

THE
WORKS

John O'Story
1811—

OF

WILLIAM MASON, M. A.

PRECENTOR OF YORK, AND RECTOR OF ASTON.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND;

BY W. BULMER AND CO. CLEVELAND-RON, ST. JAMES'S.

1811.

CONTENTS
OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

SERMON I.

On the Use of the World, as permitted by Revelation.

Preached at Kensington, before the late King, Sept. 5, 1757.

1 Cor. vii. 31.

—Use this World as not abusing it, for the fashion of
this World passeth away. page 1

SERMON II.

**On the Self-satisfaction which results from the practice of
Moral Duties.**

Preached at Kensington, before the late King, Oct. 19, 1760.

Prov. xiv. 14.

—The good Man shall be satisfied from himself. 13

SERMON III.

On the Connection between Religion and Liberty.

*Preached before his present Majesty, at St. James's Chapel, Sept.
20, 1761.*

2 Cor. iii.—Part of the 17th verse.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 27

SERMON IV.

Infidelity and Enthusiasm, equally averse from Rational Enquiry.

Preached in Lent, at St. James's Chapel, April 30, 1764.

Acts, xvii. Verse 11 and part of the 12th.

The Jews of Berea were more noble than those in Thessalo-
nica, in that they received the word with all readiness of
mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those
things were so. Therefore many of them believed. 41

CONTENTS.

SERMON V.

On Christian Compassion.

Preached before his present Majesty at St. James's Chapel, Sept. 26, 1762.

John xi. 35.

Jesus wept ————— 55

SERMON VI.

On Christian Courtesy.

Preached before his Majesty's Household, at St. James's Chapel, March 18, 1769.

1 Peter iii. 8.

—————Be pitiful, be courteous. - - 69

SERMON VII.

On Christian Independence.

Preached as a Lent Sermon in St James's Chapel, March 16, 1768 ; and in York Cathedral the same year, Aug. 29th.

1 Cor. vii. 23.

Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. - - - 81

SERMON VIII.

On the Christian Duty of Glorifying God, in sequel to the former Discourse.

Preached in York Cathedral, Sept. 3, 1768.

1 Cor. vi. 20.

Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. - 93

SERMON IX.

On Christian Patriotism.

Preached in York Cathedral.

Romans ix. 3.

I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. 105

CONTENTS.

SERMON X.

On Christian Benevolence.

Romans xiii. 8.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another. 121

SERMON XI.

On the Progressive Assistance of the Holy Spirit.

*Preached at St. James's before his Majesty's Household, Lent,
March 24, 1771.*

2 Peter iii. 18.

—— Grow in grace. - - - 133

SERMON XII.

On the Effects of the Divine Spirit, in sequel to the former Discourse.

Romans xv. 13.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. - - - 144

SERMON XIII.

The Rule of Honour, a principle too imperfect to regulate Christian action.

*Preached before the late King at Kensington, Oct. 28, 1759, and at
St. James's Chapel, before his present Majesty, March 1, 1767.*

Galat. i. 10.

Do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. - - - 161

SERMON XIV.

God, the universal and equal Father of all Mankind.

*Preached in York Cathedral, 27 January, 1788. On the African
Slave Trade.*

Acts xvii. 28.

—— For we also are his Offspring. - 175

CONTENTS.

SERMON XV.

On the prophetical tendency of Christ's discourse with Nicodemus.

Preached at York Cathedral on Whitsunday, 1778.

St. John iii. 8.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. - - - 191

SERMON XVI.

On the Duty of avoiding Bad Company, instanced in that of Gamesters.

Ephesians v. 16.

Redeeming the time because the days are evil. 203

A Conjectural Essay, in which the meaning of the word *Angel*, as sometimes used by St. Paul in his Epistle to his Grecian Converts, is attempted to be ascertained. 217

An Examination of the Prophecy, contained in the 24th Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. - - - 247

AN
EXAMINATION
OF THE
PROPHECY,
CONTAINED IN THE 24th CHAPTER OF ST. MATTHEW'S
GOSPEL.

INTRODUCTION.

IT will, perhaps, be supposed from some things advanced in the following pages, that the Author is among those, who reject all *double senses* in their explication of Scripture. But he is far from being of their opinion. He thinks that many things in the Mosaic writings and those of the Jewish Prophets admit, nay, even demand such a two-fold interpretation. But he thinks also that this mode ought to be very cautiously, if ever used, when the prophecies delivered by Christ, or his Apostles are the subjects of investigation; and for this reason: The Books of Moses, part of the Psalms and Prophecies, clearly refer to what the Jewish œconomy was only a type or shadow of, and therefore are to be applied to their reality, the Christian dispensation. But in the code of this final dispensation we find few Prophecies except this in question, which were ever construed to have a double sense; for even the Apocalypse (so far as he understands Mr. Mede's Synchronisms) has only been interpreted to convey one sense in different and distinct visions. He thinks therefore that a double meaning should in this prophecy be sedulously avoided, because it is expressly said in it, that *all* things shall be fulfilled in the generation, in which it was delivered:

and therefore when it is now evident that only one of them has been fulfilled, though the other has been supposed by some divines to be predicted in the same place and words, the Infidel has but too good grounds to reject the whole as a fiction.

There is another thing in these pages, which seems to require previous explanation. It is where a distinction is made between the Prophetic and Parabolic Style. The author well knows that the term *παραβολη* is very frequently used in Scripture for Prophecy, and even (as in the Book of Job) for a mere speech or answer: but he knows too that a Parable and a Prophecy are two distinct things, and are always delivered in Scripture by two modes of expression. The Prophetic Style is marked chiefly by its strong hyperbolical figures and glowing metaphors. The Parabolic, on the contrary, by the most familiar images; divested of every thing that may be termed rhetorical and sublime. Invention it has in a great degree (as being of the nature of Apologue or Fable) and that oftentimes truly poetical.

The Author thought he perceived this difference between two parts of our Saviour's discourse to his Disciples on the Mount of Olives, and therefore he used these terms of distinction on an occasion, where such distinguishing terms seemed to him to elucidate his general subject.

AN

EXAMINATION, &c.

THE Design in these sheets is to prove, that the Prophecy of our Saviour refers entirely and exclusively to the destruction of Jerusalem, and not to the end of the World: which, if proved, refutes the grand objection of Infidelity, founded on these words at the conclusion of this Prophecy, “ Verily, verily, this generation shall not pass away before all these things be fulfilled.”

I begin with stating the occasion of its delivery, which arose in the Temple, when his Disciples were admiring its superb architecture, and were told by Jesus in a general way, that the time approached when it would be totally destroyed. This raised their curiosity to know the precise time; therefore immediately after, when he was retired to the Mount of Olives, “ His Disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be; and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the World?” Matthew, ch. 24, v. 3.

St. Mark agrees with St Matthew perfectly as to the occasion and place, but puts the Question differently—

“And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives over against the Temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, came unto him privately saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign, when all these things shall be fulfilled.” Mark, ch. 13. v. 3.

In like manner St. Luke: “And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign shall there be when these things shall come to pass?” ch. 21. v. 7. By St. John this Prophecy is not recorded.

On comparing the three passages above, we find that it is only in the first, that two Questions are put; the one concerning the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the other of the end of the World. A sign is asked for in them all, but in St. Matthew only a sign of *their Master's coming* is mentioned. And accordingly in that Evangelist the sign of the Son of Man's coming is mentioned, as well as his coming in the clouds of Heaven: but in the two others the sign of the Son of Man is omitted, but his coming in the clouds with power and great glory inserted.

We see, therefore, though there is a general harmony in the accounts of the three Evangelists, yet that the narrative of St. Matthew is the most circumstantial, and therefore principally to be attended to. Indeed it appears

to me, that it would be a very easy thing to interpret either of the two other accounts in an exclusive sense, as relating merely to the destruction of Jerusalem, and that it is even impossible to give them any further meaning. For in them one question only is asked, and therefore (as just reasoning leads us to expect) only one answer is given. But in St. Matthew's narrative two questions are asked; not only that which relates to Jerusalem, but that which relates to the end of the world: and to both these, I hope to shew that two distinct answers are given; not indeed in the place where, according to the general notion, the answers are prophetically blended together, but distinctly and separately. Yet only so separated as to have a manifest connexion with one another in the same discourse, and to the same persons, and from the mouth of the same divine teacher.

If I succeed in this attempt, there will be found no occasion to alter our own version, and to suppose with Bishop Newcome and others, that *συνελευσις τε αιωνος* means the end of the (Mosaic) age: for this very phrase occurs in chapter 13, v. 39 of the same Evangelist; where Christ explaining the parable of the sower, says, "the harvest is the *end of the world*." And again chapter 28, v. 20, where taking his final leave of his disciples, our Saviour says, "I am with you always, even *unto the end of the world*;" in which two places, the exactitude of our translation speaks for itself. The Greek

terms therefore neither can, nor ought to be wrested to a more confined and partial meaning in the present passage.

These things being premised, I now venture to give it as my opinion, that this second question is not answered before we come to the 31st verse of the 25th chapter, and that the three Parables, which intervene between the 42d verse of the 24th chapter, and the Prophecy just mentioned, (the two former of which inculcate the duty of watchfulness, and the third the improvement of the talents) are delivered by our Blessed Saviour as cautionary precepts, resulting from the uncertainty of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem; which, though confined within the limits of one generation, the precise time could not be determined. To this the first Parable of the Householder evidently points, as well as the second of the ten Virgins: and the immediate purpose of the third also seems to be that of inculcating to his hearers the necessity of their being zealous in the use of the talents committed to them, viz. the supernatural powers given them of propagating the Gospel during the interval between his ascension, and their flight from Jerusalem. I say this seems the immediate purpose; for it is to be remembered, that all this passed in one *private* conference between our Lord and Peter, James, John, and Andrew. I am however far from insinuating, that they have not a general import and inculcate truths, which it will behove

all Christians to attend to, and precepts which all Christians ought to practise till the consummation of all things. For it is an excellence common to all our Saviour's discourses, that those which are delivered on a particular occasion, and even for a private purpose, extend much further, and are, if not always, yet generally of universal import. There is also a peculiar beauty in the present chain of parables. They arise one from another in a remarkable climax. The first the most simple—the second more varied in point of imagery—and the third so artificially (if I may so say) contrived by concluding with the unprofitable servant's being cast into outer darkness, as to introduce the parabolical, as well as the prophetic account of those judicial sentences to be pronounced on the wicked, as well as the righteous, at the end of the world. I call it "parabolical account;" because it is delivered more in that stile, than in the other. The separation of the sheep and the goats—the addresses to each concerning clothing the naked, visiting the prisoners, all being of the parabolic species of writing, and herein very different from the high figurative stile, which occurs in the prophetic delivery of an answer to the first question. It is indeed this very different mode of describing the advent of Christ to destroy Jerusalem, and his second advent to judge mankind at the end of the world, on which I found my opinion, that the former cannot possibly include the latter. Let the two passages be placed one against the other, to make this more apparent.

The description of the Son of Man coming to destroy Jerusalem, and separate his elect (believers) from the unbelieving Jews.

Matt. chapter 24. v. 30.

“ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven,* and then shall the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn. And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory.”

31. “ And he shall send his Angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather his elect from one end of heaven to the other.”

The description of the Son of Man coming to judge the righteous and the wicked on the last day.

Matt. chapter 25th.

Verse 31. “ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

32. “ And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats.

* Here, according to the prophetic manner, *the sign* and coming of the Son of Man is vested in clouds; and his power and great glory, how strongly soever exhibited, is not personally exhibited; and what he does is done by the ministration of Angels, to gather together only his elect.

33. "And he shall set the sheep on the right hand,
"and the goats on the left.

34. "Then shall the King say to them on his right
"hand, Come, ye blessed children," &c. &c.

Here, in parabolic phrase, he comes personally with his holy Angels, and appears sitting on the throne of his glory—takes upon himself the office of separating the righteous from the wicked, under the parabolic images of sheep and goats.

If then these two descriptions were given as declaratory of one and the same event, viz. the end of the world, we must be obliged to think, that the former was expressed in terms very incompatible with the latter, and with all the other various passages in the New Testament, which relate to the last day, and a future judgment. Whereas, if we confine the meaning of the Prophecy to the gathering together of Christians, and saving them from that destruction, which Christ's coming at that time was to bring on the devoted Jews, the description is in such a sense full and complete. If we extend it to the other, it becomes inadequate and defective. Besides, it seems highly improbable, that, if the divine speaker meant it so far to extend, he should have given this second description so immediately after the first, with which, as we have already shewn, it is so closely connected by the three

parables, which intervene : all of which inculcate truths peculiarly to be attended to by his apostolic hearers, who had been told, that though the destruction of Jerusalem was to be completed in that generation, in which they then lived, the time when could not be ascertained, no more than that of Christ's second coming in *επιστασια τα αιωνος* to judge the world.

It must however be confessed, that these two passages in the Prophecy—" *Then shall they see the sign of the Son of Man coming, and Then shall they see the Son of Man,*" (which latter seems to imply the actual sight of him still more directly,) are strong indications, that he would appear personally at the time. Yet when we know, that he did not so appear, and that among the many signs and prodigies, which were then seen, and which Josephus has recorded, none of them were understood by either Jews or Christians to be a personal appearance, the true believer will conclude, *from the event*, that his *power* only was manifested, and the glory, with which he was invested, was still shrouded in clouds, in the same manner, as when he led the Israelites through the wilderness : and will therefore agree with me, that the omission of clouds in the description, of what can be construed in no other sense than that of the last day, is no weak foundation for believing, that he was enshrined in them, when he came to take vengeance on the Jewish

nation, for which they have the authority of a prophetic expression used by all the three Evangelists, in which this passage occurs.

I come now to a more close examination of the Prophecy, of which I mean not to give a perpetual comment, because this seems unnecessary: but rather to prove, in a series of Annotations, that every circumstance mentioned in it may justly be applied to the first question, asked by the Apostles, but by no means to the second.

Matthew 24. v. 3. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples come unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed, that no man deceive you.

ANNOTATIONS.

Verse 3. From this to the 13th nothing occurs, which is not clearly prophetic of what was to happen between the time of his ascension into heaven, and the beginning of the siege.

Every expositor, I believe, agrees in this. In Bishop Newcome's Observations on our Lord's conduct, as a Divine Instructor, this matter is treated copiously. See page 185.

5. For many shall come in my name; saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places.

8. All these are the beginnings of sorrows.

9. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

ANNOTATIONS.

Verse 13. The end, ο τέλος, clearly means the end of the Jewish calamities. If the text means, that every person who endures to the end of the world were to be saved, this would be a strange declaration in this place; but that he who continues a true believer in Christ, shall

14. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all Nations: and then shall the end come.

15. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand.)

ANNOTATIONS.

not be included in the general wreck of Jerusalem, is perfectly consistent with the context.

14. The Gospel of the kingdom means here not a general conversion to Christianity, but that it shall be preached and known to be a Religion universally. It was preached at Rome before Titus laid siege to Jerusalem. The *whole world* is one of those hyperbolical expressions, like *for ever*, denoting only a large extent, either of place or time, common to Prophecy. It frequently meant Rome and the Roman Empire.

15. See Bishop Newcome on the verse, where he explains the time of the abomination of Desolation to be that, when Titus made his first three encampments round the City: and the abomination to be the appearance of the statues of the Heathen Deities, which the Romans carried on their standards. The *Holy Place* he believes to mean the precincts of the City; these, as well as the City itself, being accounted holy. In proof of this he quotes Maccabees, ch. 10, ver. 11, where it

16. Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains.

17. Let him which is on the house-top, not come down to take any thing out of his house.

ANNOTATIONS.

appears to be declared so by King Demetrius, "Let Jerusalem also be holy and free, *with* the borders thereof." However this be, the next verse

16. Manifestly proves that it relates to Jerusalem, and not to the end of the world, when it says, "Let them, which be in Judæa, flee to the mountains," i. e, when Jerusalem is besieged. So that whatever may be the precise meaning of the *abomination of Desolation*, it is sufficient for us to consider it in the prophetic way, in which Daniel used it, and in which Christ repeated it.

17. From this to the 27th verse nothing occurs that does not exclusively predict what would happen to the emigrants from Judæa, as well believers, as others. All of them in such circumstances would look to a deliverer, and false ones might mislead them, as history informs us was the case. These verses, therefore, are only admonitions to Christ's *then* elect, for whose sake, he says, that those days of calamity should be shortened. We well know (God be blessed) that there have since been days which deserve not that name; and yet the end of the world is not come; therefore, as the completion of

18. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days.

20. But pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day.

21. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the Elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very Elect.

25. Behold I have told you before.

26. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he

ANNOTATIONS.

Prophecy fails in this particular, but holds good with respect to the destruction of Jerusalem, we seem authorized to assert, that the divine Prophet did not in this place allude to the end of the world.

is in the desert, go not forth ; Behold, he is in the secret chambers ; believe it not.

27. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

28. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

ANNOTATIONS.

27. I do not think that the similitude of the lightning necessarily means, that Christ's coming should be sudden ; but that the effects of it should be extensive through all the land of Judæa. It is to be observed, that this verse is the first in which his coming (*παρρσια*) is mentioned ; and it is mentioned in conjunction with the coming of the Romans, who were to be the Ministers of his vengeance.

28. This coming of the Romans is, in my opinion, clearly marked by the eagles gathered together, in allusion to the Roman standard. I know some divines, among whom is Mr. Gilpin in his late Exposition, are of a different opinion ; but to me this verse appears to be in the true prophetic style ; neither too clear for the time in which, or for the persons to whom it was delivered ; nor too obscure to be fully developed by the event, that is, when the Prophecy was accomplished.

29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

30. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of

ANNOTATIONS.

29. That is, the tribulation prior to that day, on which the siege commenced: for to those prior days every part of our Saviour's speech has hitherto referred. And now, as might be expected, his style rises into that highly figurative one which, from the hyperboles employed, is a specimen of what is justly called prophetic writing, and which Isaiah and the greater Prophets had heretofore used to describe the fall or rise of nations, or any other great temporal event. Concerning the usual prophetic terms, and their explanations, to which the Jews were accustomed, much might here be quoted from various divines. It is sufficient here to quote Bishop Hurd's ninth Sermon on the Style of Prophecy in general; and his sixth on Christ's second coming; that part particularly, which treats of this identical Prophecy, though I am sorry to find, that he disagrees with me, when he says, "I know that this Prophecy admits a "secondary sense." See Sermon VI. p. 171.

30. If the sign of the Son of Man be taken literally, it may be construed to mean those celestial prodigies

Man in heaven; and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

31. And he shall send his Angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.

ANNOTATIONS.

attendant on the siege, of which Josephus is full, and which are also recorded by Tacitus in the fifth Book and thirteenth Chapter of his History. But as Christ speaks here in the prophetic and figurative style, *heaven* may mean the capital, and *the tribes of the earth* the dispersed Jews throughout Judæa; and the *sign* the appearance of the Roman army, the ministers of vengeance. However this may be, it is clear, that the imagery can have no similitude to the last day, or day of judgment; for here he comes not to judge, but to destroy his enemies, and save his Elect. This has been noted before, when the difference of the two accounts was pointed out in the preliminary remarks.

31. This verse is in the high prophetic style, and with this verse it ceases, and in the next descends to the parabolic.

33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

34. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

ANNOTATIONS.

34. No artifice of interpretation can make these words imply any thing either more or less than what they do : they expressly declare, that " this generation (the generation in which he was speaking) shall not pass away, " till all these things be fulfilled." Now, if this prophecy, as far as it has gone, has a double sense, if it has predicted the last day, as well as the destruction of Jerusalem, what can we say to it, except that it was only particularly a true Prophecy. One part of which Infidelity itself must allow to have been fulfilled ; yet the other part the firmest believer dares not say has been so, because many generations have passed away, and the last day is not yet come. *All these things*, therefore, have not been fulfilled. On that account, it is of the highest importance to those, who would vindicate the truth of Christianity, as I have here attempted to do, to hold that this prophecy relates only to the first question asked by the Apostles, " When shall these things be ? " and to seek for an answer to their second in the remaining part of Christ's discourse, where I have shown they may be sure to find it ; not indeed fully answered as

35. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

ANNOTATIONS.

more than the former was, and this for the reason given afterwards in the 36th verse. But before I comment on that, I must here observe that Dr. Clarke thinks it to be an extraordinary ingenious conjecture of Grotius's to make *ἡμεῖς οὖν, that day*, in verse 36, opposed to *πάντα τὰ πάντα, all these things*, in verse 34, and would have the sense to be "the destruction of Jerusalem shall be presently, but the last day of Judgment is known to none but God." And Dr. Benson, who seems to favour this conjecture (See his Introduction to his Paraphrase on St. Paul's Ep. p. 30), though he does not allow of a double sense in this, or indeed in any Prophecy, thinks it would be a more just division of the chapters, if the 25th of St. Matthew began at the 36th verse of the 24th. For my own part, I am a friend to no divisions of chapters whatever, as I think they have but too frequently perplexed the meaning of the New Testament-writers, and particularly in this place; where one individual discourse of our Saviour with four Apostles privately, is frittered into two portions so very injudiciously. Neither can I admit the conjecture of so celebrated a critic as Grotius in this place, to be more than ingenious. It would scarcely have been true, even

36, But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only.

ANNOTATIONS.

if instead of ταῦτα πάντα, εἴτην had been added to ἡμεῖς, and the translation of "But of that *other* day knoweth "no man," &c.; for though some subsequent passages might be construed as relating to the day of judgment, as the time of Noah before the flood (see v. 38, 39) yet there are others that will not, as v. 40, 41, where two men shall be in a field, and two women grinding at a mill, of which one of each shall be taken and one left; which, as I have said in another note, contradicts the subsequent description of the last judgment, where *all* shall be gathered together, and *all* separated by Christ himself. Yet I am ready to allow, that the general and repeated admonitions to watchfulness, which are continued through the rest of his discourse, sometimes in direct precepts, at others by parabolic inference, introduce his answer to the second question as pertinently, as his caution against deceivers and false Messiahs was introductory to the first: and that both these introductions, though delivered only to the four Apostles, were meant to be of universal use and application to all Christians in all ages. Yet to declare one truth *directly*, but in such a manner that another truth may be deduced from it *consequentially*, is a distinction, which should

37. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

ANNOTATIONS.

always be attended to, and in no place more accurately than in the whole of this most important discourse. To explain myself still more clearly, by one historical instance, where thousands might be adduced. In the time of Cromwell's usurpation, when Fifth Monarchy men and other fanatics were so much abroad, the cautionary advice at the exordium of this discourse ought to have been as much attended to by Christians of the time, as it was primarily by the Apostles, to whom it was delivered. Yet nobody will say, that the Prophecy had *in a double sense* any allusion to that turbulent period of English history.

36. The divine Prophet here declares, that the precise time and season of the destruction of Jerusalem is known to no man, no, not the Angels, &c. If then this declaration was made by Christ, when speaking only of what may be called, great as it was, but a mere local circumstance, when compared with that most momentous one, the general judgment of all mankind, the Apostles had all reason previously given them to believe, that to their latter question no direct answer could be given; and that they must rest satisfied, as in the

38. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark,

ANNOTATIONS.

former case, with a general description only of the two events.

But we must not quit this verse without observing a remarkable difference in the three Evangelists, as they appear in the parallel places. That of St. Matthew, as above, says "the time is known to *the Father only.*" St. Mark adds, that it is known not to the Angels in heaven, *neither to the Son, but to the Father only,* ch. xiii. v. 32. In St. Luke, the whole sentence is omitted. The words of St. Mark, therefore, have given a handle to Socinians and others to question the foreknowledge of the Son. But, I think, their arguments will have little weight with those, who consider how frequently Christ speaks to his Disciples with a reference to his humanity only. It would be well, however, for the collators of MSS. of the Greek Testament, to examine whether the words in St. Mark *ουδε ο υιος* are not an interpolation. I mention this in passing, though the text in no way affects my argument.

37. The Prophecy being finished, I shall here only give a general note on what occurs between this and

39. And knew not until the flood came and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

40. Then shall two be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41. Two women shall be grinding at the mill : the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42. Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

ANNOTATIONS.

v. 43, and observe that this sequel, as it may be called, has occasioned the general suspicion, that the last judgment was here treated of, as well as the destruction of Jerusalem. But what can the words " One person to " be taken, and the other left," &c. have to do with the last judgment, where *all* are to be taken and judged, and none to be left ? But when we understand them as descriptive of those who shall escape from the horrors of the siege, viz. of emigrant believers and unbelievers promiscuously endeavouring to save themselves, it becomes naturally descriptive of what must and did happen in that temporary confusion.

41. Here, after inculcating the duty of watchfulness to his Apostles, their Divine Master enforces it by those Parables, which have already been so sufficiently noticed, as here to require no further comment.

I have therefore only to add the following short inferences, by way of recapitulation.

1st.

Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed within the time of that generation, in which the Prophecy was delivered; therefore so far the Prophecy is undeniably true.

2dly.

The Son of Man did not come to judge the world in that generation; because we know, that he has not yet come for that purpose: therefore the Prophecy was not given as predictive of that event.

3dly.

The Son of Man did not appear personally at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, nor did he then say, that he would judge the righteous and the wicked; therefore his advent for that purpose must be declared, if at all, in some other place. But,

4thly.

He did declare that he would thus come, and made this declaration in one and the same conversation, which he had with his Apostles. He declared too, that his appearance would be personal, sitting on his throne, and separating the righteous from the wicked, and that severally he would pronounce sentence on each: therefore

he has given distinct answers to both the Apostolic questions ; so that the former cannot be supposed to include the latter, without implying a palpable and quite unnecessary tautology.

THE END.

London ; printed by W. Buhner and Co.
Cleveland-row, St. James's.