

SERMON I.

JER. 5, xxix.—Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

IT was the lot of the prophet Jeremiah to be raised up and called to the prophetic office in a very degenerate age. The floods, as well of idolatry as vice, with which the nation had been inundated, during a long reign of a cruel, wicked, and idolatrous Manasseh, had, it is true, received a temporary check, by the zealous and persevering endeavours of a virtuous and pious Josiah to effect a reformation. Apostacy had however taken such a deep root, that altho' the current of defection was for a time arrested, and vice overawed by his presence and authority, yet it does not appear that the body of the nation ever concurred heartily in that reformation. Hence it was that nearly all its good fruits and effects disappeared as soon as one of his degenerate offspring mounted the throne. The prophet Jeremiah being himself a witness to this awful progress in the road to ruin, was frequently sent both to the rulers and the nation with heavy tidings. It does not appear that either his denunciations of impending vengeance, or his pathetic exhortations to repentance and reformation, were accompanied with any remarkable success. By his faithfulness he roused the indignation of a profligate court, and an equally profligate people, against himself, and became the victim of a most cruel and unrelenting persecution; by which his life was repeatedly exposed to the most imminent danger. Unlike those prophets who foretold things which were not to come to pass until after the lapse of many ages, he lived to witness the accomplishment of some of his most important predictions, in the actual destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the slaughter and captivity of the principal part of the inhabitants, and the almost entire desolation of the whole land.

God was the political King and Lawgiver of the Jewish nation, in a sense which was peculiar to that people. We cannot therefore find any other nation whose situation is, in all respects, parallel to that of the Jews. But altho' there is a

ut any ref-
without a-
reason why
ey are pub-
than some
occasioned
They are
say of the
they were
on why the
from which
this day.