

seems not only repugnant to reason, but is quite inconsistent with that literal fulfilment which prophecy has hitherto received. If all past predictions, except where figures are obviously used, have had their fulfilment *literally*, even when the minuteness of prophecy was extreme, on what principle of interpretation is a mode of fulfilment yet unprecedented now to be expected? We can point to a long series of predictions which have been literally fulfilled, and to others which are being so at this very day, in their utmost minutiae, and can see no reason to suppose that those which, for ought we can tell, may relate to the ensuing month or the ensuing year, are not to have a literal fulfilment also, as no intimation is given by the Spirit of Prophecy of a period at which this mode of their accomplishment shall cease. Thus alone can the criterion divinely given, by which to distinguish the *true* prophet from the *false*, be of any avail: "If thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath *not* spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." Deut. xviii. 21, 22. And the minuteness with which prophecy has hitherto been fulfilled, proves how safely the rule may be applied. The past dealings of God in this respect, which show the perfect correspondence between the prediction and its accomplishment, have, however, been much neglected; and hence, perhaps, the unwillingness so often displayed, believably to receive the promises he has bestowed, without the intervention of our own limitations; and hence, also, our unbelieving fears to submit divine predictions concerning the future to the ordeal which Jehovah himself has prescribed.

"But of the evidence to be derived from the past fulfilment of prophecy, did our limits permit the prosecution of this branch of the argument, the history of nations and individuals would furnish abundant and valuable illustration. We might take the scripture predictions concerning the state of different countries, and show how amply they are verified by the accounts of recent travellers, wholly unconscious of the coincidence, and, in some cases, with views decidedly hostile to Revelation. Or, taking history as evidence, we might trace the literal fulfilment of prophecy in the rise and fall of empires—the scenes of their splendor, and the means of their overthrow. We might refer to the judgments poured on cities famed of old, and in the height of their glory when denounced of the Lord;—of Nineveh, of Babylon, of Tyre, of Jerusalem, and others: and might gather thence evidence incontrovertible of the literal fulfilment of prophecy in circumstances the most improbable to human foresight—by me is the most unlikely in human estimation—and with a specification of incidents so apparently insignificant as would, perhaps, never have been recorded had not the minds of historians been under the immediate control of him whose omniscience they thus unwittingly attested. The very improbability of such prophecies ever being fulfilled, renders their accomplishment a more glorious display of that divine attribute which