



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

C

33.

84.



600041889-



JOSIAH AND CYRUS,

TWO GREAT OBJECTS OF DIVINE NOTICE

IN THE

SCHEME OF REVELATION.

LONDON:
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

JOSIAH AND CYRUS,
TWO GREAT OBJECTS OF DIVINE NOTICE,
IN THE
SCHEME OF REVELATION.

WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS
OF
THE TRUTH OF SACRED HISTORY,
AND OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROPHECY WITH
RESPECT TO THOSE SOVEREIGNS,
DRAWN FROM THE
ACCOUNTS OF "A MODERN TRAVELLER,"
& OF HEATHEN WRITERS.

BY THE
RIGHT REV. ROBERT GRAY, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,
AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.

1833.

84.



P R E F A C E.

THE evidence of Christianity is distributed through all ages, and is to be deduced from the history of almost every generation. It is this consideration, which precludes the possibility of human contrivance, and which demonstrates the intervention of God in the administration of a spiritual Government.

The events which took place in Paradise laid the foundation of truth in the fall and degradation of man, to be subjected to a state of punishment, grounding the necessity of an atonement for sin, on the attributes of God, which could not be violated with impunity without injury

to his glory, and the subversion of all order in the world.

The promise of the Seed of the woman, which should ultimately crush the head of the evil principle, was revived in the blessing imparted to Abraham, and in the prophecies of the Messiah, communicated through every stage of the rise and progress of religion.

The propitiation to be provided was intimated in the approved sacrifice of Abel, in the Passover, and in the types and ritual of the Mosaic law, fulfilled by the death of Christ, which is to be commemorated in the Eucharist till his coming again.

The patriarchal covenant included the universal design afterwards disclosed in the Gospel, and the Mosaic dispensation prepared the way for the manifestation of Christ.

A pervading uniformity and consistency of purpose are discovered in every mea-

sure in the advancement of the spiritual scheme. Christ is the corner-stone of the whole fabric, which is fitly framed together; every component part therefore in the Spiritual Temple—every Entablature in its structure indicates traces of the same design, and is adapted to cohere with, and assimilate itself to, the well-compacted structure—every successive addition made by different writers becomes a consistent part of the Inspired Volume.

Whatever period we choose in the Sacred History, either that of Noah, of Moses, or of David, exhibits the ark as the object of solicitude and reverence; and when the book of the law was composed, it was deposited therein.

If we contemplate the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, or the release from the captivity in Babylon, the same controlling Power shows itself in favour of a

people, selected as a nation of priests; who were led out from, and brought back to, a land promised to their forefathers; and restored to them when weaned from idolatry.

From this time Judea became the resort of devout men from every part. Sixty-three years before the birth of Christ, Pompey entered the sanctuary of the Temple, and showed some respect¹ to an invisible God, not represented by any image; and, as the Day-spring from on high approached and appeared, some light of Divine instruction seemed to be imparted to lead those that were in error into truth. The Wise Men of the East brought forward their gifts: Pilate was constrained to acknowledge that there was no fault in Him, whom he delivered to be condemned to death: and the Centurion confessed at the crucifixion, that Jesus truly was the Son of God.

¹ Tacit. lib. v. § 9.

Titus, when he inflicted the Divine vengeance in the destruction of the Temple, witnessed the veneration of the Jews for their sanctuary, for their laws, and for their sabbaths ; and he carried the emblems of a ritual service, the table, and the candlestick, with its branches, to Rome, to be sculptured on his arch ; the memorials of the accomplishment of prophecy in the demolition of the sacred city, and in the dispersion of its inhabitants ¹.

The Roman historian, who knew not, it may be presumed, that the Divine sentence had foretold, that not one stone of the building should be left upon another ; and that the time was come, when the true worshippers should no longer worship there ; yet when he recorded the conflagration of the Temple, declared

¹ Annals, lib. v. § 13.

what was substantially true, that " a voice, more than human, was heard" proclaiming the departure of the Gods from their sacred abode.

JOSIAH AND CYRUS,

TWO GREAT OBJECTS OF DIVINE NOTICE,

IN THE

SCHEME OF REVELATION.

PART I.

JOSIAH.

THE discoveries brought to light from time to time which tend to the confirmation of the truth of Scripture are well deserving of our consideration. These discoveries, whether they result from investigation of the scenes of nature, or from researches into the records of history, though they often appear to be casually and unexpectedly made, are, no doubt, providentially concerted by Divine wisdom to take place at the very period when they are most required, or most calculated to produce their effect. They are presented to the reflection of mankind with design

to establish the veracity and to illustrate the inspiration of those sacred writers who have been employed by the Almighty to reveal his instructions and to communicate his dispensations to mankind.

Such, for instance, are the facts which demonstrate the agreement and consistency that subsist between the Mosaic account of the creation, and the observations of accurate philosophy¹. Such are those coincidences which illustrate the analogy between the moral and spiritual designs of revelation, and the constitution and appointments of nature in the visible world².

Such also are the memorials and vestiges in which we trace the universal extent of the deluge ; or those which prove the infliction of Divine wrath on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The effects and traces of the former judgment are detected in the organic remains and fossil productions which are

¹ Sharon Turner, Sacred History of the World.

² Butler's Analogy.

to be found in almost all the parts and strata of the earth; the vestiges of the latter were so conspicuous in the time of Tacitus, that they led this philosophical historian to admit that considerable cities in those countries had sunk into ashes under a conflagration occasioned by the descent of celestial fire¹.

The appearance indeed of the spot in which this miraculous destruction took place indicates sufficient evidence to authorize the same persuasion, as may be collected from the accounts of almost every traveller who has visited those parts of Judea.

The historical events on which the testimonials of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations depend are so well attested by profane writers, and those writers are so numerous, that it would be endless to refer to them.

There is scarcely a revolution or signal event in profane history which does not exhibit some occasional links of connec-

¹ Hist. lib. 5. § 7.

tion with the progress of Revelation—or some proofs of the completion of its prophecies and declared designs.

Almost every monument which is drawn forth from the shades of antiquity, in proportion as its rude characters and mutilated inscriptions are made out and deciphered, reflects some lustre on the truth of the sacred book.

Such testimonies, it is true, as deduced from remote periods and writers, not known to the general classes of society, are often too recondite to produce uniform conviction, they are best appreciated by those who are conversant with the character and authority of ancient writers, and the circumstances under which they lived.

But there are also some suffrages to insulated facts and events, so striking in themselves, and drawn from sources so obvious and prominent as to require little knowledge of distant times, and little investigation to certify their claims to regard—they present such broad evidence for contemplation that they cannot be

overlooked by any carelessness or resisted by any obstinacy:

It is the duty of those who watch over the spiritual and moral interests of society to familiarize, as much as possible, all the proofs of the truths and authority of Christianity, to the general classes; especially when much insensibility with respect to them seems to prevail, and when so much industry is exerted to mislead and corrupt the public mind. It is more peculiarly the duty of the Ministry to bring forward things "new and old" with this view; and it is the object of the author in the present work to produce two instances of a confirmation of the sacred records, which seem particularly to demonstrate the truth of prophecy, as substantiated by authorities known and accessible to all.

Josiah king of Judah, and Cyrus the Persian, were two persons eminently distinguished in sacred history. By an honour peculiar to their character, and which indicates the importance attached to their actions in that scheme and eco-

nomny carried on by Providence under the old dispensation, both of them were foretold in prophecy a considerable time before their birth, and many circumstances relating to them were minutely specified before they came to pass. Josiah, in particular, was spoken of by the prophet who is styled in Scripture¹ “the Man of God out of Judah,” whom Josephus¹ calls Jadon, but Tertullian, Sameas, and whom we must regard as a minister of God.

This prophet was delegated by an especial commission to protest against the profanation of an altar which Jeroboam wished to pervert to idolatry, in opposition to the temple of Jerusalem—an altar which, however venerable for its original dedication to God, was then about to be abused by an unhallowed priesthood and service.

Jeroboam had been raised up by the Almighty to punish the evil propensities of Solomon, when estranged from God in his latter days, and to him it had been

¹ Antiq. Lib. 8. c. 9.

foreshown that he should establish the ten tribes of Israel into a separate kingdom.

Jeroboam, however, had no sooner ascended the throne of Israel than unmindful of the great favour which he had experienced, and with design, it should seem, of preventing his subjects from going up to Jerusalem to worship, lest they should again be brought into subjection to the kings of Judah, fabricated golden calves for idolatrous worship, and endeavoured to promote an exclusive reverence for the altars of Bethel and Dan¹, appointing persons from among the lowest of the people to become priests.

The calves of gold which the king made might seem to have been molten in conformity to the superstition which prevailed in Egypt, the fatal influence of which had infected the Israelites soon after their departure from that country, and seduced them from their obedience to God, even when Moses was deriving instruction from the Almighty on the Mount.

¹ 1 Kings xii. 28—30.

The prophet, who is styled the **Man of God**, was appointed to repair to **Bethel** to execute his high commission.

Bethel, as we collect from the sacred history, was the very place where **Jacob**, when he was journeying to **Padan-aran**¹, had been favoured with a Divine vision, in which he beheld a representation of that intercourse that was graciously to be established between heaven and earth by the ministry of angels, and in commemoration of which he set up a pillar. **Jacob**, at the command of God, agreeably to his vow, afterwards built an altar there, and there the **Almighty** again appeared to him on that occasion, and confirmed to him the general blessing of **Abraham** and **Isaac**², with the additional assurance that “kings should come out of his loins.”

On this sacred spot, after an interval of about 750 years, 975 years before Christ, the prophet (**Jadon**) arrived at the time when **Jeroboam** stood by the altar to burn incense.

¹ Gen. xxviii. 12—19.

² Gen. xxxv. 1—14.

Jadon seems to have been directed by God to address the altar itself, and not the king, and, thereby, might be thought to reprove the idolatry of Jeroboam, in paying Divine worship to inanimate objects. The prophet, by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, at the very moment that Jeroboam polluted the sacred place, as if excited by the daring profanation, exclaimed, "O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, Behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee¹."

In order the more to signalize this remarkable prophecy, Jadon, in a manner very customary with these holy men, delivered a sign, which was to confirm and substantiate the Divine prediction, "Behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out."

Indignant at the declaration which exposed the vanity and remote consequences

¹ 1 Kings xiii. 2.

which should result from this profanation, even the utter abolition of idolatry in that place in future times, the king stretched out his hand from the altar to seize the prophet, saying, "Lay hold on him," when his hand which he put forth against him was instantly dried up, so that he could not draw it in again; and at the same moment that the sign was given, the altar was rent, and the ashes poured out: which circumstances were evidently miraculous, and intended to excite confidence in the fulfilment of the prophecy remotely to be accomplished.

Jeroboam, in an earnest supplication, implored the prophet to entreat the Lord his God, and to pray for him, that his hand might be restored to him again; and accordingly the man of God besought the Lord, and the hand of the king was again made perfect.

The subsequent death of the prophet, and its affecting circumstances, and the fate of Jeroboam, whose character and conduct were implicated with this prophecy, conspired to render it conspicuous,

and to illustrate the proceedings of God in the aggravation of his judgments, as the period of the captivity drew near, and the Almighty "began to cut Israel short."

The punishment of the prophet, while it manifested the stern authority with which the Divine injunctions were enforced, exhibited proofs of the strict fidelity to his commands, which God required in his servants. They were not to presume to exercise their own judgment in any deviation from implicit obedience; but as they were afterwards told, if the roll of prophecy should be destroyed by the impiety of the sovereign, (as in the case of Jehoiakim), they were to take (as did Jeremiah) another roll, and to write the same words, so that no obstinacy could resist, and no subtlety elude them¹. Men were not to depart in a single letter from the precepts laid down. The man of God, after having uttered his prophecy, at first testified his reverence for the Divine word by rejecting the proffered rewards of Jero-

¹ Jeremiah xxxvi. 28.

boam, who invited him to his house. “ If thou wilt give me,” said the hitherto faithful servant of God, “ if thou wilt give me half of thine house, I will not go in with thee ; neither will I eat bread or drink water in this place ; for so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn away by the way that thou camest ; so he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.”

It was not that the prophet, like Balaam, loved “ the wages of unrighteousness,” but that, being unmindful of the undeviating consistency and irreversible designs of God, he, after having himself received the commandments of God, could listen to any human being, and especially to one of the prophets of Bethel, who might be permitted to prove him. Therefore it was that the false prophet who lied unto him, when he professed to have received a command inconsistent with that by which Jadon should have been directed, was permitted to draw him to destruction.

Therefore, also, was it appointed, that

from the mouth of him who had deceived him, the man of God was constrained to receive his sentence; and it came to pass, that while he trespassed by eating bread at the board of the false prophet, the word of the Lord came to him who had betrayed him, and he cried out to the man of God that came from Judah, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which the Lord said unto thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water, thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers."

The event is well known : and when the prophet was gone, " a lion met him by the way, and slew him, and the carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it; and the lion also stood by the carcase." A fearful spectacle to all; the rumour of which soon spread to the city where the old prophet dwelt, who went

and beheld the circumstances ; “ the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass ;” and the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and brought it back, and came to the city to mourn and to bury him ; “ and he laid his carcase in his own grave, and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother ¹. ”

That no testimony might be wanting, it came to pass, that after the false prophet had performed these obsequies he spake to his sons, saying, “ When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre where the man of God is buried ; lay my bones beside his bones, for the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the high places which are in the city of Samaria, shall surely come to pass ¹. ”

By the immediate fulfilment of the prediction, that the carcase of the prophet should not come to the sepulchre of his fathers, a solemn shade was spread over the spot where he was buried, and

¹ 1 Kings xiii. 24—32.

the monument was inscribed with a divine sentence in lines not to be erased.

The memorable censure which attached a sacred interest to the tomb, continued its impression to distant times, and when the sovereign, who had been predicted by name, appeared, the inhabitants of Bethel, who had cherished, no doubt, an awful expectation of the accomplishment of God's appointed purpose, were able, when called upon by Josiah, to relate the history of the man of God¹.

The fate of Jeroboam blends another interest with the historical events which give a prominency to this very remarkable prophecy. Josephus, on I know not what authority, represents the king to have been hardened in wickedness by the false prophet. Scarcely had he experienced the mercy of God in the restoration of his withered arm at the prayer of an appointed prophet, against whom he had stretched it out, than he manifested his impenitence by making again, "of the

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 15—17.

lowest of the people, priests of the high places. Whomsoever he would, he consecrated, and the thing became a sin unto his house, to cut it off, and to destroy it even from the face of the earth¹.”

Under the displeasure of God, Abijah, his son, (by a daughter, it is said, of Absalom and Tamar²) became sick, and Jeroboam, under a reverential awe of those prophets whose instructions he had disregarded, sent his wife in disguise to Ahijah, the prophet who had foretold his accession to the throne, to reign over the ten tribes of Israel in a separate kingdom. The prophet received the wife of Jeroboam with a rebuke, for attempting to deceive him. He commanded her to remind Jeroboam of his ingratitude to God, who had exalted him, and to foreshow evil to his house; and he informed her, that as “her feet should enter into the city the child should die, and that all Israel should mourn for him,

¹ 1 Kings xiii. 33, 34.

² Josephus, Antiq. L. 8. c. 10.

and should bury him ; for that he only of Jeroboam should come to the grave¹, because in him there was found some good thing towards the Lord of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.”

The event exhibited the sign of the completion of the threats of God towards this rejected family ; and when Jeroboam's wife “ came to Tirzah, when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died², and they buried him, and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah, the prophet.”

Jeroboam himself, after having reigned seventeen years, was defeated in a battle, of almost unprecedented destruction, by Abijah, king of Judah, who set his battle in array with four hundred thousand men against him, and Jeroboam himself had an army of eight hundred thousand men³.

While Abijah addressed Jeroboam and his people, and reproached them for their

¹ 1 Kings xiv.

² 1 Kings xiv. 17, 18.

³ 2 Chron. xiii.

rebellion against Rehoboam, and for their idolatry and apostasy from God, Jeroboam contrived an ambushment to come behind the army of Abijah, and the battle was before and behind: yet when Judah cried unto the Lord, God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah, and God delivered them into their hand, and there fell of Israel five hundred thousand men; and Abijah pursued after Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with the towns thereof, and other towns, and Jeroboam recovered no strength but died¹.

This signal overthrow of Jeroboam was so unexampled that, though it is confirmed by Josephus², some have suspected a mistake in the number of his host: but as the slaughter in former times, when men fought as it were hand to hand, was greater in many instances than usually takes place, when a superiority in discipline, numbers, or improved tactics, leads to more immediate and decisive advan-

¹ 2 Chron. xiii. 13—19. ² Antiq. L. 8. c. 11.

tages, it is probable that there is no mistake. It is to be remembered also, that God expressly declared as the period of the captivity drew near, that he would execute his wrath, with more signal severity on the accumulated offences both of the nations of Judah and Israel, and as these threats were at this time receiving their accomplishment, it may be concluded that the representations are not exaggerated by any errors in the text.

When Josiah ascended the throne, B. C. 641, he was only eight years old, and it may be presumed that he was educated in the principles of religion, since in the eighteenth year of his reign¹ he communicated to the high-priest an order to repair the temple at Jerusalem : a similar measure had been accomplished about 200 years before in the reign of Jehoash, when Jehoida was high-priest². While the people were occupied about this great work, the high-priest appears to have found the

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 3. 2 Chron. xxxv. 8.

² 2 Kings xxiii. 1—16.

book of the law¹, probably the autograph of Moses², which had been neglected, at least, during the apostasy which had prevailed in the preceding reigns of Manasseh and Amon. Possibly some faithful high-priest had taken it from the side of the ark³, where it was placed in the holy of holies, in such a time of general corruption, and hidden in some private place, lest it should be destroyed, as it appears that some of the kings of Judah had demolished a part of the temple.

Moses had directed that the king should transcribe a copy of the law on his establishment on the throne, from that which was before the Levites, and that "it should be with him, and that he should read therein all the days of his life, that he might learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of the law and the statutes to do them⁴."

Although Josiah had at this time

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 8.

² 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.

³ Deut. xxxi. 24—26.

⁴ Deut. xvii. 18—20.

reigned seventeen years, he had not so much as read the whole of the law, so that the reformation at this time had only probably consisted in the abolition of idolatry, and not in an entire restoration of the institutions of religion to their purity; for it was after this time that the ordinance of the passover was ordered to be kept according to the law.

Josiah, when he heard the words of the law, was affected with contrite feelings, in reflecting on the sins and abominations which had recently prevailed. Under these religious impressions he directed the high-priest and his ministers to inquire of the Lord what would be the effect of his own conduct and of that of all Judah. Conscious that some measures were necessary to mitigate the Divine wrath, his solicitude was awakened, and he might have observed that this book¹ threatened and foretold the captivity. The king was desirous of knowing what he and his people should do to avert those

¹ Levit. xxvi. 33. Deut. xxviii. 41.

judgments, which he concluded, from the threatenings which had been denounced, would take place ; and the more so as he was aware that his ancestors, remote and immediate, had been very deficient as to the observance of the precepts, commands, and ordinances enjoined in that book, and, therefore, he was apprehensive that he had incurred the more extensive penalties of the law, of which the transgression was to be visited to the third and fourth generation.

The high-priest, in consequence of the order of the king, had gone to Huldah the prophetess, who was then known to be under the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit. She instructed them to inform the king of those calamities which were to come upon them for their impiety, in conformity to what Moses had foretold. They were, however, to declare to Josiah, that in consideration of his contrite feeling and humiliation he should “ be gathered to his fathers and to his grave in peace¹ ;” an assurance very remarkable

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 18—20.

and peculiarly gratifying to a sovereign of the Jews, as connected with many pious sentiments of regard to their descent, country, and hopes, which the Divine promises had authorized. The assurance was likewise uttered with especial reference to a mitigation of the afflictions which overshadowed Josiah and his house, and with a discrimination of his fate from that of other members of his family.

It should be observed, that Jeremiah had at this time been a prophet above five years¹, residing probably at Anathoth, and before this time Zephaniah began to prophesy ; but the king's command being very urgent, and Huldah being near at hand, and known as well for her prophetic spirit as for her faithfulness, they resorted to her.

Josiah then called all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem unto him, and went up to the house of the Lord with the priests and the prophets, and caused one

¹ Jerem. i. 1, 2.

of the Levites to read the words of the book of the covenant ; and the king made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book ; and all the people stood to the covenant. He further signalized his zeal for the Lord by the utter destruction of the abominations of idolatry throughout all his dominions, and, in particular, he adopted measures that completely fulfilled the prediction before referred to, which had been uttered at the altar in Bethel by the man of God, by taking the bones of the idolatrous prophets out the sepulchres, and burning them upon the altar. It was upon that occasion the sepulchre of the prophet was discovered ¹.

It is worthy of observation, that, although Bethel belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and that tribe in general

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 15—17. compared with 1 Kings xii. 28—33. and xiii. and Joseph. Antiq. L. 10. c. 4.

firmly adhered to the house of David, yet the inhabitants of Bethel deserted Rehoboam, and went over to Jeroboam.

Bethel was at the southern extremity of the kingdom. The Lord, in the days of Jeroboam himself, was preparing for the fulfilment of the prediction of the man of God upon Judah, when Abijah the king of Judah and the son of Rehoboam took Bethel, &c. from Jeroboam¹, and from which time it probably was subject to the king of Judah only. It should be added, that neither that king, or any of the subsequent kings of Judah, seem to have prevented the worship of idols there.

Notwithstanding the zeal of Josiah to effect a reformation, his measures were obstructed by the perverseness of the people, so that the denunciations of wrath were repeated with increased severity. With respect to Josiah himself, in particular, while his exertions mitigated the displeasure of the Almighty, he seems to have subjected himself to a premature death

¹ 2 Chron. xiii. 19.

by a disregard of the will of God, which was intimated to him, though, indeed, upon questionable authority.

In order to exhibit this with its full display, and that no points deserving consideration may be omitted, I shall present the reader with extracts from the two sacred historians who alone mention the expedition.

In 2 Kings xxiii. 29—34, it is stated, “In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates, B. C. 610, and king Josiah went against him ; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father’s stead.

Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem, and his mother’s name was Hamutal, the daughter

of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of one hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. And Pharaoh-nechoh made Elia-kim, the son of Josiah, king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there."

In 2 Chronicles xxxv. 20—24. and xxxvi. 1—4. it is said,—“ After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt, came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates, and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah. I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he de-

stroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah, and the king said to his servants, Have me away for I am wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had : and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in *one of the* sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.”

“ Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father’s stead in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And the king of Egypt put him down in Jerusalem, and condemned the land in one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem,

and turned his name to Jehoiakim ; and Necho took Jehoahaz, his brother, and carried him to Egypt:”—where he died ¹.

It appears that the Assyrians² had some time before conquered Carchemish, and that Pharaoh-nechoh, or some of his predecessors, had taken it, and now the Assyrians had wrested that city out of the hands of Pharaoh-nechoh, whom Herodotus states to be Necos³ the son of Psammitichus ; and the king he went against was Nabopolassar the king of Babylon, who had subdued Assyria, and who therefore was styled the king of that country ⁴.

It is not quite clear from what motives Josiah was prompted to oppose the expedition of the king of Egypt, which naturally he might have been expected to favour.

It is not improbable, that it was designed by Providence to weaken the power and retard the operations of the Assyrian monarch against Judah, whom they were

¹ Joseph. L. 10. c. 5.

² Isa. x. 9.

³ Herod. Lib. 2. 159. ⁴ Joseph. Antiq. L. 10. c. 5.

to lead into captivity. The Assyrian monarchs were jealous of the kings of Egypt, whom they sarcastically represented as “a broken reed, on which, if a man leaned, it would go into his hand and pierce it¹.”

In any case, Josiah seems to have raised himself against a declared purpose of God without enquiry of him; and it is possible that he was biassed by some unbecoming deference to the ambitious designs of Nabopolassar, the reigning monarch, who having subdued the king of Nineveh, had permitted part of the kingdom of Samaria to be subject to Judah. The Divine finger had pointed to the king of Assyria as to the great enemy of the Jews, appointed to inflict the chastisements of God on that nation, with whom therefore it was unbecoming to enter into a covenant of amity, and whose kindness to the Jews was only, as shown with regard to Hezekiah, intended to inveigle them.

Although, however, Pharaoh-nechoh

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 21.

had sent word to Josiah, that he acted under a Divine commission, saying, "God commanded me to make haste; forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not;" which injunction might possibly have been given by Jeremiah, or some other prophet. The king persisted. Josiah appears to have acted in this instance rashly, and inconsistently with the rectitude of his former conduct, if not irreverently against God.

It has been doubted, indeed, whether Pharaoh-nechoh could have received instruction from the Almighty, but this was not, in fact, an unprecedented circumstance, or inconsistent with the Divine economy, for God frequently seems to have communicated his will to persons and nations whose interests were implicated with those of his peculiar people. Not to mention earlier cases, in the history of Abraham, Jacob, and Moses; the king of Assyria, in the time of Hezekiah, from his success against Israel and the Jews, seems to have conceived that he had derived assistance from God, for he said,

“ Am I now come up without the **Lord** against this place to destroy it? The **Lord** said to me, Go up against this land to destroy it¹.” Which assumption was strengthened by the declaration of **Isaiah**, “ O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets².”

It deserves, indeed, to be remarked, that the Almighty not only vouchsafed to employ heathen nations in the execution of his great purpose, but considered it to be consistent with the grandeur and munificence of his dispensation to appoint a recompense for the services performed; as he did in the instance of Nebuchadnezzar, to whom he assigned Egypt as a reward for his enterprise against Tyre, when, as Ezekiel declares, “ every head was made

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 25.

² Is. x. 5, 6.

bald, and every shoulder was peeled ; and, therefore, Egypt was given to him for wages for his army¹ :” by such appointments the cause of God was signalized, and his attributes proclaimed abroad.

During the captivity, the Almighty frequently manifested his direct interposition in concerns affecting the welfare of his people, when subjected to hazard or oppression, and many of the rulers were brought directly to the acknowledgment of the supremacy and great attributes of God, as in the cases of Nebuchadnezzar² and Darius³. So that little doubt can be entertained that heathen kings sometimes received communications from the Divine Being, and derived instruction from prophecy.

The sacred historian states, that the armies met in the valley of Megiddo, which was in the tribe of Manasseh, and that Josiah disguised himself that he might not be known to the king of Egypt, being sensible that, if known, the enemy

¹ Ezekiel xxix. 18.

² Dan. ii. 47. iv. 34, 35.

³ Dan. vi. 25. 27.

would direct his chief force against him, as the king of Syria had given orders respecting Ahab, when he fell at Ramoth Gilead.

Josephus gives an account very similar to that of the sacred historian, and supposes that Josiah was pushed on by fate, which is not inconsistent with the sacred account. However, the archers shot at king Josiah; and either suspecting him to be the king, or observing his valour in the fight, they endeavoured to take him off as a principal enemy. His servants put him into another chariot, and they brought him to Jerusalem; and he died.

Herodotus¹ informs us, that “by land (Necos) conquered the Syrians (or Jews) in an engagement near the town of Megdolum (Megiddo); and after his victory obtained possession of Cadytes (Jerusalem), a Syrian city.”

Thus the Almighty was pleased to punish a wicked, depraved, and hypocritical nation, by taking a good king

¹ Lib. 2. 5.

from them. During his reign the country had peace on every side, and was generally in a flourishing condition; and though Josiah was slain by the king of Egypt, yet it was not in a war in which he was personally concerned, and he was carried off by his servants without molestation, and interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors; and, therefore, the prophecy of Huldah had a full and literal accomplishment. If the prophecy should be restricted to import, that he should not be living when these various calamities should so distress his nation and people, and the promise implied only that his eyes should not see all the evil which God had threatened to bring upon this place, the completion of the promise is obvious. If he misconceived, and relied too much upon it, he yet was not rejected, and may be said "to have been gathered to his fathers in peace," lamented by the whole nation; and particularly by the prophet Jeremiah, who now, as a seer or prophet, beheld the judgments of the Almighty ready to fall on the guilty

nation ; and, indeed, the lamentations for Josiah were so general and great, that Zechariah ¹ compares them by prophetic and striking anticipation to the mourning and lamentations that the Jews will hereafter make, when they shall be converted to the Christian faith for their sins ; especially for having crucified and pierced the Son of God.

On the death of Josiah, the Jews seem to have departed from the established law, of placing the eldest son of the deceased king upon the throne of his father, by anointing Jehoahaz king, who was the youngest son of Josiah, as he appears to have been distinguished for his vigorous character and marked qualities : and having oppressed the people, he is compared to a young lion ².

Pharaoh-nechoh, on his return after his victory, appears to have been desirous of revenging the opposition that he had received from Josiah ; and for that purpose made use of the dissensions which pro-

¹ Zech. xii. 11.

² Ezekiel xix. 2, 3, 4.

bably existed between Jehoahaz and Eliakim, his elder brother ; and having got Jehoahaz or Shallum into his power, he deposed him, after a reign of three months, he having been possibly tumultuously set up by his party, and not legally entitled to the throne. The sacred historian and Pharaoh did not, therefore, consider him as king, and Pharaoh-nechoh supposing him, from his bold and enterprising spirit, to be a dangerous person, bound him, and carried him captive to Egypt, when Jeremiah¹ pathetically exclaimed “ Weep ye not for the dead (Josiah), neither bemoan him, but weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country. For thus saith the Lord, touching Shallum, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place ; he shall not return thither any more, but he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see

¹ Jer. xxii. 10—12. 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. Ezek. xix. 9.

this land no more." The prophet clearly preferring death to captivity.

Ezekiel likewise, taking up a lamentation for this family, whom he calls the princes of Israel, alludes particularly to Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim. The former, he describes, as having learned to catch the prey, and to have devoured men. The latter, who was substituted in his room, seems to have completed the desolation of the country, till the nations combined against him, and carried him to Babylon. Pharaoh-nechoh having made Eliakim, (probably Josiah's eldest surviving son,) king, in the room of his father, in a manner not uncustomary, exercising his supreme power and authority, changed his name to Jehoiakim ; he imposed also a fine upon the country, and took Jehoahaz or Shallum from the place, where he had bound him, to Egypt, as a prisoner and captive, and there he died, as the prophet Jeremiah had predicted.

It happens that a recent discovery in Egypt, which, no doubt, refers to this event, most strikingly illustrates the

relation of the sacred historians. Mr. Belzoni, whose indefatigable researches in Egypt have brought to light many remarkable circumstances, having with good fortune, and with a penetration which seems to have belonged to him, suspected from his observations that some temple and sepulchral building existed, covered with earth, at Babel el Malook, near Thebes, and that the approach to it was to be opened at the foot of a steep hill under a torrent, effected an entrance. Agreeably to this conjecture, he there discovered very ample and spacious apartments, and “with the assistance of Mr. Ricci, made drawings of all the figures, hieroglyphics, emblems, ornaments, &c. that” were “to be seen in the tomb,” and “took impressions of every thing in wax.” These were brought to England, and representations of them were exhibited in London¹.

In “the first hall”—“on the left,” he

¹ A Narrative of Operations and Recent Discoveries in Egypt and Nubia, by G. Belzoni, 1820, p. 240; and Remarks on his Plates 6, 7, 8, p. 528.

observed “ a military and mysterious procession, consisting of a great number of figures, all looking towards a man who is much superior to them in size, and faces them. At the end of this procession are three different sorts of people from other nations, evidently Jews, Ethiopians, and Persians: behind them are some Egyptians without their ornaments, as if they had been captives, rescued, and returning to their country, followed by a hawk-headed figure, it should seem, their protecting deity.”

Mr. Belzoni states, that he has “ the satisfaction of announcing, that according to Dr. Young’s late discovery of a great number of hieroglyphics, he found the names of Nichao, and Psammathis his son, marked in the drawings,” he had “ taken of this tomb;” and that it is the first time that hieroglyphics have been explained with such accuracy, which proves the doctor’s system, beyond doubt, to be the right key for reading this unknown language; and, it is to be hoped, that he will succeed in completing his

arduous and difficult undertaking, as it would give to the world the history of one of the most primitive nations, of which we are now totally ignorant. Nichao conquered Jerusalem and Babylon, and is stated by Herodotus, to have made an expedition into Ethiopia¹. What can be more clear than the above procession. The people of the three nations are distinctly seen; the Persians, the Jews, and the Ethiopians come in, followed by some captive Egyptians, as if returning into their country guarded by a protecting Deity. The reason why the Egyptians must be presumed to have been redeemed captives, is their being divested of all ornaments, which served to decorate and distinguish them from one another. The Jews, are clearly distinguished by their physiognomy and complexion; the Ethiopians by their colour and ornaments; and the Persians by their well-known dress, as they are so often seen in the battles with the Egyptians.”

¹ Lib. 2. c. 30.

That these monuments of antiquity were commemorative of parts of the history of Pharaoh-nechoh, the son of Psammetichus, there cannot be a shadow of doubt. That many of the representations also have a direct reference to the particular expedition which Pharaoh-nechoh made against the Assyrians or Babylonians, is equally certain. In the prosecution of this enterprise he was led up to Judea, and was encountered by Josiah—prosecuted his war against the Assyrians, and recovered Carchemish. On his return, he deposed Jehoahaz, or Shallum, the son of Josiah, and carried him bound as a captive into Egypt.

The circumstances of this captivity are depicted in the sculpture, &c. ; in which the captives appear to be advancing to salute the monarch, and the personages consist of such captives as we should expect to find in such a procession, namely Jews, Egyptians, &c. who as Belzoni observes, “ may be presumed to have been prisoners released from their bondage.” Ethiopians are likewise portrayed,

who were probably allies or captives, who might have accompanied Pharaoh-nechoh in his expedition.

Mr. Belzoni availed himself of Dr. Young's mode of discovering the hieroglyphics, and has clearly detailed and made out the names of Pharaoh-nechoh and Psammathis in the paintings.

He having published plates¹ of these remarkable representations in the catacombs, and compared the sacred accounts with those of Herodotus, was decidedly of opinion that they refer to the captives who were carried into captivity by Pharaoh-nechoh, after having taken the sacred city, that is, Jerusalem. He found some difficulty from the statement of Herodotus, that all the kings of this dynasty were buried at Sais. This observation of Herodotus, however, which is very general, and which admits probably of many exceptions, does not of itself constitute sufficient evidence to induce us to reject the application of the paintings to the events of the

¹ See particularly plates 6, 7, and 8.

reign of Pharaoh-nechoh ; and it is not impossible that the catacombs in question might originally have been erected in honour of the victories of Pharaoh-nechoh during his life, and that the sarcophagus containing his body might afterwards have been deposited where his triumphs had been consecrated.

It must be admitted that the designs and hieroglyphics of these ancient monuments exhibit striking instances of that evidence which, from time to time, seems unexpectedly, and, as it were, providentially to burst upon us in an inquisitive age, in proportion as it is qualified by learning and science to apprehend the application and to attend to the importance of such discoveries, whether bearing on the historical relations, or the miraculous events described in Scripture.

The sacred writings have at no time excited more attention, or been distributed with more zeal—at no period have they been compared or illustrated with greater effect—and in no age have the extrinsic proofs which bear witness to their

inspiration, been multiplied with such increased testimony and attestation.

It should be observed, that the singular termination of the life of Josiah, of whom we have seen it had been foretold in prophecy, that he should do great acts in the suppression of idolatry, serves to show how exactly the Almighty verified his promises to his selected people, that they should be rewarded or punished, as predicted by Moses.

It is likewise deserving of particular notice, that the fate of individual sovereigns is often bound up and implicated, as it were, with the circumstances of national prosperity or affliction. The condition of him who is most eminent for his station is signally marked out for the illustration of the Divine judgments, while, at the same time, he is rendered instrumental to the reward or condemnation of his subjects, —to the blessings or calamities, to which they are exposed.

PART II.
CYRUS, THE PERSIAN.

It appears in the sacred accounts of Cyrus the Persian, that this monarch also was the object of prophecy, and that he was foretold by name by Isaiah, above one hundred and fifty years before his time, as one who should be instrumental to the accomplishment of the long predicted purpose of the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, and of their restoration to rebuild their city and temple.

The prophet, speaking in the name of God, after carrying on his views to Christ, the great object of all prophecy, who was ultimately to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles¹, opens a more immediate

¹ Isaiah xlii. 1—9.

subject of approaching redemption, and of connected circumstances which were to come to pass, and which he was about to declare, “before they should spring forth.”

In the desultory spirit and intermingled views of prophecy, he speaks of a conversion and illumination hereafter to take place, of which, though the final effects refer to the time of the Gospel, yet others had a nearer application, as he the Lord was well pleased, likewise “to magnify the law and make it honourable¹.” He also who had given “Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers²,” was now about to redeem them, and he who was their Saviour, and who had before manifested deliverance³, and given his promises to Cyrus, was now resolved “to bring his seed from the east, and to gather them from the west, and from the north, and from the south,” by a deliverance, figurative perhaps of still more distant events, for that they were his witnesses and his servants

¹ Isa. xlii. 21.

² Isa. xlii. 24.

³ Isa. xliii. 1—3.

whom he had chosen ¹; that he was their Lord, and beside him there was no Saviour; “that for their sake he had sent to Babylon, and brought down all their nobles and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.” He affirms that he is the first and the last, and that besides him there is no God ²; and after deriding the people who had formed a god and molten a graven image, He declares that they should be ashamed by him “who frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad.” He “confirmeth the word to his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers. He saith to Jerusalem, thou shalt be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof. He saith to the deep, be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers. He saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid.”

¹ Isa. xliii. 5, 6.

² Isa. xliv. 6.

And, as if this were not sufficient, he thus expresses himself in the succeeding chapter, before yet Cyrus was conceived in the womb:—"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him." "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut asunder the bars of iron, and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which called thee by thy name, am the God of Israel; for Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name. I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else—there is no God besides me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known me. That they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness. I

make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things¹.”

The grandeur of the scheme opened by this prophecy, and the importance of the revelation accomplished by Cyrus, exhibit some of the most striking scenes of history, and some of the most impressive representations of the contrasted effects of religion and of idolatry.

While, with respect to the first dispensation, the scheme illustrates the proceedings of God in resisting the progress of error and superstition, and in promulgating the evidence of truth, it carries on our views to the second covenant, and reveals the testimonies which support its gracious communications.

As the judgments of God appeared to be inflicted on the Jews for their disobedience and deviations from his law, we are led to observe with what further views he employed other nations to harass and subdue them, in order that, by

¹ Isaiah xlv. 1—7.

their dispersion and captivity, they might communicate the light of revelation and the knowledge of his power through Pagan countries.

The captivity of the Jews, during seventy years, enabled the land of Judea to enjoy her sabbaths which, for four hundred and ninety years, had been neglected. The renewal of a right spirit in the people in their affliction disposed many, who were distinguished for their example among them, to manifest the power and the influence of that wisdom and of those principles which they derived from their religion ; and which were calculated to raise the minds of all, to whom they were imparted, to an apprehension of reverence for the true God.

The Assyrian empire, which had been employed against the select people of God as the rod of his anger, had, at the period of the captivity, attained the height of magnificence and power¹. Nebuchad-

¹ 2 Kings xxiv. 7, and Daniel.

nezzar, in the conviction that the King of Heaven had given him a kingdom and power, went up in blind conformity to the sacred prediction, and besieged Jerusalem, carried away the vessels of the House of God into the land of Shinar, into the house of his god ¹, and directed, agreeably to the prophecy of Isaiah, that the descendants of the kings of Judah should be trained as eunuchs or servants in his palace ².

Daniel, who was among the children of Judah selected to stand in the royal presence, and to behold the scenes of the falling empire, was chosen also by the Almighty to record the prophecies and judgment of God from the first year of the captivity, and had his life prolonged till the first year of the reign of Cyrus. He was instructed in the learning and language of the Chaldees. As he was consulted by the Assyrian kings, the signal deliverances which he experienced in resisting their commands tended to render his communications conspicu-

¹ Daniel i.

² 2 Kings xx. 18. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6.

ous, to spread among the idolatrous people the knowledge of the true God ; and to establish the publicity of his prophetic descriptions with respect to those empires which were successively to be established by the Persian, Grecian, and Roman powers, and of those subordinate kingdoms into which the latter dominion was to be subdivided ; all of which were to be broken in pieces by the kingdom of the Messiah, which was never to be destroyed.

At the time when we contemplate the extent of the Assyrian empire after it had regained from Egypt the countries from the Euphrates to the Nile—at the moment when Nebuchadnezzar was lifted up with pride in the city which he had built, and the lofty branches of the tree seemed to reach to heaven¹, the Almighty was about to cut it down, and to raise up a king, whose right hand he was to hold, to subvert nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings.

Cyrus, this eminent sovereign, who

¹ Daniel iv. 11—14.

was appointed for these great purposes, was brought up among the Persians, a nation then inconsiderable in its numbers, but distinguished for those virtues of simplicity, temperance, and frugal rectitude, which, by their own nature and tendency, were calculated to establish a moral ascendancy in the world, and to give the Persians advantages over people degraded by luxury and vice.

The character of this sovereign is described with great prominence and relief in Pagan history, particularly by Xenophon, a Grecian writer, eminently distinguished for the truth of his representations and for the simplicity of his style. Cicero, indeed, after Plato¹, speaks of this life of Cyrus as of a work written not so much with regard to historical truth as with a view to exhibit a pattern of a virtuous sovereign; but the Roman orator, if he had been acquainted with the wonderful conformity which the *Cyropædia* exhibits with the prophecies and the re-

¹ De Legibus, L. 3.

cords of Scripture, would not, probably, have expressed this sentiment. This correspondence will appear remarkably in the accounts with which we proceed to present the reader.

The Assyrians having commenced hostilities against the Medes, Cyrus, who was connected in close alliance with them, was appointed leader of a combined army, increased by auxiliaries, whom he had conciliated by his conduct and generosity. His measures seemed wonderfully to prosper. Grotius, advert- ing to Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, and others, whom God appears to have employed as instruments of his will, observes, that to such persons even those things which did not seem to depend on human prudence succeeded beyond their wishes, and more than the accustomed variety in the vicissitudes of human affairs generally admitted ; and he remarks that such a similarity of events, and such a conspiring as it were to a certain end, was an indication of providential direction ; for as in the throwing of dice, chance might

sometimes produce a fortunate number, yet if the same should be thrown a hundred times, no one would say but that this was occasioned by some contrivance¹.

But these remarks do not come up to the case and subject before us. Grotius, indeed, himself in demonstrating the providence of God from the Jewish prophecies, particularly refers to the rending asunder of the altar of Bethel by Josiah, described by name above three hundred [and fifty] years before the event took place; and to Cyrus, whose name and principal actions were pre-signified by Isaiah².

It does not appear, however, that any of the commentators, though they have pointed out the accomplishment of prophecy in the destruction of Babylon, and in the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity effected by Cyrus, have directed their attention to some earlier events which

¹ Grotius de Veritate, Lib. 1. Sect. 12.

² Ibid. Lib. 1. Sec. 17.

remarkably verify the predictions of the sacred writers, and illustrate the direction of Providence in the proceedings and progress of Cyrus in his advancement towards Babylon.

A signal instance of this, in a fulfilment of some prophetic declarations of Isaiah with respect to Cyrus, and instrumental to his final success, was displayed in the first great battle that took place at Thymbria, in which Neriglissar was slain, and Croesus put to flight¹.

Isaiah, speaking by anticipation, of God having raised up Cyrus in righteousness, and directed his ways, that he might "build his city, and let go his captives, not for price or reward," has introduced a declaration, not noticed that I am aware, by any commentator; but, which, though of subordinate importance as to the main purpose, which may be presumed to have been in contemplation of the Almighty, in the designation and

¹ Prideaux's *Connexion of the Old and New Testament*, Vol. I. p. 133.

appointment of Cyrus, must have contributed to the advancement and accomplishment of his ultimate success, and administration to the re-establishment of the Hebrew nation in Judea.

“ Thus saith the Lord—The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabæans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee—they shall be thine—they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee; they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, surely God is in thee, and there is none else, there is no God¹. ”

Now it was scarcely in human language more accurately to describe the circumstances of the accession of the Egyptian allies to the cause of Cyrus in the very manner in which they were brought to pass.

Xenophon, in his *Cyropædia*, informs us, that a body of twenty-six thousand Egyptians had joined the army of Cræsus,

¹ Isaiah xlv. 13, 14.

when commander of the Assyrian forces, who came over by sea:—they are described as men of stature, protected by long shields, and as armed with javelins and scymetars. They occupied the centre of the army.

In the action, in which the defeat of the Babylonian army was accomplished, the historian represents the Egyptians to have fought with considerable prowess, so as to have created some apprehension of a discomfiture of the army of Cyrus, till, by a change in the mode of attack, Cyrus assailed them behind, and defeated them, when they removed from the army in a body, and collected themselves together in a circle, covering their heads with their shields. Cyrus, commiserating the fate of these brave men, sent and offered them terms of capitulation, and they were brought over to him as captives (in chains), and engaged to assist in his enterprise, stipulating only that they should not be led against Cræsus: who, as Justin informs us, was well-beloved by foreign nations.

The Egyptians, no doubt, were instrumental to the success of the conqueror against Babylon, who, afterwards, agreeably to the promise which he had made to them, settled them in Larissa and Cyllene, in the maritime parts of his dominions. Both cities retained the denomination of Egyptian cities till the time of Xenophon¹, and, it is probable, that some of the treasures of Egypt, by which Alexander stated he had enriched his soldiers², were taken in part, at least, from these cities.

Thus were the labour of Egypt, and the merchandise of that nation and others, transferred by colonies from Egypt, at the very time that Ezekiel had foretold that it should become the basest of kingdoms, and that it should not exalt itself any more above the nations, “for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations, and I will scatter the Egyptians among the na-

¹ Cyri Instit. Lib. 7. c. 11. Edit. Schneidieri et Zeunü, Tom. III. p. 27. Edinburg, 1811.

² Arrian. Alexandri. Expedit. Lib. 7. c. 9. p. 432. Schmied. edit. Lips. 1798. p. 432.

tions, and will disperse them among the countries ¹.”

After this action several years were passed in mutual preparation, and Cyrus, in expeditions against some of the allies of the Assyrians twice approached Babylon, and contemplated its position and fortifications.

The period, however, appointed for the continuance of the captivity of the Jews, as expressly foretold by Jeremiah, was not accomplished—the power of God was yet to be shown in the punishment of idolatry, and in the protection of his servants at Babylon. They were still “to seek the peace of the city” whither God had caused them to be carried away captives, “for not till after seventy years should be accomplished at Babylon, was God to perform his good word in causing them to return ².”

Cyrus having defeated Cræsus and besieged Sardis, had taken possession of that city and its immense treasures, and

¹ Ezekiel xxix. 12. 15. xxiii. 26. ² Jer. xxix. 7. 14.

after many other successes in Lower Asia, Syria, and Arabia, he overthrew Belshazzar in a general engagement, and advanced toward Babylon—the fated city upon which “evil was to come.”

Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, of whom Jeremiah had intimated that he should continue to reign over Babylon till “great kings should serve themselves of him¹.”

Isaiah, in a prophetic view of the impending fate of Babylon, had thus expressed himself long before the captivity: “A grievous vision is declared unto me—the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth: Go up, oh Elam—besiege oh Media, all the sighing thereof (of the Jews) have I made to cease.”

In allusion to “the night of pleasure to be turned into fear,” and in bitter derision of the festivity of the Babylonians, he had thus exclaimed—“prepare ye the table—watch in the watch-tower—eat,

¹ Jeremiah xxvii. 7; and see also Isaiah xiv. 22.

drink : arise ye princes and anoint the shield—behold here cometh a chariot of horsemen, with a couple of horsemen, and he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen ; and all the graven images of her god he hath broken to the ground ¹.”

At the very hour that Belshazzar celebrated his impious feast, and profaned the sacred vessels which had been brought from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and offered adoration to the gods of gold and silver ², “ the arrows were made sharp and the shields were gathered, because it was the vengeance of the Lord—the vengeance of his temple ³.”

The Divine sentence was written, and as might be historically described in the prophetic language of Jeremiah, the sovereign and his people, “ in their heats, made their feasts and were made drunken, that they might rejoice, and sleep a per-

¹ Isaiah xxi. 1—9 ; see also xiii. 17.

² Called Labynetus, by Herodotus, and Naboandelus, by Josephus. Evil-merodach, by Prideaux, Vol. I. p. 136.

³ Jeremiah li. 11, 12.

petual sleep, and not awake. The archers were called together.”

Cyrus turned the course of the river by dykes, so as to lower the stream, and thus “the sea was dried up,” and he entered the city both where the river flowed in and where it issued from it¹. The two-leaved gates were opened and the gates of brass were broken. The king and the people “knew not from whence the evil came, and the mischief came upon them, and they were not able to put it off, though they stood upon their enchantments, and in the multitude of their sorceries none could save them².”

Daniel, who was called in at the suggestion of Nitocris, the mother of the king, alone could interpret the monition written by the finger of God, and he intrepidly declared to Belshazzar “that his kingdom was divided.”

In the same night was Belshazzar slain³. Cyrus took possession of the

¹ Jeremiah li. 36—43. ² Isaiah xlvii. 11—13.

³ Daniel v. 25—30.

treasures of darkness—the king was cast out from the sepulchre of his ancestors¹, and slaughter was prepared for his children.

Thus fell the Babylonish empire, after having subsisted two hundred and nine years ;—“ the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers was broken²,” a new dynasty was established, and the kingdom was given to the Medes and Persians.

Cyrus, who is uniformly represented to have paid great deference to Cyaxares, who is called Darius in Scripture, consented to his assumption of the government.

It was this Darius who suffered Daniel to be exposed to hazard for refusing to bow down to the idol which he had set up. The circumstances, however, tended only to establish the authority and influence of the prophet, who was advanced to be one of the three presidents appointed to rule over the hundred and twenty provinces

¹ Isaiah xiv. 19.

² Isaiah xiv. 5.

into which Darius divided his extensive empire¹.

Darius, though he had been led for a moment to acknowledge the true God, probably relapsed into idolatry. He died after a reign of two years, and left the throne open for the accession of Cyrus.

The reverence which Cyrus had been led to entertain for the imparted designs of the Almighty, manifested itself in the first measures of his government, and particularly in those which effected a renewal of the civil and religious institutions of the Jews.

It is probable, that the Jews, who must have looked with impatience and anxiety to the approach of Cyrus towards Babylon, in the persuasion which they must have derived from prophecy, that he was to be their deliverer, had gone forth from Babylon, and joined his army before his arrival. They who had mourned by the rivers of Babylon had foretold, or, perhaps, imprecated, with too vindictive feel-

¹ Daniel vi. 11.

ings, misery on their oppressors, and had called down a blessing on him who should dash their little ones against the stones¹: but it was graciously appointed by Providence, that even they who had thus indulged an indiscriminate rage, should be made instrumental to the mitigation of those calamities which might have involved even the unoffending offspring of the Babylonians in destruction.

Xenophon informs us, that some who understood the Syrian language [and who, probably, were Jews,] were employed by Cyrus to inform the inhabitants of Babylon, that when he should enter their city their safety would depend on their remaining within their houses, for that whosoever should be taken abroad would be put to death².

It is remarkable also, that when he appointed attendants for his person, with a view to their faithful attachment, he selected a large body of eunuchs, among

¹ Psalm cxxxvii.

² Cyri Instituti, Lib. vii. Vol. III. p. 69. Edit. Edinburgh, 1811.

whom, we may reasonably suppose, were Daniel and his companions, who we know were of royal descent in the house of Judah, and of whom, as was before observed, Isaiah had expressly foretold that they should be eunuchs or attendants in the palace of the king of Babylon¹.

From these Nebuchadnezzar had chosen the persons who were to stand in his presence², and some of these, no doubt, were continued among the confidential servants of Cyrus, and appointed by him to direct the return of the Jews from their captivity³. It is difficult not to believe that some of these drew the attention of Cyrus to their sacred books, as Josephus expressly informs us that Daniel did, and he no doubt counselled the king to execute the Divine command, which he was especially appointed to fulfil.

Whatever prophecies they might have shown to him with a view to the direction of his future conduct, must have had the

¹ Isaiah xxxix. 7, 8. ² Daniel i. 7, 8.

³ Compare Daniel vi. 1—3. with Cyri Instituti, p. 33—36.

greater weight with him, since he must have been convinced, on a retrospect of the events of his life, from a reference to those which have been already fulfilled, [as particularly to that which respected the Egyptians coming over to his cause ¹,] that they afforded him pledges, as it were, of the foreknowledge of God, and of the certainty of those events which were to take place.

That these are not gratuitous suppositions are certain; and they are confirmed by what we know to have occurred, that in the first year of his reign “his spirit was stirred up by the Lord to make a proclamation throughout his kingdom, that the God of Heaven, who had given him all the kingdoms of the earth, had charged him to build his house in Jerusalem, which was in Judah.” He accordingly permitted the people to go up; restored to them their sacred vessels, and commanded his subjects to afford them assistance, that they might rebuild their

¹ Isaiah xlv. 14.

city and temple ; in consequence above forty thousand persons returned, about 536 B. C., under the direction of the descendants of their sovereigns and high priests to Jerusalem, and rebuilt their temple ; encouraged by the assurance of the prophet Haggai to believe, that however inferior it might be in magnificence to the former structure, it should be filled with “ a greater glory,” that is, by the appearance of the Messiah ; and thus, as God had promised, a remnant returned to the mighty God¹.

Cyrus, when he visited Syria, had contemplated, probably, the desolation of the fertile plains of Judea. But we cannot suppose him to have been led by the feelings merely of policy or compassion, to send back its native inhabitants, with their sacred vessels, to rebuild a temple for whose God he had not the reverence which he professed. Daniel, by his station and influence, must have immediately introduced him to the notice of the conqueror.

¹ Deut. xxx. 1—5. Isaiah x. 22.

This prophet had observed, that the period appointed for the captivity was now approaching to its close, as he might have demonstrated to Cyrus.

He understood by books, the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord¹ came to Jeremiah the prophet, and he had prayed fervently to God that he would cause his face to shine upon his sanctuary that was desolate. He saw that a greater redemption was² hereafter to take place, and he had been informed that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince should be seven weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, and that he afterwards "should be cut off, but not for himself³."

The prophet, carrying on his inspired thoughts to the advancement and consummation of the kingdom of our Lord, had uttered revelations which, if they are overhung with the shades of mysterious

¹ Daniel ix. 2.

² Daniel ix. 17.

³ Daniel ix. 14.

obscurity, nevertheless evidently extend to the end of time, when “many shall sleep in the dust of the earth, and shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt¹.”

How far Cyrus was led to examine and consider the prophecies and communications imparted in the Scriptures must be left to conjecture. Some information, upon important points, we cannot doubt him to have received. He himself had been brought up in reverence for the Supreme Being, and he was inquisitive, and inclined to respect even the superstitions of other countries.

Although disposed to believe that he was directed by a Divine Providence, he must, nevertheless, have been led into errors by the notion which prevailed in Persia, and in which, probably, he had been educated, of the existence of two independent and conflicting principles—the one of good, and the other of evil.

With what earnest attention, therefore,

¹ Daniel xii. 2.

might he have observed that God had regarded him “as his anointed, and holden him by his right hand, for Jacob his servant’s sake, and for Israel his elect; and called him by name, and surnamed him, though he had not known him, that he might learn that he was the Lord, and there was none else, and that there was no God beside him; that he girded him, though he had not known him, that they might know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that he was the Lord, and that there was none else.”

With what surprise must the monarch, on the supposition, which it is reasonable to entertain, have heard, and have called to mind the proofs that the Lord had gone before him to subdue nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings¹, “to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates” which had not been shut, and had given him “the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.” With what reverence must he

¹ Isaiah xlv. 1, 2.

have heard the words of the prophet—
“ I am the Lord, and there is none else ;
I form the light, and create darkness ; I
make peace, and create evil ; I, the Lord,
do all these things.”

Cyrus could not, without astonishment, have followed the strain of the prophet, when, after adverting to some future manifestation of righteousness, he proceeded to deride the vanity of the Persian persuasions with respect to conflicting principles, and exclaimed, “ Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker ; let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth : ask of me of things to come concerning my sons ; I have made the earth, and created man upon it ; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded.”

Reasoning then from probability, and from the occasional intimations of history, sacred and profane, we may be authorized to regard Cyrus as one of the most illustrious of the heathens. In his disposition and character, He, who is no respecter of persons, according to his fore-

knowledge discerned somewhat conformable to his will, and to him he was graciously pleased to open some disclosure of his counsels, though to what extent must be left to speculation.

The wise and paternal government of Cyrus might seem to be sanctioned by that approval which characterized him as "the shepherd of God." The moderation of his conduct, considering the importance of the enterprise in which he was engaged, was remarkable. He enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, and a dominion which extended from India to the Caspian, Euxine, and Ægean seas, and which was bounded to the south by Ethiopia and the Arabian Gulf.

Xenophon describes him to have been occupied with great judgment in directing the affairs of his wide spread empire, and to have retained great moderation of character.

If, as Arrian represents, Callisthenes justly charged him with being the first who consented to receive divine honours, he soon corrected such offences. The

Egyptian troops, who revolted to Cyrus, after his first engagement with the Babylonians, appear to have addressed him as a god, or, perhaps, as a divinely assisted person¹, using only forms of customary adulation, which do not seem to have produced any real change in the habitual modesty of his character, or to have led him, like Alexander, to have aimed at such presumptuous distinctions. He appears ever to have recollected the salutary lesson, which Cræsus informed him he had learned from Solon, that no one was to be deemed happy till the close of life.

The inscription on his monument was expressive of his reflection to the vanity of all human pursuits,—it was to this effect:—“I am Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, founder of the Persian empire, and sovereign of Asia. Envy me not, therefore, this tomb².”

The allusion in this inscription to the confined limits by which the acquisition of

¹ Isaiah xlv. 14.

² Arrian, lib. 4. c. 11. p. 248.

mortals must be bounded on the close of life, might, possibly, have suggested to Juvenal the moral observation which, with more striking effect and propriety, he applied to the premature death of Alexander¹. In the unassuming virtues of Cyrus, and in the wise and generous release of the Jews, there was no ground for censure. While no just observation could contemplate, without satisfaction, the uninterrupted prosperity which Cyrus enjoyed in peaceful repose, with a vigour of body but little impaired, to protracted age².

As his end approached, he assembled his family, and expressed his gratitude towards the gods for the protection and success which he had ever experienced, exhorted his children to the cultivation of piety and virtue, and by a very remarkable departure from the customs of his country, to the Jewish rites of sepulture, as if he had been instructed in the revealed knowledge of the first origin and destination of the body, as described by

¹ Juvenal, Sat. 10. Line 172-3.

² Xenophon. Cicero de Senectute, § 30.

the Almighty¹; he directed his remains to be interred in the earth, and after having declared his belief in the immortality of the soul, he expired with great composure.

Herodotus, who differs in many respects from Xenophon, represents Cyrus to have been killed in an expedition against the Massagetæ; which is in itself improbable, though the account is followed by Josephus, Justin, and Eusebius². If Cyrus had perished on that occasion, it is probable that Cambyses, his son, would have endeavoured to avenge his death, and in that case he would not have been at liberty, towards the commencement of his reign, to engage in a distant expedition to Egypt.

Arrian, indeed, informs us, that the tomb of Cyrus, which Alexander visited, was at Pasargadæ, not far from Persepolis, to the east.

We are the more disposed to rely on the accounts of Xenophon, as he having

¹ Gen. iii. 19.

² De Vit. Constitu. Lib. 1. c. 7.

accompanied the younger Cyrus into the East, had possessed many opportunities of correcting any erroneous accounts concerning the Persian king. Alexander, who entertained great reverence for the memory of Cyrus, particularly distinguished, when he arrived at Babylon, the Ariaspæ, who assisted Cyrus against the Scythians, and who were called Euergetæ or Benefactors¹.

Babylon continued to be the occasional residence of Cyrus and his successors, till Susa, Ecbatana, and Persepolis, became successively the royal abode.

The Macedonian sovereigns, who subverted the Persian empire, neglected Babylon, and preferred Seleucia, till at length the ancient city was deserted, and Ctesiphon became the seat of empire.

The walls of Babylon were for some time preserved, and became the abode and receptacle of wild beasts, serpents, and doleful creatures, till at length even then the enclosures fell into decay, and the boundless plain was rendered an

¹ Expedit. L. 3. c. 27. p. 211. Lib. 6. c. 29. p. 407.

awful solitude, so that not even "the Arabian pitches his tent, nor the shepherds make their folds there." Its name and site were obliterated and forgotten ¹.

Thus while the Jews, in a temporary punishment, manifested the power of God among the most distinguished nations of the earth, they were released to fulfil the intentions of Providence, by returning to Zion, that in due time it might be shown that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Considering, then, the prophetic delineation of the character and actions of Cyrus, there is the fullest evidence that before the things which related to him sprung forth, they were declared ², and the foreknowledge and intervention of God, affirmed in one age, were verified in another. Isaiah, proclaiming the attributes of God, as illustrated by prophecy, particularly refers to predictions with respect to Cyrus, foretold by name, and challenging to the

¹ Strabo, Lib. 16. p. 1305. Edit. Amstel. Isaiah xiii. 19. 22; xiv. 22, 23.

² Isaiah xlii. 9.

Almighty this exclusive prerogative of the Divine nature, thus expresses himself with reference to Heathen deities: "Who among them can declare this, and show us former things; let them bring forth their witnesses that they may be justified, or let them hear and say it is truth¹." And again, "Who, as I, shall call and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come? let them show unto them²." That saith of Cyrus, in a passage before cited, "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple, thy foundations shall be laid³."

A similar demonstration has been before exhibited with respect to Josiah, substantiated by sacred and profane records in later times, and confirmed in the fate

¹ Isaiah xliii. 9.

² Isaiah xliv. 7.

³ Isaiah xliv. 28.

of those connected with him, by the vivid representations of painting on memorials coeval with the event, and brought to light in still living colours from the sepulchres of the dead, and from temples erected by a nation which had no veneration or regard to the Scriptures of the Jews.

It remains, then, only to observe, that it has been abundantly shown, that the Holy Spirit directed the attention of the Jews, and has pointed out to the consideration of all ages, two sovereigns, designated by name long before their birth, and that many heathen historians and writers, as particularly Herodotus and Xenophon, have borne undesigned testimony to the exact verification of what the prophets described.

The former of the sovereigns, viz. Josiah, though distinguished as a righteous servant of God, terminated a reign, apparently dishonoured towards its close by a disregard to the will of God, manifested to retard the captivity of his people.

The other sovereign, viz. Cyrus, was

called from the shades of superstition to a splendid display of Divine revelation, to act as an instrument in promoting the designs of Providence in the deliverance of his people. His character and actions were foreshown, with the utmost precision, by the prophets of God; and the heathens bear their suffrage to his claims¹ in the disclosure of scenes which confirm the proofs of Divine wisdom, at an interesting period, when the appointed time for the advent of the Messiah was precisely foretold. It is to be remembered, that the light of prophecy shone forth thus clearly while the Assyrians were deluded by the soothsayers of Chaldea; and Cræsus, and many others, misled to destruction by the ambiguous and equivocal communications of the Pagan oracles². Thus, then, in its earlier dawn, and under the Jewish dispensation, was revelation rendered a light to lighten

¹ Pausanias says, that he deserved to be called "The Father of Men."—Arcad. Lib. VIII. c. 43.

² Cyri Institu. Vol. III. c. 7. p. 36. Prideaux, Vol. I. p. 141.

the Gentiles, and a glory to God's people Israel, while it carried forward its remoter prospect to the disclosure of Him who was still more explicitly characterized as emphatically "the Seed of the woman," "the Shiloh," or the Prophet sent from God — "the Messiah" or anointed of the Lord — His chosen "Priest" — "Shepherd," and "Son" — "Immanuel," or God with us.

THE END.

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, Printers, St. John's Square, London.

By the same Author.

I.

A KEY to the OLD TESTAMENT and APOCRYPHA: or an Account of their several Books, of the Contents, and Authors, and of the Times in which they were respectively written. New Edition, with Corrections and Additions. 8vo. 14s.

II.

THE CONNECTION between the SACRED WRITINGS and the LITERATURE of JEWISH and HEATHEN AUTHORS, particularly that of the Classical Ages. 2d Edit. 2 Vols. 8vo. 1*l.* 1s.

III.

DISCOURSES on VARIOUS SUBJECTS; illustrative of the Evidence, Influence, and Doctrines of Christianity. 8vo. 6s.

IV.

SERMONS on the PRINCIPLES upon which the REFORMATION of the CHURCH of ENGLAND was ESTABLISHED; preached at the Bampton Lecture in 1796. 8vo.





