

the promised 'seed' became the desire of all nations. Holy men were watching and waiting, and holy women too, were anxiously looking for the highly favoured one who should be the mother of the Son of God. But the set time was not yet come. So long indeed was the promise delayed that some began to despair of its fulfilment, and others questioned the divine origin of the predictions which had caused universal expectation. Yet God had not forgotten his promise; but had been preparing the way for its accomplishment as fast as his unerring wisdom thought best. From eternity he had regarded it, and arranged his plans of creation, providence and redemption with reference to it. The predicted event was great, and the preparation for it must be great also, and ages must circle away before it can be complete.—God, the Eternal, delights in progression; although his works were finished, *in semine* from the beginning; yet the law of gradual development is strictly observed, in bringing them forward into actual and complete existence. First the blade and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, suggests a principle fully carried out in the system of remedial mercy. Religion has had its infancy and childhood as well as man. The primitive simplicity of the patriarchal institution which was divinely instituted in the first age of the world, was the most simple that we can conceive. It contemplated no other bond of union but the marriage covenant and the relations growing out of it. This was well adapted to lead the mind forward to future developements of God's purposes in the plan of redemption. After a lapse of two thousand five hundred years the more complex doctrines and usages of Judaism were added to the divine simplicity of the family worship. The law was added to it, but did not supersede it, being founded on the matrimonial compact, and that on nature itself it cannot be superseded so long as the true worshippers of God are drawn together by family ties. The doctrines and usages of Judaism were chiefly representative and typical in their character, and designed to lead forward another step towards the full development of the scheme of redemption, already formed in the divine mind. The law was given by the dispensation of angels, and the Jewish types set up with reference to the promised "seed." This is the secret of their power to save. Through these the Saints who died before the Hope of Israel came, looked forward to his advent with intense feeling; for he it was who should confirm their title to endless bliss. They were all saved in anticipation of his sacrifice.—Through this they obtained pardon, holiness and eternal life. By these shadowy representations the work of preparation for the grand event which was yet future, progressed, and four thousand years passed slowly away before this long cherished and eager expectation was fulfilled; and then he who was in the form of God took upon himself the form of a servant, and men beheld his glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace, and truth. Events had taken place of great interest, and revolution had succeeded revolution to prepare the way for his appearance. The fulness of time had come when God sent forth his Son. It was in every respect the fit season; neither too soon nor too late to accomplish the object of his mission.