**The 12th,** 13th, and 14th chapters contain prophe­**cies** which refer entirely to the Chriſtian dispenlation; the circumſtances attending which he deſcribes with a clearneſs which indicated their near approach.

The ſtyle of Zechariah is ſo ſimilar to that of Jere­miah, that the Jews were accuſtomed to remark that the ſpirit of Jeremiah had paſſed into him. He is ge­nerally proſaic till towards the concluſion of his work, when he becomes more elevated and poetical. The whole is beautifully connected by eaſy tranſitions, and preſent and future ſcenes are blended with the greateſt delicacy.

Malachi was the laſt prophet that flouriſhed under the Jewiſh diſpenſation; but neither the time in which he lived, nor any particulars of his hiſtory, can now be aſcertained. It is even uncertain whether the word Malachi be a proper name, or denote, as the Septuagint have rendered it, h*is angel @@*(r), that is, “the angel of the Lord.” Origen ſuppoſed, that Malachi was an angel incarnate, and not a man. The ancient Hebrews, the Chaldee paraphraſt, and St Jerome, are of opinion he was the ſame perſon with Ezra: but if this was the caſe, they ought to have aſſigned ſome reaſon for gi­ving two different names to the ſame perſon.

As it appears from the concurring teſtimony of all the ancient Jewiſh and Chriſtian writers, that the light of prophecy expired in Malachi, we may ſuppoſe that the termination of his miniſtry coincided with the accompliſhment of the firſt ſeven weeks of Daniel’s pro­phecy, which was the period appointed for ſealing the viſion and prophecy. This, according to Prideaux’s account, took place in A. M. 3595; but, according to the calculations of Biſhop Lloyd, to A. M. 3607, twelve years later. Whatever reckoning we prefer, it muſt be allowed that Malachi completed the canon of the Old Teſtament about 400 years before the birth of Chriſt.

It appears certain that Malachi propheſied under Nehemiah, and after Haggai and Zechariah, at a time when great diſorders reigned among the prieſts and people of Judah, which are reproved by Malachi. He inveighs againſt the prieſts (i. 6, &c. ii. **1,** 2, &c.); he reproaches the people with having taken ſtrange wive3 (ii. 11.); he reproves them for their inhumanity to­wards their brethren (ii. 10. iii. 5.); their too fre­quently divorcing their wives; their neglect of paying their tithes and firſt-fruits (Mal. iii. 13.). He ſeems to allude to the covenant that Nehemiah renewed with the Lord (iii. 10. and ii. 4, 5, &c.), aſſiſted by the prieſts and the chief of the nation. He ſpeaks of the ſacriſice of the new law, and of the abolition of thoſe of the old, in theſe words (i. 10, 11, 12, 13.): “I have no pleaſure in you, faith the Lord of hoſts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the riſing of the ſun, even unto the going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incenſe ſhall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name ſhall be great among the Heathen, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.” He declares that the Lord was weary with the impiety of Iſrael; **and** aſſures them, that the Lord whom they fought

ſhould ſuddenly come to his temple preceded by the meſſenger of the covenant, who was to prepare his way; that the Lord when he appeared ſhould purify the ſons of Levi from their unrighteouſneſs, and refine them as metal from the droſs; and that then the offering of Judah, the ſpiritual ſacriſice of the heart, ſhould be pleaſant to the Lord. The prophet, like one who was de­livering a laſt meſſage, denounces deſtruction againſt the impenitent in emphatic and alarming words. He en­courages thoſe who feared the name of the Lord with the animating promiſe, that the “Sun of righteouineſs ſhould ariſe with ſalvation in his rays,” and render them triumphant over the wicked. And now that prophecy was to ceaſe, and miracles were no more to be perform­ed till the coming of the Meſſiah; now that the Jews were to be left to the guidance of their own reaſon, and the written inſtructions of their prophets—Malachi exhorts them to remember the law of Moſes, which the Lord had revealed from Horeb for the ſake of all Iſ­rael. At length he ſeals up the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, by predicting the commencement of the new diſpenſation, which ſhould be uſhered in by John the Baptiſt with the power and ſpirit of Elijah; who ſhould turn the hearts of fathers and children to repen­tance; but if his admonitions ſhould be rejected, that the Lord would ſmite the land with **a** curſe.

**The** collection of writings compoſed after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, and acknowledged by his followers to be, divine, is known in general by the name of χαινη διαθηχη.This title, though neither given by divine command, nor applied to theſe writings by the apoſtles, was adopt­ed in a very early age, though the preciſe time of its introduction is uncertain, it Being juſtiſied by ſeveral paſſages in Scripture @@†, and warranted by the authori­ty of St Paul in particular, who calls the ſacred books before the time of Chriſt ωαλαιαδιαθηαη @@‡. Even long before that period, either the whole of the Old Teſta­ment, or the five books of Moſes, were entitled βιϐλιον, or book of the covenant @@§.

As the word διαθηχη admits of a two-fold interpretation, we may tranſlate this title either the *New Covenant* or the *New Te*ſt*ament.* The former tranſlation muſt be adopt­ed, if reſpect be had to the texts of Scripture, from which the name is borrowed, ſince thoſe paſſages evi­dently convey the idea of a covenant; and, beſides, **a** being incapable of death can neither have made an old nor make a new teſtament. It is likewiſe probable, that the earlieſt Greek diſciples, who made uſe of this expreſſion, had no other notion in view than that of covenant. We, on the contrary, are accuſtomed to give this ſacred collection the name of *Te*ſt*ament;* and ſince it would be not only improper, but even abſurd, to ſpeak of the Teſtament of God, we commonly underſtand the Teſtament of Chriſt; an explanation which removes but half the difficulty, ſince the new only, and not the old, had Chriſt for its teſtator.

In ſtating the evidence for the truth of Chriſtianity, there is nothing more worthy of conſideration than the authenticity of the books of the New Teſtament. This is the foundation on which all other arguments reſt;

@@@[m]† Matth. xxvi. 28. Gal. iii. 17. Heb. viii. 8. ix. 15-20.

@@@[m]‡ 2 Cor. iii. 14.

@@@[m]§ 1. Mac. i. 57.

@@(r) סלאכ׳ *Malachi* ſignifies properly my *angel.*