

the final gathering of His elect from the four winds of heaven, will purify his church by such signal judgments as shall rouse the attention of the world, and in the end strike all nations with religious awe. At this period the apostate faction shall occupy the Holy Land. This faction will certainly be an instrument of these judgments by which the church will be purified. That purification therefore is not at all inconsistent with the affairs of the atheistical confederacy ; but after such duration as God shall see fit to allow in the plenitude of his power, the Jews converted to the faith of Christ will be unexpectedly restored to their ancient possessions.

The swift messengers will certainly have a considerable share as instruments in the hand of God in the restoration of the chosen people. Otherwise to what purpose are they called upon (ver. 1) to receive their commission from the prophet? It will perhaps be some part of their business to afford the Jews the assistance and protection of their fleets. This seems to be insinuated in the imagery of the first verse. But the principal part which they will have to act will be that of the carriers of God's message to his people. This character seems to describe some christian country, where the prophecies relating to the latter ages will meet with particular attention ; where the literal sense of those which promise the restoration of the Jewish people will be strenuously upheld ; and where these will be successfully expounded as to be the principal means, by God's blessing, of removing the veil from the hearts of the Israelites. Those who shall thus be the instruments of this blessed work may well be described in the figurative language of prophecy as the carriers of God's message to his people. The situation of the country destined to so high an office is not otherwise described in the prophecy than by this circumstance, that it is "beyond the rivers of Cush;" that is, far to the west of Judea, if these rivers of Cush are to be understood as they have been generally understood,—of the Nile and other Ethiopian rivers : far to the east, if of the Tigris and Euphrates. The one or the other they must denote, but which, it is uncertain. It will be natural to ask, of what importance is this circumstance in the character of the country, which, if it be anything is a geographical character, and yet leaves the particular situation so much undetermined that we know not, in what quarter of the world to look for the country intended, whether in the East Indies, or in the western parts of Africa or Europe, or in America? I answer that the full importance of this circumstance will not appear till the completion of the prophecy shall discover it. But it had as I conceive a temporary importance at the time of the delivery of the prophecy, viz., that it excluded Egypt. The Jews of Isaiah's time were, by a perverse policy, upon all occasions courting the alliance of the Egyptians, in opposition to God's express injunctions by his prophets to the contrary. Isaiah therefore as if he would discourage the hope of aid from Egypt at any time, tells them that the foreign alliance that God prepares for them in the latter times, is not that of Egypt, which he teaches them at all times to renounce and despise, but