Isaiah in sublimity, I am inclined rather to think that he displays more art and luxuriance in amplifying and decorating his subject than is consistent with the poetical fervour, or indeed with true sublimity. He is, in general, an imitator, and yet he has the art of giving an air of novelty and ingenuity, but not of grandeur and sublimity, to all his compositions. The imagery which is familiar to the Hebrew poetry he constantly makes use of, and those figures which were invented by others, but were only glanced at, or partially displayed by those who first used them, he dwells upon and depicts with such accuracy and copiousness, that he leaves nothing to add to them,

Blair's
Criticism.

Analysis of
Michaelis.

nothing to be supplied by the reader's imagination. On this score his ingenuity is to be commended, and he is therefore of use to his readers, because he enables them better to understand the ancient poets; but he certainly does not strike with admiration or display any trait of sublimity. Of this I will propose only one example; many of the same kind may be found in looking over the writings of this prophet. In describing a great slaughter, it is very common in the best poets to introduce a slight allusion to birds of prey. Thus, in the Iliad,

————— ΑΥΤΗΣ Δ' ΕΛΩΓΙΑ ΤΕΥΧΕ ΚΥΝΕΣΣΙΝ
ΟΙΩΝΟΙΣΙ ΤΕ ΠΑΣΙ.

Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore. *Pope.*

Thus it is the language of boasting in the historical part of Scripture: 'I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the field.' 1 Sam. xvii. 44. Asaph also, in Ps. lxxviii. 48: 'He gave their cattle to the hail, and their flocks to the birds.' Moses is still more sublime, Deut. xxxii. 23, 24—

I will spend mine arrows upon them;
They shall be eaten up with hunger, a prey unto birds,
And to bitter destruction!
I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them,
With the poison of the reptiles of the earth.

But Habakkuk is more excellent than either of the former, (chap. iii. 5,) speaking of the victory of Jehovah over his enemies,—

Before him went the pestilence,
And his footsteps were traced by the birds.

Doubtless the *birds of prey*. Isaiah is somewhat more copious, chap. xxxiv. 6, 7—

For Jehovah celebrateth a sacrifice in Botzra,
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
And the wild goats shall fall down with them;
And the bullocks together with the bulls:
And their own land shall be drunken with their blood,
And their dust shall be enriched with fat.

These, and other images, Ezekiel has adopted, and has studiously amplified with singular ingenuity; and by exhausting all the imagery applicable to the subject, has in a manner made them his own. In the first prediction of the slaughter of Magog, the whole chapter consists of a most magnificent amplification of all the circumstances and apparatus of war, so that scarcely any part of the subject is left untouched: he adds afterwards, in a bold and unusual style, 'Thus, son of man, saith Jehovah, speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field; Assemble yourselves and come, gather yourselves on every side to the banquet which I prepare for you, a great banquet on the mountains of Israel. Ye shall eat flesh, and ye shall drink blood; ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and

Ezek. xxxix.
17—20.

of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. Ye shall eat fat till ye be satiated, and drink blood till ye be drunken, in the banquet which I have prepared for you. Ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with men of valour, saith the Lord Jehovah.' In this I seem to read a poet who is unwilling to omit any thing of the figurative kind which presents itself to his mind, and would think his poem deficient if he did not adorn it with every probable fiction which could be added; and for this very reason I cannot help placing him rather in the middle than superior class. Observe how the author of the Apocalypse, who is in general an imitator, but endued with a sublime genius, and in whose prose all the splendour of poetry may be discerned, has conducted these sentiments of Ezekiel: 'I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice unto the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat of the flesh of kings and of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit upon them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.'

Rev. xix. 17,
18.

"But Ezekiel goes yet further, so delighted is he with this image, so intent is he upon the by-paths of the Muses, that he gives even the trees, taking them for empires, to the birds, and their shades, or ghosts, he consigns to the infernal regions. Thus, chap. xxxi. 13—15: 'Upon his trunk shall all the fowls of heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches. To the end that none of all the trees by the waters shall exalt themselves for their height, nor shoot up their top among the thick boughs; neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water; for they are all delivered unto death to the nether parts of the earth in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit,' &c. In this we find novelty and variety, great fertility of genius, but no sublimity.

"I had almost forgotten to mention that Ezekiel lived at a period when the Hebrew language was visibly on the decline. And when we compare him with the Latin poets who succeeded the Augustine age, we may find some resemblance in the style, something that indicates the old age of poetry."

Supposed
intercourse
of
Pythagoras
and Ezekiel.

Pythagoras is supposed to have acquired his knowledge concerning the Mosaic law from Ezekiel; and some have even believed him to have been the same person with Nazaratus, under whom the Grecian philosopher is reported to have studied. If, as is commonly said, Pythagoras were born nine years after the Babylonish captivity, he might have visited Babylon when very young, and have become acquainted with the prophet in the decline of life: certain it is, that he did travel to Babylon, and, according to some calculations, was the contemporary of our prophet.

Some writers represented Ezekiel as the president of the tribes of Gad and Dan, in Assyria, and as having introduced serpents

among them for their idolatry. Hieronymus reports that he was put to death by his countrymen for his invectives against their vices, which a just estimate of the temper of mankind will render by no means improbable. Epiphanius mentions a popular belief in his day, that Ezekiel's remains were deposited in the same tomb with those of Shem and Arphaxad, in the land of Maur. His sepulchre was revered by the Jews, Medes, and Persians. Tudela says, that a roof was built to it by Jeconiah and thirty thousand Jews, containing the statues of Jeconiah and Ezekiel. A synagogue and library were also formed, in which were preserved the manuscript of Ezekiel's prophecies. A tomb is still shown as the tomb of this prophet, about fifteen leagues from Bagdad.

CHAPTER XV.

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

FLOURISHED FROM A.M. 3547, B.C. 457 ; TO A.M. 3570, B.C. 434.

A.M. 3547. THE first of the eminent persons whose names we have placed at
B.C. 457. the head of this section, was a Jewish priest, and, according to his own testimony, in the seventh chapter of his writings, the son of Seraiah, a high priest who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar, at the reduction of Jerusalem. B.C. 587. The term *son* may, however, be taken, in the large sense of the Hebrew language, to signify descendant, for, in all probability, he was his grandson or great-grandson. This is shown by Prideaux, in a chronological argument, to which considerable attention, to say the least, is due. If he were not born in Assyria during the captivity, which is, however, likely, he must have been one of the Babylonish captives. Ezra represents himself as a ready scribe ; and as he diligently devoted himself to the study of the laws and judgments of heaven, he obtained a very distinguished respect among the Jews for his learning, pious zeal, and knowledge of the Scriptures.

In the seventh year of the reign of Ahasuerus, or Artaxerxes Longimanus, according to the ordinary computation, about B.C. 457, Ezra was permitted to return with the Jews to Jerusalem, for the purpose of restoring the state and reforming the church. It is scarcely to be questioned that this act of royal favour ought to be attributed to the influence of Esther, the queen, who had been an orphan Jewess under the guardianship of Mordecai, a captive Jew, and who has been justly characterized as “ she was one of the very few that resist the allurements of splendour—that cherish kindness for their poorer relatives ; and remember with gratitude the guardians of their youth.”

Ezra
proceeds to
Jerusalem.

It was on the first day of the first month, called Nisan, or about the middle of March, that Ezra left Babylon for Jerusalem, and, halting at the Ahava, a river of Assyria, he instituted a solemn fast. On the twelfth day he went forward towards Jerusalem, which they reached on the first day of the fifth month, called Ab, or about the middle of July, having devoted four months to the journey. No sooner were they arrived than our scribe delivered into the temple the presents of the Persian king and his nobles, and those of the people of Israel left behind, amounting to 100 talents of gold, 20

basins of gold, worth 1,000 drachms, and two of copper; and 650 talents of silver, with silver vessels of 100 talents weight. He lost no time in stating the nature of his commission to the king's lieutenants and governors of Syria and Palestine, and which intimated that he was empowered to settle the church and state of the Jews according to the law of Moses; to appoint magistrates and judges, with full powers of imprisonment and confiscation of goods, and even with banishment and death.

Ezra soon found abundant occasion for the exercise both of his talents and his virtues, which were of no ordinary description. Almost every class of the people had apostatized into idolatrous connections, having taken wives of other nations in direct violation of the law of God. Upon the discovery of this sad defection, he rent his clothes—that is, his inner and outer garments, and pulled off the hair of his head and beard, as the deepest token of mourning; and, after convening the people by public proclamation, he endeavoured to impress them with a just sense of their impiety, and engaged them by oath to repudiate their wives and dismiss their children; thus retracing their false and illegitimate steps. Commissioners were appointed fully to investigate the affair, which was by this means effectually settled.

Ezra succeeded Zerubbabel in the government of Judea, and in the administration both of civil and ecclesiastical affairs, and executed this commission during thirteen years, when, in the twentieth year of Ahasuerus, he was superseded by Nehemiah, who was appointed for the same purpose by the Persian court. We shall have immediate occasion to notice this eminent individual. Ezra was encouraged to proceed with the reformation of the church and state by the protection and patronage of Esther; and, in the second year of Nehemiah's government, he was employed from morning to evening to read the book of the law, during the feast of tabernacles, of which he is generally reputed to have been the compiler and corrector: but more of this subject presently. The next day he expounded this sacred volume, and continued the practice of reading it in the temple eighty days, which at length was succeeded by a solemn renewal of the covenant. Whether he retired into a private station in his own country or returned to Babylon, is not certain. According to Josephus, he died and was buried at Jerusalem, in the hundred and twentieth year of his age. Other traditions report, and it is the received opinion among the Jews, that he died in Persia, and was buried on the banks of the river Samura; where Benjamin Tudela states, that his tomb is shown in the city of Zamuza.

The book which passes under the name of Ezra was doubtless his own composition. In the last four chapters he speaks in the first person: "And hath extended mercy unto me before the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened, as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me;

Civil
governor
there for
thirteen
years.

The book
of Ezra.

A.M. 3547.
B.C. 457.

A.M. 3547. and I gathered out of Israel chief men to go up with me." (Chap. vii.
B.C. 457. 28.) Some have pretended that the first six chapters were given, not by Ezra, but by some preceding writer; but their reasons are sufficiently futile, while the authenticity of the whole may be considered as fully established from the most ancient testimonies.

This valuable book is a continuation of the Jewish history, from the period at which the Chronicles come to a close, and the connection of the two histories is obvious by the commencing verses of the book of Ezra, which contain a repetition of the concluding part of the Chronicles. Passing over the sad season of the captivity, the book begins with declaring that God had already begun his design of causing the city and temple of Jerusalem to be rebuilt, by disposing Cyrus to promote that great event. It relates the fulfilment of several prophecies, in the release which Cyrus granted in the first year of his dominion in Babylon, and in the return of the people, now first called Jews, after a captivity of seventy years. A list is then furnished of the leaders of numbers of the captives who returned under Zerubbabel. Ezra says, that the whole number amounted to 42,360, but the separate numbers which he mentions are only 29,818 persons; a discrepancy which, perhaps, may be sufficiently accounted for by supposing that he omits some individuals who are viewed collectively, as those of the ten tribes, or those who had lost their register. It is not unlikely, moreover, that the text has in some instances, been corrupted. This list in question evinces the great diminution which the Jewish nation had suffered by war and captivity; so that the Jewish writers persist in affirming, that it was only the dregs of the people that returned. The narration proceeds to notice the erection of a temporary altar and service, and the laying of the foundation of their holy temple; and the lamentations of those who recollected the magnificence of Solomon's temple, are forcibly depicted; also the opposition of the Samaritans, and others, whose proffered services were refused, the final completion and dedication of the temple, A.M. 3489, and the celebration of the passover.

A passage
found in
Justin
Martyr.

Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, distinctly asserts that the ancient Hebrew copies contained the following passage, which the Jews expunged: "Ezra said to the people, This passover is our Saviour and our refuge; and if you will be persuaded of it, and let it into your hearts, that we are to humble him in a sign, and afterwards shall believe in him, this place shall not be destroyed for ever, saith the God of hosts; but if you will not believe in him, neither hearken to his preaching, ye shall be a laughing-stock to the Gentiles."

Ezra proceeds, at his seventh chapter, to relate his own return with the Jews to Jerusalem; describes the impiety of the people; his earnest supplications; their repentance, and separation from their Assyrian wives and offspring; enumerating the names of the

transgressors, and even the priests and rulers who had broken the law respecting marriage, with an impartiality which alike evinces the faithful historian and the determined reformer. A.M. 3547.
B.C. 457.

The book of Ezra, from the eight verse of the fourth chapter, to the twenty-seventh verse of the seventh chapter, is written chiefly in the Chaldee dialect, which was at that period the prevalent language throughout Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia. As this part of the history contains letters and decrees originally produced in that language, there was an evident propriety in retaining it, because the Jews, having recently returned from captivity, were probably as much, or even more familiar with the Chaldee than with the Hebrew. Nehemiah has been supposed to intimate, by certain expressions in his eighth chapter, (viii. 2, 8,) that the law was not universally understood; the meaning of which might be, that some of them had forgotten the Hebrew language during the captivity.

Ezra has always been held in the highest estimation by his own countrymen, both as a priest and as a prophet; and many have been of opinion, that he is the same person as the prophet Malachi of the canon, the common appellation by which he is distinguished being his proper name, and the latter, which signifies an angel, or messenger, being assigned him, with reference to his peculiar office as the restorer of the Jewish religion to its primitive purity. To him, both Jews and Christians, by an uniform and united tradition, have attributed the honour of collecting, arranging, and publishing the sacred code, which has been called the canon of Scripture, comprising such writings as we are bound to receive as authentic and inspired. He is believed to have himself composed in addition, the greatest part, if not the whole, of the book which passes under his name, the two books of Chronicles, and the book of Esther. These, together with those of Nehemiah and Malachi, were only classed with the other sacred writings fifty years afterwards, when, subsequently to the suspension of the prophetic spirit, the books of Scripture were finally closed by Simon the Just and the great synagogue.

Ezra's
labours on
the canon.

This subject has been often discussed, and the importance of it being abundantly obvious, the present section appears the proper place to enter a little further into the consideration of it. We may therefore state, that some of the Christian fathers have strenuously maintained that the Scriptures were entirely lost during the Babylonish captivity, and that Ezra consequently re-wrote them by an express revelation. Such were the sentiments of Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Basil. But this is grossly fabulous, and was clearly derived from the fourteenth chapter of the second apochryphal book of Esdras, a composition which has been falsely imputed to Ezra. It is moreover dangerous, since he who is thus affirmed to have restored them, might be much sooner suspected of forgery than a host of independent writers. It is certain that king Josiah and Hilkiah caused copies to be taken of the law, which

Opinions of
the fathers
respecting it.

A.M. 3547. they found in the temple, in the schools of the prophets, or in other
 B.C. 457. places. Hence, though copies of the law had become excessively scarce, the people of God were then favoured with the opportunity of obtaining them for their use. Although the original of the law was burnt at the destruction of the temple, within a few years, there must have been many copies still remaining in private hands, from the preceding circulation of them. We are certain that Daniel possessed a copy in Babylon, because he has given a quotation from the law, and refers to the prophecies of Jeremiah, which, had he never seen them, must of course have been impossible. "In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by *books* the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Yea, all Israel have transgressed *thy law*, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath *that is written* in the law of Moses, the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. As it is *written* in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth."

Daniel ix. 2,
11, 13.

The existence of the Sacred Code is further obvious, from the expression in the eighteenth verse of the sixth chapter of Ezra, where it is stated, that the Priests and Levites were settled in their office, *according as it is written* in the book of Moses; and in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, at the first verse, the people called upon Ezra to *bring the book of the laws of Moses, which the Lord had commanded* to Israel; expressions which sufficiently indicate their being extant at the time. In addition to these citations, let it be recollected that the Jews had always been notorious for their extreme jealousy upon the subject of their inspired writings; never admitting as sacred, till after the most scrupulous and rigid examination, a book, a sentence, or a line: to imagine, therefore, that any Priest, as Ezra, could by his single authority and influence, palm upon the nation as divine, or as the ancient and long-written law, what was simply his own invention, or, to say the best, his own recollections, or even the fruit of his direct inspiration, without our hearing more of such an important claim; or, to say, that such a person, so naturally qualified to write in the various modes of history, poetry, and prophecy, and occupying so important a station in the Jewish Church, yet *could* at the same moment be so *morally* disqualified as actually to impose fabrications as facts, attaching other and ancient names to his own,—that is, that he could produce the compositions of a great and good, and even inspired man, though a bad one,—each, or any of these, were too manifestly absurd to be a tenable position.

Actual task
of Ezra.

The question therefore is, What did Ezra actually accomplish? and the reply is, he collected, arranged, and published the books

which constituted the Sacred Code. By comparing together the different copies he would be able to obtain both from private and public depositories, upon his return from Jerusalem, he would detect the discrepancies which had arisen from the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers, and, disposing the several books in their proper order, issue a correct edition up to the age in which he lived. It would naturally become a part of the labour which, under the influence of a divine inspiration, he accomplished, to exchange certain obsolete phrases for such as were in current use: and, in a few necessary cases, to furnish some additions to the original text, either to elucidate or complete the history, and, finally, to substitute the Chaldee letters for the Hebrew.

That Ezra was the principal agent in thus settling the Scripture Canon, we have not only the concurrent testimony of the ancient Jews and the earliest Christians, but the corroborating consideration that had he not been able to obtain copies, he could not have executed the commission of the Persian king, as recorded in the book of Ezra, chap. vii. 25, 26, "And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or unto banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment."

The Canonical Scriptures were anciently divided into three parts, comprising the *Law*, the *Prophets*, and the *Hagiographa*. The latter division comprehends the Psalms, the Proverbs, the book of Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

Final state
of the
Hebrew
Canon.

According to this arrangement, the Old Testament consisted of twenty-two books, corresponding to the letters of the alphabet, to which were added Ezra and Nehemiah.

The five books of the law are divided by the Jews into fifty-four sections; and they believe that this division was conformable to the divine intimation to Moses upon Mount Sinai. It is, however, with more probability, attributed to Ezra, who is also supposed to have sub-divided the sections into verses called *pesukim*. The most received opinion is, that this invention was intended for the convenience of the Chaldee interpreters.

To this period many have assigned the origin of the Jewish synagogues. Ezra, after issuing an edition of the law and the prophets, which he had with so much pains rendered correct, appointed the Levites and other scribes most distinguished for their acquaintance with these invaluable records, to read and expound them to the people, who were at first collected together, as at the time when Ezra first read the law, in some capacious street or opening of the city. The inconvenience of such an attendance at all seasons of the year, naturally suggested the propriety of erecting temporary

Origin of
the
synagogues.

A.M. 3547. sheds or tabernacles, and, at length, more substantial edifices for
 B.C. 457. public service. In the midst of them was placed a desk or pulpit, for the purpose of reading and expounding, in imitation of that which Ezra is stated to have used; and, at the upper end, or opposite the door, was a chest containing the book of the law, wrapped in an embroidered cloth. Probable, however, as this statement may be considered, some have thought it not unlikely that the Jewish synagogues existed previous to the captivity, while others, particularly Basnage, (Lib. V. ch. 4,) have referred them to the more recent date of the Asmonæan dominion.

NEHEMIAH.

Nehemiah. NEHEMIAH, who succeeded Ezra in the administration, in the
 A.M. 3559. twentieth year of the reign of Ahasuerus, was the son of Hachaliah,
 B.C. 445. and a person of great excellence and exalted piety. Babylon is represented as the place of his birth, and tradition assigns his descent to the tribe of Judah. It is believed, and apparently with good reason, that he was not the same person who is mentioned by Ezra as having returned with Zerubbabel from the Babylonish captivity; since no less than ninety-two years intervened between the first year of Cyrus and the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, and consequently, if they were the same persons, Nehemiah must have been, at least, one hundred years old, a supposition wholly incompatible with his long journey from Shushan to Jerusalem, and with those great exertions and activity during a government of twelve years. His admirable qualities and distinguished family recommended him to the office of cup-bearer to the king, which was not only a situation of great honour, but of extraordinary emolument; for it appears that Nehemiah acquired so much wealth as to be enabled to live in his government in expensive splendour by means of his own private purse. The *tirshatha*, (Ezra ii. 63, and Neh. vii. 65,) was the general term, in the Persian and Chaldean languages, appropriated to the royal deputies and governors.

Cup-bearer
 at Shushan.

The office of cup-bearer gave Nehemiah an intimate and daily access to the king, which afforded the opportunity of conciliating his favour, and of course obtaining any purpose which he might have at heart. That he would not improperly, or for any unjustifiable ends, avail himself of this privilege, is plainly deducible from his character; and on the other hand it cannot be questioned that there is a certain and legitimate use of station and of influence which does not derogate from the dignity of real worth, and which, in certain cases, may essentially conduce to the welfare of individuals or the happiness of mankind. Such was precisely the fact in the present instance. When it became his turn to wait, in the regular discharge of his office, the king noticed a very considerable alteration in his general appearance; he remarked that his countenance seemed to be remarkably beclouded, as if with anxious care, and that all his

habitual cheerfulness had suddenly forsaken him. This led to those inquiries through which the king learned the deplorable condition of Nehemiah's native country, and especially of its metropolis, which affected him with the deepest grief. He took occasion, therefore, to request the royal permission to revisit the land of his ancestors, and to undertake the rebuilding of the city. This request, seconded by the intercession of the queen, was favourably accepted, and he received a commission, as governor of the province of Judea, to repair the walls of the place, and restore it to the same condition in which it was previous to the Babylonish incursion. Royal letters were, at the same time, despatched to the governors beyond the Euphrates to afford every requisite assistance. Asaph, the keeper of the forests, was to furnish whatever timber might be found necessary to accomplish the work, and a guard of horse was appointed to accompany him on his journey.

A.M. 3559
B.C. 445.
His
commission
to
Jerusalem.

Having reached the place of his destination, Nehemiah continued three days among the people without communicating to them any information with regard to the design of his visit: and it was not until the fourth day, after going privately round the walls in the preceding night, that he summoned the principal people together, produced his commission, and solicited their concurrence in the laborious undertaking. To this proposal they instantly gave an unanimous and most joyous assent. The plan adopted for the execution of the project was to divide the people into companies, assigning to each his proper district and portion of labour, while Nehemiah himself superintended the whole.

Plan for
rebuilding
the city.

Great and good works are seldom suffered to advance far without opposition. A misunderstanding of their design, or an envy of the parties engaged in them, often sets a thousand engines in motion to obstruct or counteract the proceedings. Such is human nature, and such will ever be the sad development of its deformity. Sanballat, a Moabitish officer, and Tobiah, an Ammonite, both equally inimical to the prosperity of the Jews, soon began to use the frequent and ready-made weapons of hostility, scoffing and ridicule. As the persons who had undertaken the business, however, were not acting without being duly authorized, and were not to be easily shaken in their purpose or counteracted in their plan, these wretched confederates sent to some of the neighbouring nations to induce them to unite in attempting the demolition of the works and the destruction of the people engaged in their execution. But the governor, having discovered the plot, took care to watch their motions, and to form a proper guard to defend the workmen, ordering each one for himself to provide arms in case of attack. He moreover poured out earnest supplications to heaven, the necessity for which he did not suppose was superseded even by the best preparations for defence, and urged the people to proceed by every encouraging address and argument.

Opposition.

A.M. 3559.

B.C. 445.

Stratagems
of the Jews'
enemies.

These measures completely overawed their enemies, who now tried other expedients, and pretending to adjust their differences amicably, several times invited Nehemiah to a conference in one of the villages in the plain of Ono, in the tribe of Benjamin; but he, aware, no doubt, of their treacherous intentions, absolutely declined the interview. Sanballat next resorted to the stratagem of sending a letter with the following statement: "It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king, according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together." (Nehem. vi. 6, 7.) To these allegations a reply was sent, consisting of a manly and positive denial, and charging Sanballat as their contriver. He had now only one last resource, the bribing to his interest Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah the priest, a friend of his enemy. Nehemiah, going one day to the house of Shemaiah, he pretended to prophecy that his enemies would that night make an attempt upon his life, and advised him to seek security by accompanying him into the inner part of the temple, or sanctuary, which was, indeed, a place of great safety, being guarded by the Levites; and, on account of its holiness, could not be hostilely entered. The design of this was twofold—to dishearten the people, by convincing them of their governor's apprehensions; and to facilitate the capture and destruction of the place, by depriving them of their general. It also had a tendency to give countenance to the report of his departure from his allegiance to the king, since he would thus have fled when the report was put in circulation; and, besides, he might, by this means, have been secured by some priestly confederates, till the season of action was passed. The contrivance, however, did not avail, since Nehemiah refused the advice that was given him, on the ground of its being inconsistent with honour and religion. He, moreover, soon perceived the true origin of this insidious suggestion.

The walls
finished.

In the space of fifty-two days the whole work was completed, such was the extraordinary zeal of the governor, and such the indefatigable industry of the people. A dedication of the walls and gates of Jerusalem was then solemnly observed, to appropriate the whole to the service of God, and to perpetuate the remembrance of the divine goodness, as well as to serve the purpose of a public celebration. Sacrifices and offerings were presented in the temple, and the great feast of tabernacles religiously observed. Nehemiah's conclusion and testimony at this happy termination of his labours are interesting. "And it came to pass," says he, "that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God."

With the view probably of returning to Shushan, to inform the king of the present aspect of his affairs in Judea, and perhaps to counteract the reports which his inveterate enemies might have put in circulation to a wide extent, Nehemiah appointed his brother Hanani (who had proved his zeal by going from Jerusalem to Shushan, first to communicate information of the state of his country,) to the charge of the gates; and Hananiah, another person of unquestionable principle, to the direction of his house or palace; and to both in conjunction, the general superintendence of the affairs of the city. He afterwards arranged for the chief men of the state to fix their abodes at Jerusalem, on account of the present diminished condition of the population, which required to be recruited, while the remainder were to cast lots, by which a tenth part of all the people of Judah and Benjamin were obliged to reside in the city. These were the two tribes that anciently possessed Jerusalem, which was situated partly in one tribe, and partly in the other; but the precise divisions have never been accurately ascertained.

A.M. 3559.
B.C. 455.
Nehemiah
returns to
Persia.

Immediately previous to Nehemiah's return to Shushan, Ezra produced the Sacred Code, which he had been zealously engaged in completing, and, assisted by thirteen other priests, publicly read and expounded it to the assembled multitudes from a raised platform or pulpit, which was erected for the purpose of rendering him the more conspicuous and the more easily heard.¹ To this circumstance we have already adverted in our preceding account of this celebrated scribe.

Notwithstanding the precautions taken by Nehemiah, especially in the appointment of the solemn reading of the law, and the public renewal of their attachment to it, he had not left the capital long before the people became exceedingly corrupt, which may be chiefly attributed to Eliashib, the high priest, who was allied by marriage to Tobiah, one of the great enemies of the Jews, but who had, in consequence of this connection, obtained apartments in the temple. Upon his return, therefore, Nehemiah resolved to correct this shameful abuse; but so much had Tobiah insinuated himself into the affections of the people, that he was compelled to proceed most cautiously. He accordingly caused the book of the law to be read, and when a passage in Deuteronomy was recited, which states that an Ammonite or Moabite should not come into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation for ever, they were instantly convinced of their error, and, under the governor's directions, who availed himself of the favourable moment, Tobiah's furniture was cast out of the sacred chambers, and they were again purified and restored to their legitimate use. Nehemiah zealously proceeded

Corruptions
in his
absence.

Deut. xxiii. 3.

Zeal on his
return.

¹ "We are not to think," says Patrick, "more than one person, for (as we may observe by the very next words,) it was made large and long enough to contain fourteen people at once."

A.M. 3559. with the work of reformation, restoring to its holy design the sabbath,
B.C. 445. which had been profaned by secular employments, dissolving irregular associations in marriage which had been unlawfully formed with strangers, and re-organizing other parts of the state which had fallen into decay and corruption. This last act of salutary government took place about the fifteenth year of the reign of Darius.

It is not known how many years Nehemiah lived after his return from Persia; it seems probable that he attained a great age, and was the last governor of the province delegated by the Persian kings, who, it is thought, afterwards left its general superintendence to the Jewish high priest, till Alexander the Great subjugated the empire. Nehemiah is believed to have continued in his government to the period of his death, notwithstanding all the revolutions of the Persian court, which were by no means few or trifling; for Xerxes his son succeeded Ahasuerus, or the Artaxerxes of profane history, and was followed by Sogdianus, who slew him, after he had reigned only forty-five days. Sogdianus was, in his turn, put to a violent death, after six months and fifteen days, by his successor Ochus; who seized him by a stratagem, and cast him headlong into ashes. Ochus assumed the name of Darius, and after murdering his brother Arsites, and suppressing several insurrections, ruled over Persia nineteen years, at which period Nehemiah was living, and whether he or his prince paid the debt of nature first is uncertain.²

Death.

² Vide Prideaux's Connection, an. 425.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LATTER MINOR PROPHETS.

FLOURISHED FROM ABOUT A.M. 3416, B.C. 588; TO A.M. 3607, B.C. 397.

To this latter period of history belongs the prophet MALACHI, who Malachi. maintains the singular and interesting position of the last individual of the Jewish church to whom the prophetic inspiration was communicated. Justyn Martyr, indeed, has maintained that this inspiration did not cease till the Christian æra, but this idea is wholly unsupported by evidence. We have before alluded to the notion that the name assigned to this prophet was merely a term descriptive of the character of Ezra, as the messenger of the Lord, commissioned to execute an important business on behalf of his nation, and that, consequently, these supposed different persons ought to be regarded as one and the same individual. The contrary, however, is by far more probable; for, in addition to the general consideration that the names of the prophets were frequently given to designate their office, his writings have always held a distinct situation in the Hebrew canon, and there is no sufficient reason for displacing them.

Previously, however, to the mention of further particulars of Malachi, we must not wholly omit three others, which have been classified under the general appellation of *minor prophets*, and who stand in immediate connection. We have already spoken, in the Minor prophets. proper place, of Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Joel, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk. It now remains to furnish a brief notice of those who succeed in chronological order; premising, what should not be forgotten with regard to the common, and perhaps improper epithet applied to these illustrious men, that they are not called minor prophets with reference to any inferiority in their writings, either in respect of the composition, the diction, or the subjects of their prophecies, but solely on account of their small extent in point of quantity. In the Hebrew canon their writings are comprised in a single volume, and were, probably, collected into that form by Ezra, or some other member of the great synagogue.

OBADIAH is to be placed next in chronological order to Habakkuk. Obadiah. His name signifies "servant of the Lord;" but he has himself furnished us with no account of his origin, nor of the period when he A.M. 3416. was honoured with revelations from heaven, nor, indeed, with a B.C. 588.

A.M. 3416. single particular of his own life. Certain traditionary accounts
 B.C. 588. represent him as a native of Bethacamar, and of the tribe of Ephraim. It is also said that he died in Samaria; but both the mode of his life and death are, in fact, not ascertained with the least degree of certainty. The most probable opinions with regard to the time of his prophecies, refer them to a little after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. He represents the cruel character of the Edomites, and declares that, whatever might be their fancied security, they should certainly be "cut off;" but he assures the Jews of their future restoration, and of the establishment of the spiritual kingdom of God. Short as the book is, there is, nevertheless, great beauty in the composition, and great importance in the events to which it refers.

Haggai. The next in succession is HAGGAI, said to have been of sacerdotal
 A.M. 3484. extraction, and the first of the three prophets who flourished after
 B.C. 520. the Jews returned from their captivity. He was raised up for the evident purpose of stimulating Zerubbabel, and Joshua the high priest, to resume the building of the temple, after the interruption of fourteen years, occasioned chiefly by the intrigues of the Samaritans. His work commences with a remonstrance with the people for being so solicitous about the completion and adornment of their own houses, and neglectful of the house of God, declaring that the scarcity they experienced was to be attributed to this cause. The glory of the latter temple, he affirms, should very much surpass that of the former—not, indeed, in external splendour, but in spiritual and inward magnificence: for, in the latter, the incarnate Messiah was to supply the place of the symbolical and prefigurative Shekinah. The people are then appealed to again upon the subject of their offences and transgressions, and consoled by the promise of future blessings; when the prophet proceeds to represent the commotions and revolutions that should precede the great advent of the Messiah typified by Zerubbabel, and which seem to have received their accomplishment in the state of the Babylonian affairs under Darius, the Macedonian wars, those between the successors of Alexander, or those which followed the death of Cæsar in the Roman empire. Bishop Lowth characterizes Haggai as "the most obscure of the prophetic writers." He has some fine poetical passages; though, in general, his work may be considered as a prose composition. He is said, by Epiphanius, to have been buried among the priests at Jerusalem.

Zechariah. ZECHARIAH was the son of Barachiah, but no certain information
 A.M. 3486. can be obtained of the precise period or place of his birth. It is
 B.C. 518. probable that he was of the sacerdotal race, and consecrated to the priestly office. He was evidently contemporary with Haggai, and was, like him, sent to urge the Jews to proceed with the building of the temple; and to which admonitions and appeals they paid

attention. He continued to prophesy more than two years, and probably lived to witness the completion, in about six years, of the undertaking. Our Saviour describes the Jews as being guilty of the blood of Zecharias, the son of Barachias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar: but, as it is believed that the prophet died in peace, it is supposed that Zecharias, the son of Jehoida, is intended, who was slain in the court of the Lord's house, at the command of Joash. If this be the case, the copyists might have inserted Barachiah from a mistaken supposition of the reference being to the prophet; and it is observable that in the parallel passage of Luke, Barachias is not mentioned. Jerome moreover states, that in a manuscript copy of the Gospel of Matthew, used by the Nazarenes, which he had permission to copy, it was written the son of Jehoida. The prophecies of Zechariah contain several splendid passages; and he was so remarkable for several excellences, as to have obtained the characteristic epithet of the sun among the lesser prophets. His poetry is chiefly to be found towards the latter part of his volume, the rest being in prose. The whole is constructed in the most beautiful manner, and bears a striking resemblance to the style of Jeremiah; so much so, indeed, that the Jews were accustomed to say that the spirit of Jeremiah had passed into him. He foretold the siege of Babylon by Darius the son of Hystaspes; and the Jews are believed to have taken warning by his premonitions, to withdraw into a place of security. The coming of Christ, also, is represented by him in very express terms, and the lowliness of his condition particularly specified,—“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Nor must we here omit to notice, that as the 12th verse of the eleventh chapter of this prophet relates to some of the circumstances of our Saviour's crucifixion, is quoted by St. Matthew as spoken by Jeremiah, many learned men have assigned this and the two preceding chapters to the latter prophet, and suppose them to have been accidentally inserted amongst those of Zechariah. Others have also regarded the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of Zechariah as belonging to some earlier prophet. For the latter conjecture there appears to be no foundation, and the inspiration of these portions of the canon is placed beyond a question, by the distinct quotations of them in the New Testament. The former incongruity has been thought to be removed by supposing the Evangelist to allude to some traditional prophecy of Jeremiah, and more probably by the supposed mistake of some copyist of the gospel, who transcribed the name of Jeremiah for that of Zechariah.¹

2 Chron.
xxiv. 21.

Matt. xxiii.
35.
Luke xi. 5.

¹ “One MS. the Syriac and Persian versions, and God. Ver. et Veron. in Blanchini Evang. quad. read *δια τῆ* *προφητῆ* (in Matt. xxvii. 9,) without any name,” observes Dr. Grey, in his valuable key to the Old Testament.

MALACHI.

Malachi. MALACHI is represented by the author of the Lives of the Prophets, under the name of Epiphanius Dorotheus, and the *Chronicum A.M. 3568.* Alexandrinum to have been of the tribe of Zebulun, and a native of Sapha, where it is reported he was buried, having died at an early age; but not before he had rendered some effective assistance to the great synagogue, who were engaged in restoring order and prosperity to their country. As the light of prophecy terminated with his ministry, it may be considered as coinciding with the accomplishment of the first seven weeks of the prophecy of Daniel, according to Prideaux, (A.M. 3595,) but, as others suppose, a few years later. That he prophesied after Haggai and Zechariah is certain, for the worship of the temple, now restored, was regularly conducted, and his ministry probably succeeded, that of Nehemiah. His style is described by Lowth as of the middle kind, seeming to indicate that the Hebrew poetry, from the time of the Babylonish captivity, was in a declining state, and being past its prime and vigour, fast verging towards the debility of age.

After beginning his prophetic testimony with a representation of the extraordinary affection of God for the people whom he had chosen, in preference to all other nations, and to whom he had communicated the blessings of his peculiar covenant, Malachi charges them, in the name of heaven, with base ingratitude, flagrant disobedience, and impious profanation. Both priests and people are described as infected with a similar spirit of transgression, and are threatened with the most exemplary punishment. It is obvious that the prophet refers to offences of a similar kind with those which had excited the indignation of Nehemiah, which corroborates the supposition of the coincidence or near succession of his ministry to the period of that illustrious governor. He represents the priests as mercenary and profane, and the people as multiplying divorces and intermarriages with idolaters; and after denouncing the wrath of God, and declaring his weariness at their iniquities, and intimating his intention to bestow his mercies upon the heathen, where his name should be highly revered and celebrated, he passes on to announce the sudden manifestation of the Lord in his temple, after preparing his way by "the Messenger of the Covenant." Alluding to the operations of a refiner's fire and of fuller's soap, he states that, at his appearance, he would purify the sons of Levi, that the offerings they were accustomed to present should no longer be corrupt, but acceptable, as done "in righteousness," and should thus partake of the spiritual character of those of their distinguished ancestors in "the days of old," and be equally "pleasant unto the Lord." In the same spirit, and with similar methods, he declares his resolution to testify against all their transgressions, and utterly to exterminate them; appealing, as a proof of the impossibility of

allowing these mal-practices to proceed to any greater extent without a proper chastisement, to the unchangeableness of his nature, as the God of Holiness. This is followed by an exhortation to repentance, accompanied with a remonstrance with them for those strange and rebellious sentiments they had cherished, and even unblushingly expressed, and promises of abundant pardon and blessing.

The conclusion of this volume of prophecy points to the advent of the great Messiah, under the magnificent image of the "Son of Righteousness, arising with healing in his wings," till which period they were directed to keep the law of Moses with its corresponding ceremonials and services, which would still be adapted to the obscure period of the prefigurative dispensation up to the æra of the breaking of the evangelical morning upon the long-benighted world. Elijah is also named as the precursor of the new economy, whose office it would be to reform the principles and enlighten the minds of the people, and thus avert the impending and merited judgments of the Almighty. Under the name of the ancient and self-mortifying prophet, was couched a prediction of John the Baptist, our Saviour's illustrious precursor, of whom it is expressly recorded, "This (John) is Elias, which was for to come."

A.M. 3568.

B.C. 436.

A.M. 3607.

B.C. 397.

Matt. xi. 14

Having thus reached a remarkable period when the stream of inspired communications suddenly ceased to flow, and a season of four hundred years, unbrightened by prophetic illumination, followed, it may not be improper, before dismissing the subject, to offer a few cursory observations on that singular order of men whose biography has so long engaged our attention.

Calculating from Moses to Malachi, the prophets occupied a period of more than a thousand years, continually directing the Jewish nation to the covenant of God and the grand development of its blessings in the future, but hastening æra of our Saviour's manifestation. It was their invariable reference to this great circumstance of human history that diffused a splendour over those of their minor predictions which contained an allusion to it, and impressed an importance and a glory upon each prophetic scroll as it opened in succession before the eyes of Israel. Their appointment to the office they assumed was evinced in the miraculous attestations which they were enabled to give to their testimony, of which several instances are recorded in the Sacred History, and in the instant completion of many predictions which are also the subjects of history. We have still further evidence in the daily fulfilment of their prophecies in the latter times, and, in addition to these considerations, their high claims to notice were sustained by an unimpeachable integrity, as well as by the very nature and tendency of their communications. The Jews held this as an axiom, that the spirit of prophecy never rested upon any but a wise and holy man, one whose passions were allayed; and it must be seen, that during

General reflections on the prophetic testimony.

the long and glorious succession to which we have alluded, the name of no prophet occurs who is not entitled to the highest respect and reverence on account of his personal excellences. The zeal which they displayed was of no ordinary kind, both as it regards its intensity and its purity. It does not appear to be blended with the unhallowed fire of human passions, however fiercely it rages against the impieties of mankind, but equally delights in expressing the condescending benevolence and inviting forbearance of the Most High, as in representing his displeasure. Their mode of life was generally retired and austere when not immediately occupied in the duties of their office; these required their frequent attendance at courts and camps, and in the public assemblies of the people. In their common deportment they resembled the Great Teacher whom they were inspired to predict, and of whom they have been considered as, in some degree, the living prototypes.

“In general,” to quote the remarks of Dr. Cox on this subject, “the prophets chose to live in the plainest manner; they built their houses with their own hands, and wore a coarse dress of a dark brown colour. Instead of availing themselves of the opportunities with which they were often presented, of acquiring riches, or of frequenting the luxurious tables of the great, they sometimes refused the most valuable presents. Of this we have a remarkable specimen, when Elisha declined the gifts of Naaman, and inflicted a dreadful punishment upon Gehazi for his contrivance to secure them. If the mean attire and mode of living which distinguished the ancient prophets, cannot be viewed in the light of an authoritative example to future ages, and if something may be reasonably conceded to the practices of different nations, this may be received as an axiom, that those whom providence has appointed to the sacred office ought to avoid all unnecessary show in their appearance, and all ambitious aspiring after the vain splendours of life; for ‘the fashion of this world passeth away.’ On the other hand, it is the duty, (the allusion is to the story of the Shunammite,) and should be considered as the principle of pious individuals, to whom providence has dispensed riches or competence, to minister to the necessities of the poor servants of God; who, while devoting their lives to promote their spiritual comfort and that of their families, have neither time nor means to rescue themselves from a state of dependence and poverty.”²

The prophets were accustomed to deliver their predictions aloud in some place of public resort, or otherwise affixed them to the gates of the temple. Sometimes they assumed a clothing of sackcloth, particularly to denote their humiliation and sorrow for the disobedience of the people, or on account of any judgments they were taught to anticipate; and in other cases they employed various

² Cox's Female Scrip. Biog. Vol. II. p. 406.

external signs of distress or degradation—as when Isaiah walked naked, or but partially clothed, and barefoot. Many writers, however, maintain that these things merely passed in vision to the prophets, and were not real transactions; and to this opinion some considerable probability at least may be attached.

With regard to the peculiar nature of prophetic inspiration, it would be unsuitable here to enter upon those controversies which have arisen from this subject. The prophet's understanding seems in general to have been influenced, rather than his fancy or passions, though in some instances, doubtless, all were engaged. That he was himself sensible of a divine control is obvious, and fully capable of appreciating its reality, by the distinctness and grandeur of the impressions; but what might have been the peculiar mode of its communication cannot always be ascertained: probably sometimes by one method, sometimes by another—in dreams, and visions, and voices, and angelic messengers, and secret, but infallible impulses. By these means they were enabled to record accurately what they had seen, what was past, or what was yet to come. Generally, it is probable, the sense, or matter, rather than the precise words, was conveyed, a supposition which is justified by noticing that our Saviour wholly quotes the prophecies in this manner, and not with verbal accuracy: but, in many cases of express supernatural communication, the very words themselves were doubtless inscribed upon the prophet's memory, and conveyed by his pen to his page. While in no case were they permitted to err, this statement of the nature of the inspiration admits of that diversity of style which is observable in their writings, as comporting entirely with the uniformity of truth.

The following Table of the order and time of the appearance of the Jewish Prophets, accords with that of Archbishop NEWCOME, who follows, as we have done, with some slight variations, the chronology of Blair's Tables.

THE PROPHETS, IN THEIR SUPPOSED ORDER OF TIME.

	BEFORE CHRIST.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.
Jonah,	Between 856 and 784,	.....	Jehu and Jehoahaz, according to Lloyd; but Joash and Jeroboam the Second, according to Blair.
Amos,	Between 810 and 785,	Uzziah, chap. i. 1,	Jeroboam the Second, chap. i. 1.
Hosea,	Between 810 and 725.	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, the third year of Hezekiah,	Jeroboam the Second, chap. i. 1.
Isaiah,	Between 810 and 698,	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, chap. i. 1, and perhaps Manasseh,	Overthrown.
Joel,	Between 810 and 660, or later,	Uzziah, or possibly Manasseh,	Overthrown.
Micah,	Between 758 and 699,	Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, chap. i. 1,	Pekah and Hoshea.
Nahum,	Between 720 and 698,	Probably towards the close of Hezekiah's reign,	Overthrown.
Zephaniah,	Between 640 and 609,	In the reign of Josiah, chap. i. 1,	Overthrown.
Jeremiah,...	Between 628 and 586,	In the thirteenth year of Josiah,	Overthrown.
Habakkuk,	Between 612 and 598,	Probably in the reign of Jehoiakim,	Overthrown.
Daniel,	Between 606 and 534,	During all the Captivity,	Overthrown.
Obadiah, ...	Between 588 and 583,	Between the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the destruction of the Edomites by him,	Overthrown.
Ezekiel,	Between 595 and 536,	During part of the Captivity,	Overthrown.
Haggai,	Between 520 and 518,	After the return from Babylon,	Overthrown.
Zechariah, .	From 520 to 518, or longer,	.....	Overthrown.
Malachi, ...	Between 436 and 397,	.....	Overthrown.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS WOMEN OF ANCIENT ISRAEL.

IN pursuing the general course of Sacred History and Biography, we have hitherto referred, in an incidental manner only, to certain individuals of the female sex, some of whom, on account of their position, as well as their personal peculiarities, demand a more distinct consideration. Instruction may be gained from a view both of their virtues and their faults, which, with characteristic impartiality, are detailed in the Scripture narrative.

SARAH.

It seems remarkable that Sarah, the wife of Abraham, should be celebrated in the epistle to the Hebrews for her *faith*, while in the history in Genesis her *unbelief* is so strikingly represented; for she even laughed at the intimation of the heavenly messenger that she should have a son. This circumstance has induced some commentators to maintain that it is not the faith of Sarah, but of Abraham that is commended, as connected with the birth of a child in extreme age. But the very determinate character of the expression seems to forbid this, for it is said, "Sarah herself (*και αυτη Σαρρα*) received strength." Besides the promised seed was appropriated to her no less than to Abraham; "I will bless *her*, and she shall be a mother of nations." B.C. 1920
Sarah.
Heb. xi. 11.
Gen xviii. 12.
Gen. xvii. 16.

The fact appears to have been, that at the first announcement of the divine purpose she was overwhelmed with astonishment and a momentary incredulity, because it was so extraordinary and, according to human calculation, impossible; but that upon a little reflection "she judged him faithful that had promised." (v. 11.) This was her settled state of mind though she had first laughed at the idea, and though, alarmed at the detection of her guilt, she at the instant denied the charge. We must not determine upon character by occasional failures, or even absolutely by some gross acts of misconduct, such as we afterwards find, not only both in Abraham and Sarah, as well as in many other eminent saints, but by the test of principle pervading the course of conduct on the whole, producing substantial excellence and general consistency. By faith Sarah "received strength to conceive seed" and bear a child when past age; for although at first confounded by the thought, she soon exercised a confidence in God which nothing could shake, being per-

Dr. Owen's
remark.

sueded that "nothing was too hard" for him, and thus manifesting a belief analogous to that of Abraham himself, when he hesitated not to proceed to the sacrifice of his son. "When she first heard the promise," says Dr. Owen, "she considered only the thing promised, and was shaken in her faith by the improbability of it, being that which she had lost all expectation, and even desire of. But when she recollected herself, and took off her mind from the thing promised, unto the promiser, faith prevailed in her. This is manifested in the especial object of her faith herein; and that was τὸν επαγγελόμενον, 'him that promised,' that is, God himself in his promises."

Prevarication
in Egypt.

At an advanced period of life Abraham removed from Chaldea to Canaan, taking with him his wife and nephew. A famine having occurred, he hastened with his family to Egypt, where, to avoid a danger, they were both guilty of sad prevarication. Sarah was possessed of great personal beauty, and this led to the apprehension that she might be exposed in consequence to the licentious practices of the Egyptians, who might assassinate him to obtain his wife. She was to say that she was his *sister*. This was in a sense true, according to the Jewish method of estimating consanguinity; but the intention was to deceive, by concealing the fact that she was his wife. This artifice was of the essence of a lie, and hence the subsequent reproach of Pharaoh—"What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me she was thy wife? why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife."

Gen. xii. 18
—20.

Conduct to
Hagar.

The next transaction is still more disgraceful to Sarah. Notwithstanding the divine assurances that the posterity of Abraham should become a great nation, Sarah begins to think there is no probability of her becoming a mother. Ten years having elapsed, she requested her husband to receive Hagar, her Egyptian handmaid, to his embraces. Impatient and distrustful, she sought progeny by this means; and, perhaps, Abraham in consenting imagined that in this woman he might be the father of the promised seed. His error was to "hearken," as it is said he did, "to the voice of Sarah." Both he and she *should* have hearkened to the voice of God. The consequences of this connection were what might have been expected. Elated by the distinction she had attained, and especially by the well grounded prospect of a child, the maid became vain and insolent, the wife irritable and resentful, and suspicious of her husband's connivance at the wrongs she suffered, Abraham avoided all interference, and yielded to Sarah's resentment. Hagar was driven from the abode where she was entitled to protection, but returned in obedience to divine direction, which she received by an angel in the wilderness.

After the birth of Hagar's son, thirteen years elapsed before the announcement of a son by Sarah; on the circumstances of which we

have before remarked. The birth of Isaac was attended with great rejoicings; Sarah in the rapture of the moment exclaimed, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear me will laugh with me." This feeling originated his name, which signifies laughter; and she who hailed him with a mother's gladness, nursed him with a mother's care. The time of his weaning was celebrated with great festivities, and he was recognized as the heir of the family. Ishmael was irritated, and Sarah observing him engaged in mocking them, the old spirit of jealousy revived, and she demanded his and his mother's instant expulsion. The good old patriarch yielded with the best grace, and dismissed them with a kind provision.

Birth of Isaac.

Gen. xxi. 7, 8.

Hagar and Ishmael dismissed.

Sarah, notwithstanding the occasional outbursts of temper, was, however, eminent, as we have seen, for her faith, and moreover for her conjugal virtue. She understood her domestic character and duties to her husband, so as to endear herself to him, and generally to promote his happiness. For this she is especially celebrated, and held up by St. Peter as an example. (Comp. 1 Peter iii. 1—6.)

At the distance of thirty-seven years from the birth of Isaac, and at the age of one hundred and thirty-seven, Sarah died at Kirjath-Arba, or Hebron, in the plain of Mamre, deeply lamented by her attached husband, and was buried with all honour. Of her it may be affirmed, she was at once notorious for her defects and her excellences. Abraham doubtless forgot her faults while he wept over her tomb; but Scripture has faithfully recorded them, that they may not be forgotten by future times, but serve as a warning against the dangers of beauty, the sins of prevarication, and the consequences of domestic strife.

Sarah's death.

B.C. 1859.

REBEKAH.

After the death of Sarah, Abraham naturally felt an increased degree of solicitude respecting his family, and especially the welfare of his son Isaac. He wished to obtain a suitable connection for him in marriage, and for this purpose explained his views confidentially to the steward of his house, Eliezer; and having sought divine direction, despatched him on a journey of inquiry, to Haran in Mesopotamia. The beautiful simplicity of those times here unfolds itself in one of the most interesting recitals that can well be imagined. Eliezer immediately proceeded to the place appointed by his master, a distance of four hundred and sixty miles; and having reached the neighbourhood of the city of Nahor, he halted at a well to refresh his camels and his retinue. It was evening, a time when the women of the country usually repaired thither for a supply of water. He offered on the occasion a remarkable prayer, strongly indicative of his confidence in providence, and his full participation in the sentiments and faith of Abraham—"O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and

Eliezer's prayer.

the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink; and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master!"

At this moment, even before he had finished his supplications, a young woman in the bloom of virgin beauty approached the well, and descended the steps with a pitcher to draw water. When she came up again from the well, Eliezer was afresh impressed with her unaffected manner and attractive countenance, and at once singled her out as his younger master's predestined bride. He ran up to her and entreated permission to drink of her pitcher. She instantly took down the pitcher from her head and complied; and in the simplicity and exuberance of hospitality, she hastened repeatedly to pour the oft replenished pitcher into the trough for cattle, and supplied all his camels. He meanwhile stood in silent admiration and surprise; but at length offered her a suitable acknowledgment in a golden earring and two bracelets. He moreover inquired who she was, and requested accommodation to lodge. This was quite consistent with the habits of the age and country. She proclaimed herself to be the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, "which she bare unto Nahor." He bowed in thankfulness to her and gratitude to God.

Taken by
Rebekah to
her home.

Rebekah (for that was her name) hastened homeward, related the circumstances, and prepared her family, relatives of Abraham, for the reception of the stranger. Her brother, Laban, even went forth to meet him, and gave the faithful and pious steward a most hearty welcome. Eliezer manifested remarkable sagacity in detailing all the circumstances under which he undertook this journey, in referring to its object and in expatiating on the wealth of Abraham. The commission he had received was now at once successful, and Rebekah consented to accompany the steward on his return.

His
commission
succeeds.

Rebekah's
good
qualities.

The excellent qualities of this young woman were in happy keeping with the attractiveness of her person. Her industrious and domesticated habits—her sweet simplicity of manners—her modesty, combined with courtesy—and her kindness to animals, who had no tongue to solicit aid or proclaim their own necessities—are all conspicuous. She manifested a promptness and eagerness to perform gentle offices, which evinced an amiable heart that corresponded with her fair countenance.

Meeting of
Isaac and
Rebekah.

When Eliezer, with his lovely charge, had nearly arrived at Hebron, they saw a person walking at a distance, apparently in profound meditation. Rebekah, imagining, perhaps, it might be one of Abraham's numerous household, asked her companion if he knew who it was. He replied, it was his young master Isaac. Upon which she put on a veil, and alighted from the camel. This was

part of the ceremonial, when a bride was presented to her intended husband. Isaac seems to have avoided addressing her till he had learned all the particulars of his journey from Eliezer. In humble and joyful recognition of the providence of God, he then welcomed her to his heart and family, took her to Sarah's tent, and she became his wife.

The imagination dwells with delight on the happiness of such a union, and is ready to suppose that nothing but sunshine could ensue. Life, however, has ever been, and ever will be, a mixed condition. We are not in a condition of cloudless skies, and must look at futurity through the medium of past experience. Isaac and Rebekah were to their deep affliction childless for twenty years: an affliction the deeper that Isaac was the son of promise, that the multiplication of his seed was recorded, and that he had married with hope and in the fear of God. He, therefore, "entreated the Lord for his wife," and his prayer was heard. Twins were at length born to them, of which the elder was destined to serve the younger. Jacob's name signifies the supplanter; he having secured by a stratagem the birthright belonging to Esau. Rebekah was accessory to this proceeding, and both she and Isaac appear to have been divided in their partialities; each having a favourite child. Rebekah's contrivance succeeded in surreptitiously obtaining the father's blessing, but in what did it result? In the settled hostility of the brothers, and the necessity of their separation. Parents should beware of favouritism, which in this instance had nearly involved bloodshed and ruin.

They are childless.

Esau and Jacob born.

Family broils.

Rebekah was very anxious about Jacob after his departure; especially lest he should be tempted in his wanderings to form some idolatrous connection. She expressed herself in strong terms of apprehension, which no less evinced the power of her religion. "And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do to me?"

At this point it is singular that the Scripture narrative drops her name.

RUTH.

This distinguished individual is believed to have been of the royal race of Moab, a nation which descended from Lot, and settled on the borders of the Salt Sea. She married Mahlon, the son of Elimelech, who, in consequence of a famine in Judæa, went to reside in Moab. After his death she became a proselyte, confiding in the promises given to the tribe of Judah to which her husband had belonged. Elimelech also sought a temporary asylum in Moab, taking with him his wife Naomi and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion. He having died, the former married Ruth, the latter

A.M. 2813.
B.C. 1136.
Ruth.

A proselyte

Changes in the family.

Journey to
Judea.

Orpah. Both these sons of Naomi dying also, she was left with her two daughters-in-law to struggle with adversity in that, to her at least, foreign land. At the end of two years, having learnt that the famine had abated in Judea, Naomi resolved upon returning thither. After proceeding to a short distance, she earnestly desired Ruth and Orpah to allow her to go alone, while they went back to their own country and friends. Their disinterestedness and affection however would not suffer them to listen to this maternal kindness, and they assured her of their determination to share her misfortunes. "Surely," said they, "we will return with thee unto thy people." She remonstrated, urged, and commanded them again. The struggle became severe. Orpah at last consented; but Ruth was unshaken. "Entreat me not to leave thee," she exclaimed, "or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." This was the perfection of love; a pure attachment founded in religion, and abandoning all merely personal considerations. We have here too an example of decision in religion, and a fearlessness in professing it in despite of early associations and predilections. She cast away for ever the gods of Moab, and chose for her portion the God of Israel.

Orpah's
return.

Ruth's
adhesion.

Arrival at
Bethlehem.

The two travellers went to Bethlehem, having performed a journey of one hundred and twenty miles; but Naomi seems overwhelmed with a sense of her destitution, the changed aspect of things after ten years of absence, and perhaps the coldness of former friends, who would only know her in prosperity.

Ruth goes
to glean.

It was providentially the season of barley harvest, or the beginning of May, and luxuriant productiveness clothed the fields, so lately barren. They were, however, poor and unprovided. What was to be done? The faithful Ruth proposes to go and glean. What considerate kindness to her mother-in-law. She alone would undertake the employment to gain subsistence, but she failed not to ask Naomi's permission.

Boaz.

It happened that she went to the field of Boaz, who was a man of wealth, and a relative of Naomi. Having come to survey the reapers, he observed Ruth at her humble task, and inquired of his steward who she was, probably somewhat attracted by her pleasing appearance. Unlike those who are criminally negligent and even ashamed of their poor relations, he immediately addressed her in an affectionate manner, and she replied in modest and humble terms. Boaz intimated that he had ascertained her history, knew the voluntary sacrifices she had made, and gave her his blessing. She acknowledges the favour, and requests the continuance of his goodness. He repeats his assurances, and invites her to partake of the rural repast, and plentifully supplied her with "parched corn"

with his own hand. On her return to the field to glean, he enjoined his reapers to “let fall some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.”

With what heartfelt satisfaction must Ruth have gone home to Naomi on that evening. With astonishment and joy she hears from her mother-in-law of the relationship of Boaz to her family, and she encourages her to accept the bounty of Boaz, who desired her to keep to his field till the close of harvest. Moreover, she took the first opportunity of suggesting measures to win the love and secure a connection of marriage with the great relative who had befriended her. If these appear very extraordinary to us, we must recollect the difference of manners and customs from our own in those remote ages, and we may perhaps after all admit some degree of impropriety in the contrivances adopted. Ruth was directed by Naomi to go with the utmost secrecy to the threshing-floor, and when Boaz retired to rest among the corn, to place herself at his feet. When he spoke she was to answer frankly. She did so, and he promised all that a sense of her virtues and a knowledge of her rights dictated. The law authorized an application that the possessions of the family might not be alienated. Kinsmen were required to intermarry, and in case of refusal, the near relative was treated with great indignity. Boaz was aware of the legal claim, and informed her there was a nearer kinsman. If he did not perform his part, he avowed his own resolution to do so. Ruth carried the intelligence home, and Boaz went to the gate in the morning, stopped the relative to whom he had alluded, and appealed to ten of the elders of the city. He at first agreed to the redemption of some family inheritance of Naomi, but being informed if he bought the land he must marry Ruth, he declined in favour of his relative, and Boaz, calling upon all the elders and people assembled to bear witness that this was a fair and honourable transaction, married Ruth.

Plan to
gain Boaz.

Ruth's
success,

Lev. xxv. 23-
28.

and
marriage.

The closing part of this narrative deepens in interest. We hear of the birth of Obed. The event is universally celebrated. “And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed; he is *the father of Jesse, the father of David.*”

Obed born.

HANNAH.

Hannah was a wife of Elkanah, who descended from Zuph, an Ephrathite, or inhabitant of Bethlehem-Judah, the same with Ephratah. He had also another wife named Peninnah. They

A.M. 2883.
B.C. 1161.

resided at a place in the tribe of Ephraim called Ramathaim-Zophim. Peninnah had children, and often indulged herself in ridiculing Hannah because she was not so favoured. But herein her first excellence of character is apparent, that she bore the daily insults she received with meekness and patience, returning no harsh reproaches, though she deeply felt her peculiar affliction. Elkanah went up to the festivals of holy worship celebrated every year at Shiloh, accompanied by his family; but while there committed a folly in giving a worthy or double portion to Hannah, expressive of his pre-eminent affection, which inflamed the bitter hostility of Peninnah. Hannah was full of anxiety and distress; and what was her conduct? Did she return railing for railing, or abandon her duties in sullen despondency? Far from it. She appealed with a humble importunity to the God of Israel in the following solemn and earnest pleadings and resolve:—"And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but will give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." Here was "reverence and godly fear"—profound humility—submission and dependence of spirit on the divine will and holy fervour, which always characterizes genuine prayer.

1 Sam. i. 11.

Eli's
accusation.

The venerable priest, Eli, was at the time sitting by a post of the temple, and observing the agitation of this pious woman, sadly misinterpreted it, either from defect of eye-sight or defect of charity—it might be both. At any rate, he pronounced a very hasty and unwarrantable judgment, and with much vehemence accused her of intoxication. "How long," said he, "wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee." His extreme jealousy for the honour of the temple may admit of some palliation of the rudeness of this attack; it cannot, however, be justified. Great and good men should be very careful of reflecting upon the conduct of others without sufficient examination, as their position gives power to their words. But how did Hannah meet the charge?

Hannah's
defence.

Here, again, we must admire her meekness, and present her as an example of calm, dispassionate, and dignified self-defence under a most aggravating censure. "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto." It was highly honourable to Eli that he not only at once retracted his hasty accusation, but spoke to her with the utmost kindness, pronouncing a blessing upon her, and expressing a fervent desire that the God of Israel would grant her petition.

On the day fixed for the return of the family from Shiloh, they

rose early in the morning, and having begun the day in worship, returned to their dwelling in peace and safety; filled with gratitude to their great Preserver, and devoutly intent upon the course of his providence. "The Lord," it is emphatically stated in the Scripture narration, "remembered her."

Return from
Shiloh.

At the appointed period, Hannah rejoiced over a son, in answer to her prayer, and she promptly named him *Samuel*, that is, "asked of God." Such a name was not only appropriate, but was a lasting memorial to herself and husband of the extraordinary mercy she had received; and with what exultation we may well believe would she continually trace his growing faculties of body and mind, while with eager assiduity she performed her maternal duties.

Samuel
born,

At the season for weaning the child, she accompanied her husband to the anniversary festival at Shiloh, omitting to do so on the previous occasion, on account of the attention which her valued offspring required at home. In this arrangement Elkanah concurred. When she went to fulfil her vow, she took "three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh." There she presented the little stranger to Eli, reminding him of the time when she pledged herself to consecrate the child she had prayed for to the service of the sanctuary, and explaining to him the vow she had made. There was an observance of extreme delicacy and good taste in her reference; for she does not make the slightest allusion to his past precipitancy of judgment, and her vindication. She only tells her story in a way that should enable him to recognize her identity, and lay a sure basis for success in her application. The good priest receives him, and the mother bursts forth in the highest strains of poetic rapture and devotional celebration, in one of the most beautiful odes recorded in Scripture, terminating in a striking prophetic reference to the coming Saviour. "The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

His mothers
vow fulfilled.

1 Sam. i. 24.

1 Sam. ii. 18
—21.

The story is now merged in that of her distinguished son; but one touch of nature and of maternal character closes the beautiful biography. "Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover *his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year*, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord. And they went unto their own home. And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the Lord."

ESTHER.

A.M. 2540. The history of this remarkable individual commences in the third
 B.C. 464. year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, (called also Ahasuerus,) the son and successor of the celebrated Persian king, Xerxes. After struggling with perplexing competitions for the empire, he was at last firmly seated in the dominion of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, instituted public feasts and rejoicings on this account in the city of Shushan, or Susa, for a hundred and eighty days; at the expiration of which, the king gave another great entertainment of seven days, for the princes and people in the palace. Vashti, the queen, appointed at the same time a feast for the women, in her own apartment.

Vashti.

Her degradation.

On the seventh day, the monarch ordered the seven chamberlains to wait upon Vashti, to bring her before him with the crown-royal on her head, that he might exhibit her to his courtiers in all the pomp of dress and beauty. She, however, ventured to refuse compliance; for, in fact, it was quite contrary to Persian etiquette, as well as to female propriety. The passionate and—we fear it must be added—intoxicated husband, was much enraged, and immediately had recourse to the advice of his seven counsellors, who suggested her instant divorce and degradation, and the issuing of an edict by which all wives throughout the empire should be required to pay implicit obedience to their husbands, so that every man might have absolute authority in his own house. This was accordingly done. The supreme Ruler of nations was then, as we shall see, making “the wrath of man to praise HIM.”

Esther introduced.

After the dismissal of Vashti, the ministers of Ashauerus advised the speedy adoption of measures to fill the vacancy, and their plan savoured abundantly of a barbarous and sensual age. The “fair young virgins” were to be collected at the palace from all the imperial provinces. At this period, a Jew, named Mordecai, a descendant of those who had been carried captive to Babylon with Jeconiah, king of Judah, lived in Shushan, and apparently was one of the porters at the gate of the palace. Having no children, he brought up Hadassah, or Esther, his uncle’s daughter. She was chosen from among the virgins, and committed to the care of the king’s chamberlain, Hage, who showed her very great favour, chiefly, perhaps, from the prospect of her becoming the future queen. At the proper time, (that is, after a year’s purification, according to the custom of the sovereigns,) she was introduced to the monarch, whose affections she soon gained, which led to her extraordinary elevation. On the tenth day of the tenth month, the royal crown was placed upon her head, and she was declared to be queen instead of Vashti, a solemn festival was proclaimed, and a release from taxes to the provinces given in honour of the occasion.

Mordecai.

Mordecai, having detected and divulged a conspiracy against the

king's life, mentioned it to Esther, who of course revealed it; the traitors were executed, and the faithful Jew became known to the government, though no recompense is recorded for his services. He had a satisfaction, however, more really valuable, that of having done his duty.

Haman now figures in that splendid court. He was an Amalekite, Haman. of the posterity of Agag, the king of Amalek, in the time of Saul, and being advanced to the rank of prime minister, exacted universal homage from all the king's servants. But Mordecai did not choose to bow with sycophantish reverence as he went in and out of the palace; a circumstance which greatly marred his delightful self-gratulations amidst the royal favour and the popular applause. The servants of the king remonstrated with Mordecai, but in vain; and then represented the matter to Haman, who was excessively incensed. Mordecai's known character and loyalty renders it probable, if not certain, that his conduct arose from a conscientious scruple, and that it was the religious homage required by the highest authority of the state that he courageously refused to the minister. As an Agagite especially, he would not reverence him.

The vengeance of Haman sought to gratify itself, not only by Determined to destroy the Jews. determining on the ruin of Mordecai, but on the destruction of the entire people of the Jews; and as the Persian monarchy then included Judæa, had not providence signally interposed, few if any could have escaped. He called together the diviners to ascertain by the lot which was to be the lucky day for the execution of his purpose, which was fixed on as the thirteenth of the twelfth month following, called Adar. Upon this he went in to the king, and by an artful address, keeping out of view the particular cause of his proceeding, represented the Jews in general to be a disaffected and dangerous people, and that political expediency required their extermination. Having obtained consent to his proposal, and receiving the king's ring to be used at his discretion, the decree was issued, and letters despatched into every province to destroy all the Jews, young and old, on the specified day.

Mordecai, as may be supposed, suffered the severest anguish of Mordecai's grief and message to the queen. mind, and went about the city, approaching even to the king's gate, clothed in sackcloth, and venting bitter lamentations. Esther desired an immediate conference with him, and sent a change of raiment, which, to express his grief, he refused. Whereupon the queen despatched one of the chamberlains in attendance to make particular inquiries into the cause of this distress. All was then unfolded, and Mordecai charged him with a request to Esther to go to the king and "make supplication unto him, and make request before him for her people." This was a dangerous proposal, because, as she sent back the messenger to represent to Mordecai, the law enacted that whoever, man or woman, ventured into the royal presence without being called, should suffer death, unless he held out the "golden

sceptre" as a token of mercy and pardon: and the probability of this exercise of forbearance in her own case she questioned, because she had not been sent for during the last thirty days, which seemed to imply some alienation. Mordecai returned a message full of point and power. It was the moment for action; the decree he said extended to all her nation; she had no reason to expect to be exempted in case of its execution; she was probably advanced to her exalted position by providence, for this very service; and if she refused the hazard, deliverance would come some other way, while she and her family would perish. Here was earnest pleading combined with eminent faith in God: and it succeeded. Esther resolved to expose her life, and sent to Mordecai, to say, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I also, and my maidens, will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

She resolves to go to the king.

On the third day Esther put on her royal apparel, and presented herself in the inner court of the palace, opposite to the king's private apartment, where he sat upon his throne. What a crisis! Is she to live or to die? Are her people to be rescued or destroyed? The golden sceptre is held out; she approaches, touches it, and lives! The king asked what she wished, and promised to gratify her "to the half of the kingdom." Her remarkable prudence is then displayed. She waives for the present her great object, and simply invites Ahasuerus and his favourite to a banquet. This request was accepted, but evidently understood by the king as only introductory to some greater request: for at the festival he refers to any desire she might express, which he protests again should be granted to the half of the kingdom. She warily deferred her purpose, and only solicited the renewal of this visit from him and Haman on the ensuing day, when she assured him of a full explanation of her wishes.

The golden sceptre held out.

Haman was exceedingly vain of this honour, and left the banquetting room with a most joyous heart; but oh, the mortification that awaited him! Mordecai did not bow his head to the mighty minister. No! Not even yet overawed by his greatness and his power! He could not endure it. He hastens home; sends to request the attendance of his friends, and before them and his wife Zeresh, expatiates upon all his glory and pre-eminence above the rest of the royal household, and the singular honour of being invited to the queen's especial banquet with the king; but adds, with a mind full of pride, rancour, and malignant passions—"Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." The universal voice suggested to him to erect a gallows fifty cubits high, and to solicit the king on the morrow morning, to give orders to hang Mordecai upon it. He was soothed, and no doubt slept very comfortably on the proposal.

Haman's honour,

and vexation.

Not so the king. He was wakeful and restless, and called for the book of records of the chronicles to be read to him, wherein it was written that Mordecai had given information of the conspiracy of the two chamberlains, Bigthana and Teresh. He inquired whether the fidelity of Mordecai had been suitably rewarded, and found that nothing had been done for him. The king is sleepless, and reads the records.

Early the next morning, Haman hastened to the palace to obtain consent to his sanguinary purpose of ridding himself at a stroke, of the disdainful Jew. His master was equally anxious to see him, though for a different reason. The king consulted his minister on the best method of expressing his attachment to one whom he wished pre-eminently to honour. Haman of course concluded that himself only could be the favourite intended, and with secret exultation proposed that the individual thought of should for once be clothed in the royal apparel and crown, carried through the city upon the horse appropriated to the king, be attended by one of the first princes of the empire, and have a proclamation made before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." Ahasuerus instantly commanded the execution of this proposal—"Make haste" said he, "and take the apparel and the horse as thou hast said, and do even so to"—whom? to my favourite, my Haman? my companion at the queen's banquet?—O horror!—"to Mordecai the Jew." Haman's interview.

The poor mortified courtier goes home "mourning, and having his head covered," and even his wife and friends agree that if Mordecai be of Jewish extraction all the contrivances to ruin him would be ineffectual, so powerful was the tradition even among the heathen of the interpositions of providence for that extraordinary people. Goes to the banquet,

The king's chamberlain now appears to attend Haman to the queen's banquet. He is forced to behave with assumed gaiety. The king repeats his desire to know the queen's wishes as she had promised, assuring her with reiterated protestations that they should be complied with "even to the half of the kingdom." To his unutterable astonishment she entreats for her own life and that of her people, declaring they were all sold "to be destroyed, to be slain and to perish." He was inflamed with rage, not thinking that he had been induced so to prostitute his authority, and inquired with a voice of thunder "who is he? And where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so?" Foul conspirator, thy hour is come! The queen answered "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman." Instantly with a bursting indignation the king rushed from the apartment into the palace garden, while the quailing favourite saw plainly enough that "evil was determined against him," and earnestly implored the queen to intercede for his life. He fell obsequiously upon the royal bed, and the king returning at the moment, in his exasperation imputed the basest motives to him, allowing his attendants to cover the delinquent's face, as a person is detected,

and hung. sentenced to death. Harbonah, one of the king's chamberlains, referred to the gallows fifty cubits high which the infatuated miscreant had prepared for the object of his own hatred and vengeance. The king at once caught the allusion, and uttered the awful sentence "Hang him thereon." Thus did the providence of God frustrate the crafty designs of the great enemy of his oppressed people, and furnish a perpetual memorial to the world of his power and wisdom in bringing about his own purposes by unexpected and wonderful means.

Mordecai's promotion. Esther entreats for her people. Success. Esther became now possessed of the house of her enemy, which was bestowed upon Mordecai. The Jews, however, were not yet exempted from the decree which had been issued for their extermination. Esther, therefore, again ventures in to the king, and falling before him, urges with tears that he would "put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews." She was received as before, and proceeded to entreat that letters should be despatched to counter-order the former commands. The king was now in the humour to concede every thing; but as the Persian laws were irreversible, he could not directly rescind an edict already sent into the provinces; but he adopted the plan of putting his ring into the hands of Mordecai and Esther, to seal whatever decree they thought proper to frame in this emergency. Accordingly they gave the Jews authority to defend themselves to the utmost, calculating, in all probability, that few would attempt to massacre that people under such circumstances. It appears, however, that there was a considerable conflict, and no fewer than five hundred of their assailants were slain in the royal city. The ten sons of Haman were also slain, and, at the request of the queen, hung on the gallows.

Rejoicing of the Jews. The fast or feast of commemoration. In consequence of the danger which threatened the Jews being now averted, the following two days, namely, the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar, were filled with great rejoicings; and these, with the preceding day, were set apart by the orders of Mordecai and Esther, for the annual commemoration of these extraordinary circumstances; the thirteenth as a fast, on account of the intended destruction of the Jewish people, and the other two as a feast, because of their deliverance from it. The fast they call the fast of Esther; the feast, the feast of Purim, a word derived from the Persian language, signifying lots, because it was by the casting of lots that Haman determined the time of their extermination. During this time the book of Esther is read in all their synagogues, when all classes are required to be present; men, women, children, and servants. As often as the name of Haman occurs, they all clap their hands, and stamp with their feet, exclaiming—"Let his memory perish."

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