A DISCOURSE

UPON

THE PROPHECY

OF

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL.
A DISCOURSE, &c.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and thy holy city." These are the words by which, in our common bibles, the Angel Gabriel is made to introduce to the prophet Daniel the important prediction of the Messiah; a prediction, which has at all times held the most distinguished rank in the scale of prophecy, as at once promising to supply the most decisive testimony to the truth of Christianity, and the most comprehensive recital of its doctrines.

To the title of Messiah, now for the first time appropriated to that great deliverer, the promise of whose coming had commenced with the fall, we here find specifically annexed the several offices pertaining to
his exalted mission. "To finish the transgression," by reversing the effects of the apostacy of Adam; "to make an end of sins," by procuring forgiveness for the actual offences of all penitent believers; "to make expiation for iniquity," by offering that sacrifice of atonement which the purity of divine justice demanded; "to bring in everlasting righteousness," by introducing that upright law which was to be of unceasing obligation, and by affording those means of holiness which are to confer eternal happiness; "to seal up the vision and prophecy," by a full completion of all that the prophets had foretold; and "to be anointed as the most holy," and so invested with those high functions of Prophet, Priest, and King, whereby these several purposes were to be effected:—these are the great characters which this important prophecy attaches to the Messiah; and these are the ends for which the Angel informs the Prophet, that a certain
defined period is yet allotted to the people and the holy city. And to demonstrate, beyond the possibility of mistake, the person by whom these momentous objects were to be accomplished, he proceeds to fix by precise numerical dates, the exact time at which this promised Prince and Saviour should appear.

"Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in
the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate even until the consumma-
tion, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

In other prophecies, relating to the time of the Messiah, we find these sketched out, with varying degrees of evidence, by a general reference to historical events: but in this, we have the accuracy of numbers superadded, as if to place the subject beyond the reach of difficulty or doubt. To this, accordingly, the Christian naturally turns with confidence, for a confirmation of his faith. And yet, to the mortification of the Believer, and to the triumph of the Infidel, it is found, that no one prophecy of Scripture has been productive of greater controversy, or puzzled with a greater di-
versity of opinions, than this very prophecy, which might be expected above all others to preclude disagreement. If, however, it
shall appear upon examination, that the Commentators have uniformly proceeded upon an erroneous version of the original, the cause of this diversity will be sufficiently obvious, and the credit of the sacred word will stand unimpeached.

The principal source of the error, which has cast a cloud over the prediction, seems to lie in this, that a preconceived solution has been permitted to influence the translation. The distinct periods of seven weeks, sixty two weeks, and one week, completing the number of seventy weeks; to a period of this duration the prophecy was at once supposed to refer: and then the words, which admitted a translation in this sense, being determined to this signification, the interpreter became bound to explain the prophecy in such a manner as should account both for the entire period of seventy weeks, and for those lesser periods whose aggregate completes that sum.
But when, in this view, he comes to try the prophecy by the events, he either finds himself embarrassed by the violation of historic dates, or is obliged to depart from the very principle on which he founded his translation, and to consider the members which compose the aggregate of the seventy weeks, either as discontinuous or partially concurrent: and hereby, whilst he speaks in the general of seventy weeks, as determined upon the holy city for certain great events, he explains it in the detail by showing, that a portion of time considerably differing from that of seventy weeks was intended.

Thus, for example, whilst one Commentator concludes the sixty-ninth week at the death of Christ, and places the seventieth at the distance of thirty years, to connect it with the final destruction of the Jewish state; another makes the sixty-ninth and seventieth partially concurrent, in order that the death of Christ, which
according to this hypothesis was to happen at the end of the sixty-ninth week, should be at the same time fixed in the middle point of the seventieth. And thus an amount of seventy weeks is said to be made up by a period which in one case extends to seventy-four weeks, and in another is confined to sixty-nine weeks and a half.

Some writers, indeed, aware that such a mode of completing the seventy weeks is inadmissible, on the ordinary principles of computation, and can furnish no protection against the arguments of the unbeliever, have endeavoured to explain the prophecy by a continued reckoning. But in order to effect this, they have been obliged to resort to a use of terms so figurative, and to a violence of application so unjustifiable, in assuming an event, which exceeded the completion of seventy weeks, as happening at the expiration of sixty-
nine, that their hypothesis seems not more tenable than either of the former.

Whilst the assumption of seventy weeks as the period predicted, has thus led to perplexity in fixing the term at which the reckoning is to conclude, the same cause has been productive of no less difficulty in ascertaining the point from which it should begin.

The issuing of a decree for the restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem, has been named as the date from which the computation of the weeks was to proceed. A decree of this nature was issued by Cyrus, immediately after the delivery of the prophecy; and in consequence thereof, the Jews were permitted to return from the captivity, and to commence the rebuilding of their city and temple. To this decree, or at least to the re-publication of it by Darius Hystaspis about sixteen years after, (by virtue of which the building of the temple was completed) the prophecy must
naturally be supposed to point. But the distance of the time of Christ from either publication of this decree so far exceeds the entire period of seventy weeks, that decrees of a later date have, consistently with this hypothesis, been unavoidably resorted to. The seventh of Artaxerxes Longimanus has accordingly been adopted by some, and the twentieth of the same king by others: the former being the year in which Ezra was sent to regulate the affairs of Jerusalem, and the latter that in which Nehemiah obtained a commission to repair the walls of the city.

The reason for fixing on each of these epochs, in preference to the decree of Cyrus, which had, nearly a century before, empowered the Jews to return and rebuild their city, in exact agreement with the words of this prophecy as well as with the prediction of Isaiah two centuries earlier, can only be found in their subserviency to the received hypothesis: even the advo-
cates of this hypothesis almost unanimously confessing, that the decree of Cyrus supplies the most obvious and natural commencement to the prophetic computation, whilst the consequences arising from the adoption of any other date present obstacles not to be surmounted.

Beside the difficulties, which thus embarrass the *termination* and the *beginning* of the seventy weeks, there are others, which affect the supposed *division* of that period into the distinct portions, of which it is composed. Such division, if we will avoid imputing to the divine communications, a trifling, which may be thought to savour of Rabbinical conceit, should mark out portions of time distinguished by some signal occurrences, essentially connected with the subject matter of the prediction.* It belongs, therefore, to those who thus

* The note of Dathe, p. 641, deserves to be transcribed, both for the rejection of Cyrus's decree, and the total unmeaningness of the separate periods.
understand the prophecy, to point out such extraordinary and characteristical events. Of this, indeed, these expositors appear fully sensible. But the attempts which they have made to furnish the required solution, have only tended to evince the radical unsoundness of the principle of their interpretation.

Of the first period of seven weeks, their system admits no satisfactory account. In referring to this period the building of the city, they fix the accomplishment of that work at the distance of nearly one hundred and fifty years from its commencement; a period above threefold that of seven prophetic weeks, and terminating by forty years later than the time, at which, we know from Scripture history, the city must have been completely finished; namely, the thirty-second of Artaxerxes, when Nehemiah returned from Jerusalem to the Persian court.

When we thus find this momentous
prophecy rendered inconsistent with history and with itself, according to the interpretations which have been usually received; and when we consider that these interpretations have been the productions of the greatest minds that have graced the annals of theology and science, the names of Scaliger, Mede, Usher, Lloyd, Prideaux, Sir Isaac Newton, and other such men, being amongst those who have laboured, but laboured ineffectually, in its exposition, what can be inferred, consistently with the reverence due to the sacred word, but that the true meaning of the Prophet's language has not hitherto been rightly apprehended, and that the common version has been too easily acquiesced in without scrutiny or suspicion?

I shall now proceed to unfold, with all possibly brevity, that which I conceive to be the true sense of the original: a sense, which the strictest rules of grammatical connexion must be admitted to support,
and which the closest examination of historical events will, I trust, be found to verify.

And, first, it must be observed, that in the Hebrew language (unaffected by Masoretic punctuation) the same word is used to signify Seventy and Weeks. In the commencement of the prophecy, therefore, when Seventy Weeks are assumed as marked out for certain important purposes, we may with propriety alter the expression to Weeks Weeks, the same term occurring twice without variation שְׁשִׁים שֵׁשי and no distinction whatever existing, to intimate that whilst signifying Weeks in the one instance, it should be rendered Seventy in the other, but equally requiring the interpretation of Weeks, or * Seventy, in

* The late Professor Blayney, in his Dissertation on Daniel's Prophecy of Seventy Weeks, p. 14, observes on the commencement of this prophecy in the following manner:—

"The two first words of this verse, which are generally understood to signify seventy weeks, are literally the same, being distinguished only by the points or vowels, which are additions without authority. And as
both: and thus is at once removed the supposition, that the completion of the objects of the prediction is restricted to a period of Seventy Weeks; a supposition, which, as we have already seen, has hitherto rendered every endeavour to explain the prophecy abortive. At the same time we shall find the expression, Weeks, Weeks, both corresponding to the numbers subsequently detailed, and naturally arising out of the occasion of the prediction.

The Jewish law, as it had prescribed Sabbaths of days, had likewise ordained they are both uniformly written without the Vau, they may, with as much propriety, be rendered seventy, seventy, if the context admit of it; the repetition of the same word being often used emphatically." In the Preface, he notices a communication made to him by the Bishop of Dromore (Newcome), afterwards Primate, in which he observes, that "we ought to render instead of seventy weeks, (weeks, weeks,) many weeks."

Rossi, in his Variae Lectiones Veteris Testamenti, subjoins this note to the words: "Sic indicatà per repetitionem vocabuli multitudine, Hebdomadæ Hebdomadæ erunt Plures Hebdomadæ."

Dathius also in his illustration of this verse (p. 638) remarks, "Repetitio substantivæ ex hebraismo satis nota multitudinem indicat," and supports himself by the authority of Glassius, who confirms this by many instances from the Hebrew, at the 16th page of his Philologia Sacra.
Sabbaths of * years. The seventh year was to be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, even as the seventh day was a Sabbath of rest unto the people. So that Weeks of years formed a division of time, no less familiar to the Jewish nation than Weeks of days. Now, if we consult the history of the Old Testament, we shall learn, that the reason expressly assigned for the continuance of the captivity in Babylon for the seventy years predicted by Jeremiah was, that the land might enjoy her Sabbaths; that is, that the seventy sabbatical years, which had been neglected by the Jews during many Weeks of years, should now be completed in a state of rest secured by the desolation of the land.

* "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee; seven times seven years: and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years."—Lev. xxv. 8, 9.

Again—“Six years shalt thou sow thy land, and six years shalt thou prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land; a sabbath for the Lord.”—Lev. xxv. 3, 4.

Also attend to the 2nd verse.
In the prayer of Daniel, therefore, in which, near the close of the predicted period, he entreats the Lord to put an end to this desolation, and no longer to defer the restoration of the people and the city, what can be more natural than to suppose the cause of this appointed interval of seventy years to have been present to his mind? And in this case does not the form of expression adopted by the Angel seem to grow out of the subject? It is as if he had said,—The seventy years about whose termination you are anxious, as having been denounced upon your people, have now nearly elapsed, so as to complete those weeks of years, which had been left imperfect; and I am commissioned to inform you, that a continuance through a very long period, even through Weeks, Weeks, of years, is yet further allotted to your city and people, for the consumma-
tion of certain great and glorious purposes; for not until the end of a period so pro-
tracted shall Messiah, or the most holy, be anointed or consecrated to those functions through which these promised blessings are to be conferred.

Thus the time of the Messiah's coming is sketched in a general indefinite outline, which the Angel then proceeds to fill up with the most minute particularity, in the following words: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be Weeks Seven and Seventy;" a period, which will be found exactly to correspond to the distance, which extends from the decree of Cyrus to the birth of Christ.

But before I proceed to establish this point, it will naturally be demanded, by what means the interval of seventy-seven weeks of years has been derived from the same passage, which has been hitherto considered to denote a period of sixty-nine weeks, or of seven weeks and sixty and two weeks.
The observation already made respecting the identity of the term, by which *weeks* and *seventy* are expressed in the original, easily supplies the answer. For the present translation, *weeks seven and weeks sixty and two*, we are thus enabled to read, *weeks seven and seventy*, leaving the number *sixty and two* to connect with the following passage, with which it has always been connected, even according to the existing translation, in point of sense.

To make this plain to the mere English reader, let the passage, *weeks seven and weeks sixty and two*, (which he may be assured is a literal rendering of the original both as to the words and as to their position) be read without the words *sixty and two*, it will then become *weeks seven and weeks*; and for this last word *weeks* let *seventy* be substituted, *weeks seven and seventy* becomes the reading of the passage. In this, it must be noted, the original has undergone no alteration whatsoever. The
words have been used in their natural and familiar signification; and no change has been introduced, save in the pointing of the sentence, which, as it had no existence in the original hebrew, stands on no better authority than the private judgment of uninspired individuals, and is consequently at all times open to such modifications as the nature of the context may suggest.

But not only is the translation, which has been proposed, *admissible*, for the reasons just stated; but it is positively *authenticated* by the most ancient Greek version of Daniel: the Version of the Seventy, which has of late years been discovered and given to the public, reading the numbers, as we have done, *seven and seventy*. For it must be remembered, that the Greek version of the book of Daniel, heretofore in use, has not been that of the Seventy, but of *Theodotion*; the former having been long sought after, but not until lately recovered, being found in the Chisian library
at Rome, and published in the year 1772, from a manuscript stated at that time to be nearly 900 years old.

If then we are to interpret the prophecy, as pronouncing, that, from the going forth of the decree to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the prince, there should be *seven and seventy* weeks, we shall be surprised to find with what wonderful exactness it has received its accomplishment.

These *seventy-seven* weeks, (reckoning them according to the known language of prophecy, as weeks of years,) amount to *five hundred and thirty-nine* years, and these, computing, as is reasonable, by the *prophetic* (or as some call it the Chaldean) year, complete an interval of *five hundred and thirty-one* years of the Julian standard with the addition of *ninety-two days*; a distance, at which, it will appear, from the most accurate chronological researches, the *decree of Cyrus* is removed from the *birth*
of Christ:—that decree, which is itself pointed out by prophecy * for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of the Jews from captivity; and that glorious advent, which is so frequently the subject of prophetic exultation, the long looked for coming of the Messiah.

The Angel having thus announced the exact time of the coming of the Messiah, by its reference to the decree of Cyrus, proceeds to inform the Prophet of the fates of his country, with which the advent of that great person was so essentially

* "That 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." Isaiah xliv. 28.—And again, in the following chapter, v. 13, the prophet is made to pronounce of the same great deliverer, in the words of Jehovah, "He shall build my city, and He shall let go my captives." Yet more, Cyrus acknowledges himself to be but an instrument in the hand of the Almighty in performing this great work; declaring, that "The Lord God of heaven had charged him to build Him an house at Jerusalem," and in consequence thereof issues a proclamation of deliverance for the Jews. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22. Ezra, i. 1, 2. And all this happens, at the expiration of the seventy years' captivity, which had been predicted by Jeremiah. So that the decree which is referred to in Daniel, as the "decree to restore and to build Jerusalem," can be no other than the decree of Cyrus, which had been already so long the subject of prophecy.
connected, and to which the prayer of the prophet so immediately related. He subjoins therefore to his account of the weeks that were to precede the birth of Christ, the notice that during sixty-two of these the city and its walls should have been standing in a perfectly completed state; or, in other words, that at the birth of Christ sixty and two weeks should have elapsed from the perfect rebuilding of the city and its walls. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince shall be Weeks Seven and Seventy: Threescore and Two shall the street be built again and the wall."

Now these Sixty and Two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four prophetic years, are equal to four hundred and twenty-seven years of Julian reckoning, and two hundred and seventy-eight days: and these, counted backwards from the birth of Christ, will
be found to carry us four hundred and thirty-four years before the Vulgar Æra, which runs to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, exactly the twelfth year from the time, when Nehemiah had been sent by that King, to finish the building of the city and the structure of its walls: and on this very year, we are informed by Scripture, Nehemiah returned to the Persian court, after having executed the work for which he had been commissioned.

Thus the prophecy has fixed the birth of Christ by a twofold reference; placing it at the distance of Seventy-Seven weeks of years from the decree of Cyrus for the building of the city, and at the distance of Sixty-Two weeks of years from the complete accomplishment of that work: and both these intervals will be found to stand on the firm ground of History, and the strictest precision of Chronology.

The Angel having carried on the Pro-
phet's view to the coming of the Messiah, now unfolds to him those important events which were to follow. He adds that in the contracted or abbreviated, reckoning of the times, that were destined to precede that glorious Advent; that is, in the contracted reckoning of the Seventy-Seven weeks (reducing them from weeks to the standard of years) so that the period should be computed as Seventy-Seven Years, and these immediately following the Sixty and two weeks just named, the Messiah, whose coming had been announced, should himself be cut off; and that the city and sanctuary having no longer any share in him, he would then come in power as a conquering and avenging prince, destroying the Jewish people, and overwhelming them with the desolations of war. "Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be Weeks Seven and Seventy:
(Threescore and two (weeks) shall the street be built again and the wall). And in the contracted reckoning of the times,” (that is, in years Seven and Seventy) “even (next) after the threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the Prince that shall (then) come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”

Here, then, is a new period of time marked out by the prophecy, a period of seventy and seven prophetic years; a period commencing with the nativity of Christ and ending with the destruction of Jerusalem; or, in other words, measuring the distance between the first and second comings of our Lord: a period also, not merely distinguished by these two remarkable events, but specially described by an occurrence of such vast importance as to embrace in its consequences all those glorious objects
for the attainment of which, in the scheme of God's providence, the continuance of the Jewish state was ordained, as it is foretold in the commencement of the prophecy;—the death of the Messiah, a death which he suffered for the sin of others; a death inflicted by the Jews; and in punishment for which the rejected Messiah totally cut off his rebellious people.

This additional period, too, presents us with a new circumstance, that gives a peculiar fitness to the use of the terms, which the Angel employs in the introduction of this prophecy. The period of seventy-seven years being requisite, together with seventy-seven weeks of years, to complete the entire space of time, through which the Jewish state was to continue, and that additional number of years amounting to an exact portion of weeks of years, two portions of weeks are fitly designated by the repetition of the word weeks, as embracing the whole
time of the consummation of the divine purposes, respecting the Jewish state. "Weeks, weeks," not only expressing in the aggregate a lengthened period of weeks, but as the divine scheme develops itself, literally marking out two periods of weeks; one consisting of the number Seventy and Seven, ending with the time of the advent of the Messiah; and the other consisting of the number Eleven, comprising the important events that followed upon that advent, and terminating only with the destruction of the Jewish temple and the abolition of the Jewish state.

The rendering, that has here been given, in place of that which has been hitherto received into our common bibles, will readily approve itself to the hebrew scholar, upon a close inspection of the original. But as before, let me endeavour to make this intelligible to the English reader also. Let me then first apprise him, that the division of verses in our
hebrew bibles is matter of mere human authority, and that nothing is more common among Commentators than to alter that division as the context may require. Omitting, then, the present division of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses, and placing a full stop after the word wall, as we have already done, the passage reads as follows: "Even in troublous times and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah," &c.—or, as it is given in the margin of our bibles, "Even in *strait of times* and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah," &c. But as the particles "even" and "and," are the translation of the same hebrew conjunction *Vau*, which may be rendered by either indifferently; and as the original for *troublous times*, or more properly a *strait of times*, is justly rendered a compression, or *compressed reckoning of times*, or as it is literally of *the*, or *those times*; the sentence then becomes, "And.

* Translation also by Mede, p. 699.*
in the compressed reckoning of those times, even after threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah,” &c., or still more correctly and literally, “And in the compressed reckoning of those times, even after the weeks Sixty and two shall Messiah,” &c. Now as “those times” which the Prophet had been directed by the Angel to “know and understand,” as reaching to the coming of “Messiah the Prince,” were “Seventy and Seven weeks;” and in the compressed reckoning of those times, the weeks were to be considered as contracted to years, it follows, that the period destined for the events succeeding the sixty and two weeks was a period of Seventy and Seven Years: and, as these were to be considered as after, or next following, “the Sixty and Two weeks” just named, the period now to be contemplated was a period of Seventy and Seven Years, reckoned forward immediately from the point, at which the sixty and two weeks terminated, or from the Nativity of Christ.
We have thus then by this prophecy the Nativity of our Lord marked out by a threefold reference: first, to the date of the decree of Cyrus; secondly, to the time of the completing the building of Jerusalem by Nehemiah; and thirdly, to the destruction of the Temple and city by Titus—that is, the decree for the building of the city; the completion of the building; and the final destruction of it. The distance from the first we have already seen to be five hundred and thirty-one years and ninety-two days; the distance from the second to be four hundred and twenty-seven years and two hundred and seventy-eight days; and the distance from the third, we now find to be Seventy-Seven prophetic years, that is Seventy Five years of the Julian standard and three hundred and twenty-six days.

We may now proceed to determine the dates of these several events from their relative distances; the one main point of the destruction of Jerusalem, with which
the prophecy primarily ends, being fixed. It fortunately happens that this is a matter which history has not left in doubt. And whether we consider the substantial accomplishment of that event, as effected by the destruction of the temple, or by the subsequent demolition of the buildings of the city, a difference of not so much as a single month can disturb our calculations. But as the existence of the city and state has at all times been considered as identified with the existence of the Temple; as the prophecy of the building of the city by Cyrus was expressed by the declaration that by him the foundation of the Temple was to be laid; and as the language of this very prophecy of Daniel predicts the continuance of the holy city, which could be meant in no other sense than in reference to the Temple by which it might be considered holy or consecrated to the Lord; and above all, when we find our Lord himself pointing to "the abomination of
desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet as standing in the holy place,” or the temple, as a signal of total ensuing destruction; can we hesitate in pronouncing, that, in the downfall of Jerusalem, the destruction of its temple, that for which alone Jerusalem can be supposed to have its existence, should be pointed out, especially in the language of prophecy, as that particular event which was specially to mark the end of its duration? Now from the lunar eclipse which happened on the night of the battle of Cremona, Oct. 18, A.D. 69, we can have no doubt of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in the year 70 of the Vulgar Era*—and we are told by respectable Chronologers that the Temple was set on fire upon the tenth of August in that year. Marshall informs us, on the authority of Josephus, that whilst it was burning the Roman soldiers set up on the battlements of the outer wall thereof the

* Dr. Hales, vol. ii. pp. 1114, 1262, is to be carefully consulted on this.
Standards of their religion, their idolatrous Ensigns, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet as the abomination of Desolation. Therefore if we allow two days for the complete burning of that vast edifice, and for the accompanying sign of the abomination of the Roman standards and the sacrifices to their Images in the Holy Place, we may safely acquiesce in the fact that on the tenth day of August in the year seventy, the temple of Jerusalem was burnt, which was speedily after followed by the destruction of the various parts of the city, so that in less than one month no part of it remained standing. We have then only to reckon back Seventy-five years and three hundred and twenty-six days from the tenth of August, A. D. 70, or rather the twelfth to leave time for the completion of the

* Tenth day of August—if we allow for burning totally, &c., three days; it would be the 13th of August—take 75 years and 326 days from the 13th of August, A. D. 70, and we come to the 23rd of September, 7 B. C.

† Mdeo fixes the 8th of August for the firing of the Temple, and two days after consumed—p. 709.
burning and the accompanying desecration of the Holy Place, and we come to the twenty-second day of September in the year seven before the vulgar Æra of the nativity of Christ.

Respecting the exact year of the birth of our Saviour the opinions have been various, but there is one point in which all have agreed, that the date which has been ascribed to that event under the appellation of the vulgar Æra is decidedly and demonstrably wrong. It is well known that it was not until the year 532 A.D. that the Christian Æra was invented by Dionysius Exiguus. And it is equally well known that it was then formed upon unsound principles and erroneous calculations. It may be seen by reference to Dr. Hale's Chronology, vol. i. p. 7, that no fewer than ten different years have been respectively adopted by different Chronologers as fixing the epoch of the Nativity. Of these the most respectable
have placed it in the fifth year before the Vulgar Æra, and some not the least eminent have carried it back to the sixth year and even * to the seventh.

The diversity of opinions on the year of the Nativity, has not been greater than that, which has prevailed amongst the learned, respecting the day, to which it should be ascribed. It has unluckily happened, that in this, as well as in the former case, no contemporary tradition of the date has been preserved; and that it was left for a period considerably removed from the event, to collect from circumstances the time of its occurrence. It was not until the age of the Emperor

* Mann, p. 46, again p. 78—Year of Julian Period, 4707 and u. c. 747, agrees with b. c. 7. Does not Prideaux supply an argument from the enrolling which would even carry back the year to 8 b. c.? See what he says pp. 281, 282, and the only way he extricates himself from that conclusion is by supposing the enrolling to be carried on through a great length of time—three years he is obliged to suppose, to prevent the birth of Christ from being more than five years before the vulgar æra. Attend and see what he says about Tertullian and Saturninus. See Hales also, vol. 2, p. 705–710. He however differs from Prideaux in confining it to Cyrenius, and Prideaux to Saturninus. But they agree in the word
Constantine, in the fourth century, that the twenty-fifth of December became established as the day of Christ's birth; that day having before been commonly considered as coinciding with the day of the Epiphany, which was usually held on the sixth day of January. In addition to the erroneous* supposition, respecting the time of Zechariah's burning of incense when the Angel appeared unto him, which was the foundation of the vulgar opinion, it has been allowed on all hands, that no day could have been more unfortunately chosen than the twenty-fifth of December: a time of the year, at which it could not well be supposed, that the shepherds abided in the open air tending their flocks by night; or that the inhabitants of Judea were called on, without consideration of age or sex, to resort from places however distant to their native cities: both which events must, as we are told, have occurred

* See Jenning's Jewish Antiquities, ii. 239, 240.
at this inclement season, if the vulgar opinion respecting the day of Christ's birth be adopted. But whilst we have no authority that can be relied on for adhering to this opinion, and whilst there appear insuperable objections to its adoption, it fortunately happens that the day which we have arrived at by calculation from the prophecy of Daniel, is one which at the same time that it is free from any of those circumstances that embarrass the adoption of that commonly received, comes recommended * by characters peculiarly favourable, and which, by presenting the antitype to a celebrated Jewish institution, supplies a desideratum hitherto in vain sought for in the correspondence of the two great dispensations of the Jewish and Christian economies. The learned Joseph Mede, in his discourse of the three solemn

* It even happens that Zechariah's rotation amongst the twenty-four courses of the priests has been applied by Scaliger to fix the birth of our Saviour in September: that is, at the season of the Feast of Tabernacles. See Scaliger Fragm., p. 58, 59, also Jenning's Jew. Ant. ii. 242.
feasts of the law (p. 264—270), the feast of Passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles, remarks, that the first two were plain types, the one of the passion of our Lord, figuring the redemption through the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, by the deliverance from Egypt through the blood of the Paschal lamb: the other of the effusion of the Holy Ghost, accompanied with a sound from Heaven and cloven tongues of fire, and also the first fruits of the Christian Church presignified by the giving out the law at Mount Sinai, with thundering and the sound of a trumpet from heaven, and the ordinance of the offering of the first fruits; in each of these instances, too, the time appointed for the sign under the Law being exactly the same with that ordained for the thing signified under the Gospel; and that the third should be a type of the Incarnation, when, as St. John says, the Word was made flesh and tabernacled with
us. And for this reason, Mede approves of the opinion that the birth of Christ was in September; that thereby, the third feast, which was celebrated in that month, commencing with the fifteenth day of the month, and ending with the twenty-second, the great day of the feast, might have some marked event answering to it under the new dispensation, as the other two solemn feasts had.*

With many other writers the month of September has been deemed the most likely time of our Saviour's birth: and probably for a similar reason. Now the twenty-second day of September being the last great day of the feast of Tabernacles,

* See on the feasts, Hales, ii. 269, 270; Blayney's Dissertation, p. 30.
† Will not the 22nd of September or last day of the feast answer as well—or rather better—that being called the great day of the feast? John vii. 2. 37. On that day also our Lord openly professes himself to be the Christ, and alludes at the same time to the Pentecost. See Hales, ii. 801, 802. See also on the great day of the feast of Tabernacles, Lev. xxiii. 34, 36, 39. See also in verses 40, 42, &c. The boughs, booths, &c.; see again Mede, 266, for part of the ceremony of boughs of trees (belonging to the feast of Tabernacles) together with the Hosannas then usual transferred by the people to our Lord's procession to Jerusalem.
and also appearing to be the day on which our Lord was born, the times of that feast and of the Incarnation are found to correspond, as the times of the Passover and the Passion, of the giving of the Law and the sending of the Holy Ghost: and thus the three great types of the old law are seen to agree in point of time, as in other respects, with the events under the new law, of which they were the respective signs. Thus then, upon the whole, the date of the Incarnation seems on solid grounds to be fixed on the twenty-second day of September, in the year seven before the vulgar æra.*

* It must be observed that this date, though fixed upon grounds apparently solid, cannot, even agreeably with the interpretation which we have given to the prophecy of Daniel, be relied on as infallibly certain; the chronology and the Downfall of Jerusalem not being perfectly determined. The burning of the Temple is fixed by some on the 5th of August, and the total destruction of the city reported to be on the 8th of September. But the prophetick reckoning adjusted to the former date only places the birth of our Saviour on the first day of the feast of Tabernacles instead of the last: and the latter date, whilst it disturbs the significant connexion with the feast, places the time of our Saviour's birth at less than a month's distance from the time above ascribed to that æra.
Assuming this, we may now proceed according to the prophecy of Daniel, to ascertain the date of the issuing of the decree of Cyrus for the liberation of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; and that of the complete finishing of the walls and city of Jerusalem under the direction of Nehemiah. We have already seen that the former is distant from the advent of Messiah by an interval of five hundred and thirty-one years and ninety-two days; and the latter removed from the same event by an interval of four hundred and twenty-seven years and two hundred and seventy-eight days. We are therefore to place the decree of Cyrus in the twenty-second day of June, in the year 538 before the vulgar æra, and the finishing of the city by Nehemiah in the twentieth day of December, in the year 435 before the same æra.

The decree of Cyrus is by most Chronologers placed in the year five hundred and thirty-six before the vulgar æra: they admit that Cyrus possessed himself of
Babylon two years before; but they deny that the first year of his reign in Babylon, and the consequent release from the captivity, took place before that year. Consequently, our date in the year five hundred and thirty-eight, for the same event, appears contradicted by History, or at least by the calculations of Chronologers. But this very circumstance confirms the result of the calculation by Daniel's prophecy. For it turns out to concur exactly with the ancient Canon of Ptolemy, whose character for accuracy is universally admitted; which is confirmed by unerring characters of eclipses, and which has been deservedly esteemed an invaluable treasure in Chronology. This is almost universally conceded by the learned. And yet in this particular instance the authority of the Canon * placing the first of Cyrus's reign in Babylon in the year five hundred and thirty-eight is evaded, because, consist-

* See Blair, Falconer (70, 115), Prideaux (52–55).
ently with it, Commentators have been unable to adjust the term of the *Seventy years' Babylonish captivity* to the distance of the capture by Nebuchadnezzar from the first year of the reign of Cyrus in Babylon.

The calculation however of the prophecy of Daniel, by a fixed number of years from a fixed date, leaves no alternative; and if it leads in its result to a table of unquestionable authority, it proves its own accuracy, by departing from the conclusions of those, who depart from that table to suit a special purpose. As they could not deny the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in the year five hundred and thirty-eight before Christ, they have contrived a second coming of Cyrus to Babylon in the year five hundred and thirty-six, at which time they date the beginning of his reign and his decree for the release of the Jews from captivity; but, in the canon of Ptolemy, immediately after the death of Belshazzar (who is there called Nabonadius) Cyrus is
placed as the next successor, "as in truth and reality he was," according even to Prideaux's frank confession. (Connexion, &c. p. 53.)

But whilst exertions have been laboriously and ineffectually made to adjust the seventy years' Babylonish captivity to the release by Cyrus; whilst the Canon of Ptolemy, extolled by all for its accuracy, has been in this single case without any reason abandoned; and whilst the visit of Cyrus to Babylon as a conqueror has been contended for at two different times, at the distance of two years; it may be worth while to observe with what perfect facility and completeness the calculation afforded by Daniel's prophecy, conducts us through the seventy years allotted to the Babylonian bondage. These seventy years being prophetic years of *Jeremiah's denunciation,

* These seventy years, like the years of Daniel's prophecy, are to be considered as of 360 days each—being like them prophetic years, like them also Chaldean, and in truth entering into the composition of the same continued prophecy.
when translated into equivalent time of the civil standard, amount to sixty-nine years diminished by two days: and these reckoned back from the twenty-second day of June in the year before Christ five hundred and thirty-eight, the date of Cyrus's decree, reach to the twenty-fourth of June in the year six hundred and seven, in which year the third of Jehoiakim falls, the very year in which, as we are informed by Daniel, "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon came unto Jerusalem, and besieged it: and the Lord gave Jehoiakim King of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his God; and he brought the vessels into the treasure-house of his God." (Dan. i. 1, 2.) Here begins the deportation in which Daniel was carried away captive to Babylon: and with which "Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus." (Dan. i. 21), when we find him, at the approaching
termination of seventy years, recalling the inspired promise of Jeremiah, that the captivity of his brethren should then be at an end, and when we find the Angel commissioned to inform him of the future fates of his people, of the coming of the great Messiah, and of his finally visiting them in judgment and with desolation.

It remains yet to specify the exact time, when the city, which had been overturned from its foundations, with its temple quite destroyed, by the fury of the Babylonish invader, should be again restored with all its buildings, its Temple, and its walls. This we can ascertain by determining the time at which the prophecy informs us of this new state of things in reference to the nativity of our Lord. By that we have already seen that we are led to the twentieth day of December in the year Four hundred and thirty-five before the Vulgar Æra: and about that very year Nehemiah returned to Persia from his twelve years'
government which he had expressly devoted to the accomplishing of these things.

We have, now, by the guidance of the Prophet Daniel, aided by the predictions of his predecessor Jeremiah, been enabled, upon more than historic ground, to conduct the people of Israel, by a firm footing, through a period of more than six hundred and eighty years; through a period, stretching from the partial abandonment of the people of God, in surrendering them to the bondage of Nebuchadnezzar, to the total rejection of them, on their rejection of the Messiah, by the destruction of their city and temple, and the unexampled dispersion of themselves by the desolating arms of the Roman general. Let us pause to recapitulate the predicted æras marking out the great events of early times; and which seem to present a prophetic calendar, whereby to adjust many of the important events in the history of the chosen people, and through them the chronology
of nations. We are told by the writings of a prophet who lived above five hundred years before the Christian æra, that the Jews should be released from their captivity, and their temple and city restored, by a decree, which should precede the coming of their Messiah by seventy-seven weeks of years, and the final destruction of their temple and city by seventy-seven years; adding, at the same time, that the complete finishing of their temple and city would not last through the whole continuance of their state, but only through that part of it which commenced sixty and two weeks of years antecedent to the Nativity. The decree also is to take place at the distance of seventy years, according to the declaration made by a former prophet, that the captivity should last exactly that length of time. And the conqueror by whom this decree was to be delivered, and by whose arm the Jewish people was to be released from their captivity, was pointed
out by name and character by another prophet who lived at a still earlier period, not less than two hundred years before the event. Now inverting the prophetic order we ascertain with numeral exactness the position of the several times. The final destruction of the temple being placed as a fixed date, we thence proceed to the time of the nativity of our blessed Lord; from this we discover the issue of Cyrus's decree as well as the completion of the building of Jerusalem by Nehemiah; and from the decree of Cyrus we pass at once to the commencement of the Captivity of the Jews. Thus ascertaining from historical fact that the Temple was set fire to on the tenth of August in the year seventy from the Vulgar Æra; and assuming that it was completely desecrated and consumed at the latest on the twelfth; we arrive at the twenty-second day of September in the year seven before the Vulgar Æra as the day of the Nativity; we thence proceed to
the decree of Cyrus on the twenty-second of June in the year before the Vulgar Æra five hundred and thirty-eight (having fixed the final completing of the city of Jerusalem by Nehemiah on the twentieth day of December in the year before the Vulgar Æra four hundred and thirty-five); and, lastly, we determine the commencement of the Babylonish captivity to be on the twenty-fourth day of June in the year six hundred and seven before the Vulgar Æra.

Having now travelled through the numeral character of this prophecy, we conceive that we have accomplished that, which has been at all times the great desideratum. But as features of peculiar though not of numeral designation yet remain to mark out the office of the Messiah and the fates of the Jewish people, we shall follow on the remaining steps of the prophecy to its termination.

That the Messiah, the time of whose
coming had been promised, was, when he did come, to be cut off; and this not to be for himself or for any fault of his own; that he was then after this to come again with a mighty people, and, rejecting the people that had been his, to destroy the city and the sanctuary, overwhelming all with a flood of desolation, and marking his utter displeasure by a total and final destruction; this has been already announced by the Angel, and with a plainness too significant to require any elucidation.

The two events, characteristic of the two periods that were to follow the birth of Christ, being thus predicted, the one the rejection and death of the Messiah, and the other the consequent rejection and destruction of his chosen people, the Angel returns to particularise them by a more circumstantial detail.

And with respect to the first he foretells, that the abolition of the Jewish sacrifices should take place in the middle of
that week, during which the covenant was to be confirmed with many,—a prediction, which has been plainly verified by the fact; the Christian covenant having been proposed exclusively to the Jews during one week, or seven years, and the great sacrifice of Christ, by which all other sacrifices were for ever annihilated, having been offered in the middle of that week, or at the end of Christ's public ministry, which continued for three years and a half.

Again, respecting the event which was to close the second period, this, it is stated, was to be looked for so soon as the abomination of desolation, or the idolatrous ensigns of the invading army, should be displayed on the borders of the Temple.

The words of the Angel are as follow: “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, [and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it
desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate,"] or substituting within the crooks the translation which the Editors of the Bible have placed in the margin, as one alike admissible, but which I cannot but consider preferable, "and upon the battlements shall be the idols of the Desolator, until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the Desolator."

In conformity to this prediction, our Lord himself declares that the total destruction of Jerusalem was to ensue, when the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet should stand in the holy place; and in like conformity history informs us that the ruin which was spread by the destructive eagle (the idolatrous ensign of the Romans) when planted on the borders of the Temple, completed that final desolation of the Jewish state, which at the distance of more than seven-
teen centuries, exhibits that unhappy people as aliens and outcasts from every country on the globe.

Thus do we find this wonderful prediction reaching through a series of above six hundred years; and depicting through that entire period, with the utmost accuracy of circumstances and dates, the fortunes of the Jewish people, and the history of the Messiah.

The prophecy, as it has been now interpreted, supplies a regular chronological detail of the return of the Jews from the captivity; of the complete restoration of their city, and of their Temple; of the birth of the Messiah; of his death; of the duration of his ministry, and of the preaching of his gospel as confined exclusively to the Jews; also of his final coming to inflict punishment on his rebellious people by the total dissolution of their state; and of the signs which were to portend that day of vengeance.
The period, which embraces these numerous and important events, we also find connecting with another prophetic period; that of the seventy years' captivity, foretold by Jeremiah, from the termination of which this takes its beginning.

Thus have we not only obtained, by the interpretation proposed, a continued prophetic chronology of the Jewish history from the commencement of the captivity, but we have been enabled to comply with the conditions, which have at all times been insisted on by the enemies of revelation; namely, that the decree of Cyrus should be made the epoch of the weeks of Daniel, and that they should be reckoned in direct continuation—conditions, which, it was confidently pronounced, would render all application to the times of Christ utterly impracticable; and without which, it was at the same time, not without reason, contended, that the prophecy could never be satisfactorily established.
I shall now conclude, by summing up the substance of the Angel's communication to the prophet, as explained on the principles of the present interpretation.

"The seventy years, which were wanting to complete those weeks of years, which the Jews, forgetful of their law, had neglected to observe, being now nearly concluded, I am commissioned to inform you, that, agreeably to the divine promise, your nation shall be restored; and, with a view to the accomplishment of the divine purposes, many of such weeks of years are allotted for its continuance. Even weeks, weeks of years, are determined upon thy people and thy holy city, for the anointing of the most Holy, and thereby for the finishing the transgression, the making an end of sins, the effecting atonement for iniquity, the bringing in everlasting righteousness, and the perfect accomplishment of all that had been foretold by the Prophets. That you may the more fully com-
prehend the nature of that assurance, you must know and understand, that, from the going forth of the long-foretold decree of Cyrus for the return from captivity and the rebuilding of your city, unto the coming of the long-promised Messiah the Prince, shall be weeks seven and seventy. Three-score and two of these shall the city and its walls have been perfectly completed. And in the contracted reckoning of those seventy and seven times which shall follow next after the threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off; and the city and sanctuary being no longer acknowledged as His coming in power as a conquering prince, He will destroy the rebellious people, overwhelming them as with a flood, and end the war only with their total destruction. With many of the Jews He shall confirm the Christian covenant through that one week, in the midst of which He is to cause the sacrifice and oblations to cease by the sacrifice of Himself: but when
upon the borders of the Temple He shall cause the abomination of desolation to be displayed, then an utter end, even a speedy one, shall be poured upon the desolate."

If the true key has been used in its exposition, such is the prophecy which has been vouchsafed as a decisive evidence of the Messiah: and surely to him who can remain unconvinced by such a revelation, the Gospel must appear incredible, even though he witnessed its great Author rising from the dead.
A BRIEF REVIEW

OF THE

OPINIONS OF OTHER WRITERS.
A brief review of the various theories, devised by the expositors above named, for the solution of this celebrated prophecy, will readily satisfy us, that some path, widely different from that which they severally pursued, must be opened for its successful interpretation.

To begin with Scaliger. That great chronologer, although the decree of Cyrus for the liberation of the Jews from Babylon presented itself as the obvious date from which the weeks of Daniel's prophecy should be reckoned, was led notwithstanding to reject its claims, inasmuch as four hundred and ninety years from that period do not extend even so far as to the reign of Herod.—"Non potest esse edictum Cyri."
Nam inde putati anni 490 desinunt paulo ante initium Herodis” (De Emend. Temp. p. 601).

Being thence prevented from discerning the advent of the Messiah as the grand event predicted in the prophecy, and finding the destruction of Jerusalem to be placed at the end of about seventy weeks of years from the second year of Darius Nothus, whilst as he conceived that seventy weeks are pronounced to be determined upon the holy city, and that the destruction of Jerusalem is specifically pointed out by the words of the prophecy, he placed the beginning of the weeks in the second year of the last-named King, and pronounced their termination with the addition of half a week to correspond with the downfall of the city. The four hundred and ninety years which commence with the second of Darius Nothus reaching to the twelfth year of Nero, at which time the war with Rome was breaking out; from which to the de-
struction of the temple there are three years and a half, viz., one half week which runs beyond the four hundred and ninety years: so that the seventy weeks may be said to begin from the edict for restoring the city, and to end with its destruction. He reckoned also the sixty-two weeks after which Messiah was to be slain, as commencing from an independent origin, the fifth of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and terminating with the passion of our Lord. So that of the three decrees for restoring the city, that of Cyrus being altogether passed over, as furnishing no date from which we can reckon any of the numbers specified in the prophecy, in relation either to the passion of the Messiah, or the destruction of the city, the decree of the second of Darius Nothus supplies the origin of the seventy weeks which with the addition of half a week reach to the latter event, and that of the fifth of Artaxerxes Mnemon supplies the origin of the sixty and two weeks which
reach to the former. (De Emend. Temp. ed. 1629, pp. 601—608.)

In a preceding edition this author had placed the seven weeks as the first portion of the seventy, and reaching from the second of Darius Nothus to the thirty-second of Artaxerxes Mnemon, from which he continued the sixty and two weeks, and was consequently obliged to close them before the destruction of Jerusalem. But in the last edition, he disembarrasses himself of the seven weeks altogether, professing that he sees no specific period to which they apply, and that he views the division of the weeks into seven, sixty-two, and one, as a perfectly arbitrary division, similar to that of the Menah in Ezekiel, which, consisting of sixty shekels, is, as Scaliger affirms, arbitrarily divided into the numbers of twenty-five shekels, twenty, and fifteen. Our author makes equally light of the one week. "Septimana autem illa quœ confirmabit foœdus, duplicitur accipi potest."
Aut enim integra aut divisa. Integra post passionem: divisa dimidium ante, alterum dimidium post passionem. *Sed quae acta vel gesta illi tempori attribuenda sint, viderint eruditiores.* (Ibid. p. 607.) In a former edition, he had considered the two halves of the one week somewhat more worthy of his notice; having allotted the first half to the preaching and crucifixion of our Lord; and the second half to the three years and and half, during which, at a period nearly forty years later, the Roman arms menaced and finally accomplished the destruction of the Jewish city. Of this latter use the Author seems still willing to avail himself, being by the help of the three years and half so applied enabled to stretch out the seventy weeks to the final destruction of Jerusalem.
Mede concurs with Scaliger in beginning the weeks in the time of Darius Nothus: but although he places the edict for the renewed building of the temple in the second of that king, he does not begin his reckoning from it earlier than the sixth of his reign. At this time the temple was quite finished, and from this only could it be said to begin its continuance. And hence he reckons exactly sixty-nine weeks and half to the destruction of Jerusalem in August, 70 A. D. "From the going forth of the commandment to cause to return and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince," he takes to be a different root from that of the seventy weeks, so that whilst these are reckoned on the continuance of the Holy City, the sixty-two weeks are to run from the date of that commandment to the passion of Christ. Scaliger; he says, finding that the building of the city was finished by Nehemiah the year
before he returned to Artaxerxes in the thirty-second of his reign, fixed that to be the determination of the seven weeks, there being then forty-nine years expired from the commencement of the seventy weeks reckoned from the building of the temple under Darius Nothus. But to make this good, that author, he says, has raised the epoch of the seventy weeks so high that they end long before the destruction of Jerusalem. Scaliger accordingly, as has been seen (on second thoughts) found it necessary to extricate himself from the seven weeks altogether.

Pretty much under the influence of the same feeling, Mede observes, that "could the seven weeks be well bestowed, the chief difficulty were taken from this prophecy." It must be observed that the Darius and Artaxerxes intended in this prophecy both by Scaliger and Mede, are, in opposition to almost every authority,
Darius Nothus and Artaxerxes Mnemon,* instead of Darius Hystaspis, and Artaxerxes Longimanus.

Mede fixes the second root which he has spoken of, at the seventh of Artaxerxes Mnemon, or at the twentieth of the same King, reckoning from the former by solar years, and from the latter by lunar, to Messiah the Prince; with whose time both reckonings agree, inasmuch as at the end of both Jesus came preaching the Gospel in the last of the sixty-two weeks. (See Mede's Works, pp. 697—709.)

* Sir Isaac Newton observes on those who compute thus with Scaliger and Mede; "they ground their interpretations on erroneous chronology—for they place Ezra and Nehemiah in the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and the building of the Temple in the reign of Darius Nothus, and date the weeks of Daniel from those two reigns." (Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, p. 139, ed. 1733.) Usher, Petavius, and Prideaux all notice the chronological error committed in supposing the Darius and Artaxerxes of Ezra, whom that writer describes as favouring the building of the city, to have been Darius Nothus and Artaxerxes Mnemon; but no one has more clearly exposed this error, and proved the true Darius and Artaxerxes to have been Darius Hystaspis and Artaxerxes Longimanus, than Mr. Faber, in his Dissertation on the Prophecy of Daniel (pp. 83—94.)
It may be worth while to remark, whilst speaking of Mede, that he condemns in toto the opinion of Funccius, who in the interpretation of this prophecy reckons from the seventh of Artaxerxes Longimanus exactly seventy weeks to the passion of Christ: for that, besides the objections which appear against his assumption of Longimanus as the true Artaxerxes to be reckoned from, this computation "ends the seventy weeks, which by the text are allotted for the holy city, long before the times of the holy city were fulfilled; and it cannot be explained, how sixty-nine weeks (or sixty-two weeks added to seven) are determined upon Messiah the Prince, since they outrun his nativity, and end seven years before his passion; and therefore neither beginning nor ending, neither part nor whole of the sixty-ninth week can point us out any time of the manifestation of Messiah." (P. 710.)
Archbishop Usher begins the seventy weeks of Daniel in the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, at which time Nehemiah received a commission from the Persian court for the repair of the walls of Jerusalem. But this twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus he raises nine years too high, by taking that length of time from the reign of Xerxes, which he adds to the reigns of Artaxerxes, and his son Xerxes the second, whom the Archbishop makes to reign one year after him. By this means, in direct opposition to Ptolemy's Canon, to Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Africanus, Eusebius, and to all who have written of those times, save only Thucydides, (who, though accurate in the affairs of Greece, might yet be mistaken in those of Persia), he raises, what he calls the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, in reality to the eleventh of that King, placing it in the year B.C. four hundred and fifty-four; and from thence he easily reckons
sixty-nine weeks of years, or four hundred and eighty-three years, to the commencement of Christ's public ministry in the twenty-ninth year of the Vulgar Æra, and sixty-nine weeks and an half to the death of Christ in the passover of the year thirty-three from the Vulgar Æra. But, in addition to the violence done to Chronology by thus over-reckoning the years of Artaxerxes's reign, he has omitted to give any account of the last half week of the seventy, ending the prophecy at the death of Christ with the expiration of sixty-nine weeks and an half.

It is to be noted, that, with the Archbishop, Petavius agrees both in the beginning and the ending of the prophecy: but there is this difference, that whilst the former reckons the twentieth of Artaxerxes from the death of his father Xerxes, the latter supposes Artaxerxes to have been admitted to reign in partnership with his
father nine years before the death of that prince.

As Archbishop Usher commenced his reckoning of the seventy weeks from an imaginary twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Bishop Lloyd commenced his from the real twentieth of that King: and computing by prophetic (or, as he calls them, Chaldean) years, each consisting of three hundred and sixty days, he measures from that period, as supplying the known date of Nehemiah's commission. From this, he holds, the weeks are to be numbered, to the time of the Messiah's coming as a Prince, that is, to his coming to his cross; on which he "triumphed" over every opposition of Satan. Sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years, of Daniel's prophetic years, were to elapse within this interval; so at least, as that one additional year should not expire within it. These four hundred and eighty-three years, turned into those of the common Julian standard,
are equivalent to a little more than four hundred and seventy-six; which, as the beginning of the twentieth of Artaxerxes falls somewhat earlier than the year four hundred and forty-four before Christ, bring the computation to a later period in the year thirty-two after the Vulgar Æra, than the passover of that year.

The passover of the year thirty-three, therefore, as not adding another year to the four hundred and eighty-three, or sixty-nine weeks, reckoned from the twentieth of Artaxerxes, satisfies (as he conceives) the words of the prophecy, as far as can be expected.

Bishop Lloyd is not content with deducing the sixty-nine weeks collectively from Nehemiah's commission in the twentieth of Artaxerxes to the death of Christ, but he marks out the separate periods of the seven weeks and the sixty and two weeks. The former he holds as terminating with the close of the Old Testament
canon by the prophecy of Malachi, with whom the spirit of prophecy ceased, and in the words of the Angel "the vision and the prophecy were sealed." Marshal, indeed, who writes professedly to vindicate the Bishop's exposition of this prophecy, is obliged to desert him here. The one point of "sealing up the prophecy" cannot, he contends, be separated from the other five events cited in the twenty-fourth verse, all of them applicable to the Messiah, and fulfilled in him. Malachi, he admits also, prophesied much later than forty-nine years from the twentieth of Artaxerxes: and he can find nothing recorded of the time of Malachi's cessation of prophecy beyond a mere Jewish legend that he died in the last year of Darius.

This termination of the seven weeks he therefore concedes to be merely conjectural; but deems, that it may reasonably be placed at the complete re-building of Jerusalem by Nehemiah; and fixes it at
the year three hundred and ninety-six before the Vulgar Æra, in the ninth of Artaxerxes Mnemon: a supposition not less conjectural than that which it is intended to displace.

The seventieth week remains to be considered, which Bishop Lloyd and his follower Mr. Marshal consider to be a week altogether separate from the sixty and nine, and to relate solely to the destruction of Jerusalem. This week, consisting of seven prophetic years, reckoned back (according to this theory) from the tenth of August in the year seventy after the Vulgar Æra, commences with the seventeenth of September in the year sixty-three. In this week the Romans, the people predicted to destroy the city and sanctuary, were to make a firm covenant with many; and accordingly they did so, and apparently at this very time of the year, their general Corbulo now making peace with the Kings of the Parthians, Medes,
and Armenians, as we learn from Tacitus's Annals; they continued also during the following years of the week drawing many into their alliance, until at length the temple of Janus was shut in token of general peace, when on the twenty-eighth of February in the year sixty-seven the latter half of the week began, in the course of which were displayed the express characters of the cessation of the sacrifice and oblation, and of the Roman idolatrous standards being set up on the Temple until the whole terminated on the tenth of August by the firing of the Temple, and the full destruction of the entire city soon after completed.

The commission of Nehemiah is here assumed without reason to be the decree to return and to build Jerusalem: and it seems not without good reason that Mr. Faber has denied altogether to the commission to Nehemiah a place amongst the decrees enacted by the Kings of Persia for the rebuilding of the city and temple of
Jerusalem. (Pp. 78, 79. 108.) The reckoning of sixty and nine weeks from the date of that commission to the death of Christ is alike assumed without reason to be intended by the words of the prophecy, which pronounce that there should be from that decree "seven weeks to Messiah the Prince and sixty and two weeks." But in addition, the Seventy weeks are here said to be made up of periods entirely separate; the seventieth week being removed to a distance of above thirty years from the termination of the sixty and ninth, and thereby the 490 years which are said to have been determined upon the people and the holy city, extended to a period exceeding five hundred and twenty years. Dr. Milles has, in his Act Sermon published in Dublin in the year 1794, endeavoured to remedy this last defect in Bishop Lloyd's Exposition, by placing the first half of Christ's public ministry as concurrent with the latter half of the sixty and
ninth week, at the end of which he supposes with Bishop Lloyd the death of Christ to have taken place, and the remaining half week he supposes to expire at the time when the Apostles dispersed themselves from Judea into various parts of the world: the seventieth week pointing out the period during which the new covenant should be made with the inhabitants of Judea, partly by Christ's personal ministry, and partly by that of his Apostles, whilst the middle point of that week should be coincident with the termination of the sixty and nine weeks which were to precede the death of Christ: thus differing from Bishop Lloyd's scheme in not reckoning the weeks upon the holy city, and in departing from the Seventy weeks, not in the way of excess but in that of defect, reducing them in fact to the measure of sixty-nine and a half.

Mr. Wintle differs from Bishop Lloyd's scheme only in pronouncing the seventy
weeks that are determined upon the people and the holy city to be seventy weeks of days, denoting the time of the destined deliverance from the captivity of Babylon; but at the same time holding these weeks to be typical of another more glorious deliverance which should be comprehended in the same number of sevens or weeks, not of days, but of times or years: and this larger period to be distributed into the three portions, of seven weeks, of sixty and two weeks, and lastly of one week, distinguished by the events which the Bishop's theory, as modified by Mr. Marshal, presents.

We come now to the theory of Dean Prideaux, who reckons the weeks, not from the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus,
but from the seventh of that king; at which
time he states, that a decree was granted
to Ezra to restore and to build Jerusalem,
which decree he maintains to be the date
intended in the prophecy. For he finds
that the end of the weeks reckoned from
that period, and from that period alone,
corresponds with the events which the
prophecy professes to hold in view. This
prophecy, he contends, relates primarily
and especially to the Jews. The time, he
says, is determined upon the people of Daniel
and upon the holy city: that is, the time
which God fore-ordained upon the Jews
for being his peculiar people, and after
which the Mosaic economy should cease,
and Jerusalem should no longer be a holy
city unto him. The end of the weeks of
years, by which that time is designated,
being necessarily the death of Christ
(whereby the events effecting this change
were to be brought about) to the death of
Christ must the termination of the weeks
be consequently fixed. And to that event do the allotted weeks reach from the decree given to Ezra in the seventh of Artaxerxes.

But by the restoring and building of Jerusalem must be meant in the prophecy the restoring and building in a spiritual sense; for the interval allotted for the accomplishment of the work is seventy weeks of years, or four hundred and ninety years; and if the restoring and building be intended in a literal sense it can only apply to the restoring and building which was accomplished by virtue of the decree of Cyrus; but that preceded the death of Christ by a period of five hundred and sixty-eight years, and consequently to that decree the prophecy cannot possibly relate. The like argument applies to the supposition which would fix the decree in the reign of Darius Hystaspis. In opposition to Scaliger and others who follow his authority, he proves that Darius Nothus cannot be intended; and generally he establishes
that to no Darius or Artaxerxes mentioned in Scripture, or to no Persian King whatever, can the decree named in the prophecy be referred except to Artaxerxes Longimanus. And lastly, he denies that the commission granted to Nehemiah in the twentieth of that king can be the date designed in the prophecy, for that from that period to the death of Christ there are but four hundred and seventy-seven years, instead of four hundred and ninety: and as to the notion of abbreviated years, or the raised reckoning of the twentieth of Artaxerxes by Archbishop Usher and Petavius, he labours to prove them unfounded.

Faber also, who for the most part adopts the interpretation of Prideaux, pronounces that the commission of Nehemiah totally wants the character of a decree to restore and build Jerusalem, which is indispensable to entitle it to rank as the epoch for the weeks, being but a permission to put in force edicts which had been antece-
dently promulged. He therefore professes that he can find but three decrees for the restoration and building of Jerusalem cited in Scripture; the first by Cyrus in the first year of his reign; the second by Darius in the third or fourth year of his reign; and the third by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign; which last it must be observed that Marshal denies to be a decree of the character here intended; the contents of this decree being confined altogether to the Temple, and not at all answering to the express character of the building of Jerusalem, the wall and the streets thereof. (Pp. 120, 121.)

The whole seventy weeks are next divided by Prideaux into three periods, seven weeks, sixty and two weeks, and one week: the first beginning with the going forth of the commandment to Ezra, in the seventh of Artaxerxes, to restore and build Jerusalem, and reaching to the finishing of that week in forty-nine years after; the
second continuing from the end of that period to the coming of the Messiah in the succeeding 434 years; and the last extending from the coming of the Messiah to his death upon the cross, at the expiration of the final seven years, which complete the seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years; the Crucifixion of Christ being in the month of Nisan just four hundred and ninety years from the Nisan of the seventh of Artaxerxes when the commandment was delivered.

The special arrangement of these three periods, and the reasons of this distribution, he more particularly describes in the following manner:—The first period he allots to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which, under the figurative sense of the prophecy already noticed, he considers as consisting in the re-edification of the Church and State, and pronounces to have been effected by that last act of reformation by Nehemiah, the removal of unlawful marriages
from among the people, in the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus. And this he deems an adequate reason for distinguishing the sixty and nine weeks ending with the coming of the Messiah into the separate numbers of seven weeks and sixty and two. The sixty and two weeks, or the sixty and nine reckoned from the seventh of Artaxerxes, bring us to the coming of Christ in his official capacity; that is, to the preaching of the Gospel by John the Baptist, the fore-runner of Christ, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar: and the one week which remains to be accounted for of the seventy, is made up of the ministry of John the Baptist for three years and an half, and the personal ministry of our Lord himself for three years and an half more; and the whole expires exactly at the Crucifixion, the entire week confirming the covenant of the Gospel with multitudes of the Jews who were converted to it, and the latter part of it having caused the sacrifices and
the oblations of the temple to cease, first by the preaching of his Gospel, and lastly by that great sacrifice of himself, whereby they were all for ever abolished.

The objections that present themselves to this theory are manifold. The first to be noticed, is one, to which the Author himself adverts, for the purpose of supplying its refutation. It is predicted in the prophecy, that after the sixty and two weeks the Messiah should be cut off; or, according to Prideaux, that the Messiah should be cut off after the sixty and two weeks added to the seven weeks; or, in one word, after sixty and nine weeks. Now the superiority of the computation, on which our Author's solution eminently grounds itself, proves the death of the Messiah to have been accurately at the end (not of sixty and nine weeks, but) of seventy weeks; that is, it proves the death of the Messiah to have been full seven years later than the time foretold. But
on this Dr. Prideaux remarks, that the word *after* in this place is not to be understood as *immediately after*, but after in a larger sense, so as to admit the entire of the following week: and he then discovers that if the word *after* be taken in its literal sense to mark the exact time of the death of Christ (as it must be to make it express a date of any value) "the coming of Christ and his cutting off must have happened at the same time both together, and no intermediate space would have been left for his ministry." (Pp. 129, 130.) But he should have recollected this before, when he planned an interpretation which necessarily involved this absurdity, and not have voluntarily run into the same inconsistency which Mede had condemned in the case of Func-
cius. (See Mede, p. 310, or the quotation from him at p. 71 of these observations.) It is plain then that Dr. Prideaux's termin-
ation of the sixty and nine weeks does
not fall in with the death of Christ, as by the prophecy it ought to do.

But, secondly, that portion of it, which consists of the seven weeks, has no accurate historical termination; for the time of the final act of reformation, by which, pursuant to his scheme, the figurative rebuilding of the holy city was completed, cannot be ascertained from history. This Faber is obliged to confess (p. 330), and Prideaux acknowledges that the consideration which chiefly determines him to fix the last act of reformation forty and nine years from the seventh of Artaxerxes is the prophecy of Daniel itself (p. 189), thus building up, by *his interpretation* of the prophecy, the very circumstances which are made to establish that interpretation. I know not, for Dr. Prideaux seems very loose upon this part of his subject, whether he does not mean to mark this last act of Nehemiah's reformation by its coincidence
with another æra, the closing of the Canon of the Old Testament (pp. 128—191.) If so, he only endeavours to establish ignotum per æquè ignotum.

But it may be said, that the exact determination of the first seven weeks by the final act of Nehemiah's reformation is not essential to the just computation of the prophecy—that all that can be fairly objected on this score is, that we are left in ignorance when that final act took place—but, that it is known, that forty and nine years preceded the sixty and two weeks, and that thereby the full period pointed out in the prophecy remains unaffected. But is it nothing, that the reasons of the separation of the larger numbers into their component parts cannot be discovered? Yet more, is it nothing, that in the investigation of the times that are to be reckoned upon the holy city, it shall remain unknown when those events, which entitle it to that
appellation or its contrary, respectively occurred? Seventy weeks, we are told, are determined upon the holy city. That is, that seventy weeks are determined, not upon the entire duration of the city, for then, were it not that the number of seventy weeks is too short a period to stretch through the whole compass of the prophecy, there could be no difficulty, it is said, in the matter; as the literal city built by the decree of Cyrus must then be intended, and therefore, the going forth of the decree of Cyrus for building the city must be infallibly the date from which to reckon;—but they are determined upon the city only so long as it deserved to be denominated holy. As to the time when this characteristic ceased to belong to it, there seems to be no hesitation in the judgment of Dean Prideaux and his followers: that must necessarily be fixed at the death of Christ, because by that event,
in the opinion of some, the important purposes specified at the outset of the prophecy, and for which the times are determined, are all effected; and because, in the opinion of others; the great divorce betwixt Christ and the Jewish Church is by that consummated. But at what time shall we place the beginning of this period? The answer should obviously appear to be; at the time when the reformation of the Jewish Church and State had restored to the city that character of holiness which it had lost by its alienation from the divine ordinances. If we next ask, when was that reformation completed, the answer is, History does not inform us of that, but it must be at the distance of forty-nine years from the issuing of the decree of the seventh of Artaxerxes to Ezra to restore and build Jerusalem; for by restoring and building Jerusalem must be meant the restoring of the Jewish polity; and the restoring of the
Jewish polity must be at such a distance from that decree that the number of years measuring that distance when added to sixty and two weeks of years shall make the sixty and nine weeks of years from the seventh of Artaxerxes after which the Messiah was to be slain; whose death, we are at the same time told by these expositors of the prophecy, must not be until full seventy weeks from the same date have elapsed. But after all it is not from the completion of that reformation the weeks are reckoned by this hypothesis, but from the decree for effecting that reformation. Then it follows that the weeks are to be reckoned upon the city during a time at which the city was not holy; or the mere passing of the decree by Artaxerxes at once completed the work, and rendered the city holy before any acts of reformation were effected.

But, in addition to all this, Prideaux
and his followers seem altogether to forget that the prophecy has not announced that a number of weeks had been determined upon the *holy* city of Daniel—but that they had been determined upon *his people and his holy city*; from which it would naturally follow that whilst the Jews remained as a people, the weeks determined were not to expire, even though the city were for a shorter period to deserve the characteristic of *holiness*. Thus all the refinements, which are so ingeniously devised to bring within convenient compass the actual duration of the city, vanish in a moment. Allow the prophecy to mark the continuance of the city only whilst it deserved the designation of a holy city, and then, according to Prideaux's account of what entitled it to that designation, the weeks determined upon its continuance fall short of the allotted period of seventy weeks by forty-nine years, or the decree issued for its reforma-
tion must be pronounced to have at once accomplished its purpose before a single act for its reformation was effected: on the other hand, allow the continuance marked by the prophecy to be intended for the Jewish people jointly with their city, the weeks determined for that continuance reach to more than a century beyond the seventy weeks.

THE END.