

OF THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF CHRIST.

HAVING gone through Christ's estate of humiliation and exaltation, I shall next consider the offices sustained and executed by him in those estates. His office in general is that of Mediator, which is but one; the branches of it are three-fold, his Prophetic, Priestly, and Kingly offices; all which are included in his name, Messiah, or Christ, the anointed; prophets, priests, and kings, being anointed, when invested with their several offices; as Elisha the prophet, by Elijah; Aaron the priest, and his sons, by Moses; Saul, David, and Solomon, kings of Israel: these offices, seldom, if ever, met in one Person; Melchizedek was king and priest, but not a prophet; Aaron was prophet and priest, but not a king; David and Solomon were kings and prophets, but not priests: the greatest appearance of them was in Moses, but whether all together, is not so clear; he was a prophet, none like him arose in Israel, till the Messiah came; he was king in Jeshurun; and officiated as a priest, before his brother Aaron was invested with that office, but not afterwards: but in Christ they all meet; he is a Prophet mighty in deed and word, a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and is King of kings, and Lord of lords. The ease and condition of his people required him to take upon him and execute these offices. They are dark, blind, and ignorant, and need a prophet to enlighten, teach, and instruct them, and make known the mind and will of God unto them; they are sinful, guilty creatures, as all the world are before God, and need a priest to make atonement for them; in their unconverted state they are enemies to God, and disobedient to him, and need a powerful prince to subdue them; to cause his arrows to be sharp in their hearts, whereby they fall under him, and become willing to serve him, in the day of his power: and in their converted state are weak and helpless, and need a king to rule over them, protect and defend them. And though there are many other names and titles of Christ, yet they are all reducible to these offices of Prophet, Priest, and King: and it may be observed, that these are executed by Christ in the order in which they are here put: he first exercised the prophetic office, which he entered into upon his baptism, and continued it throughout his life: at his death, as a Priest, he offered himself a sacrifice to God for the sins of his people, and now ever lives to make intercession for them; and upon his ascension to heaven, was made and declared Lord and Christ, and sits as a King on his throne, and has been ever since exercising his kingly office; and will do so more apparently hereafter. I shall begin,

With his prophetic office; which was foretold in the writings of Moses and the prophets; the proof and evidence of which, as belonged to Jesus, lies in his miracles; the several parts of his office will be inquired into; and the time of his execution of it.

I. It was foretold that Christ should appear in the character of a Prophet, and therefore was expected by the Jews as such; hence when

they saw the miracles he wrought, they said, *This is of a truth that Prophet, &c.*, John vi. 14; meaning, that was prophesied of by Moses, to whom the Lord said, *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee*, Deut. xviii. 15, 18; which cannot be understood of a succession of prophets, for a single person only is spoken of: and this is not Joshua, nor David, nor Jeremiah, only Jesus of Nazareth, to whom they are applied, Acts. iii. 22, and vii. 37; and with whom all the characters agree: he was raised up of God as a prophet; this the believing Jews were sensible of; and therefore glorified God on that account, and considered it as a kind and gracious visitation of his, Luke vii. 16. He was raised up from among his brethren, being the Son of Abraham, the Son of David; of the tribe of Judah; born in Bethlehem; and so was of the Israelites, according to the flesh: he was like unto Moses; a prophet, like unto him, and greater than he; as the law came by Moses, grace and truth came by Christ: as Moses was raised up, and sent to be a redeemer of Israel out of Egypt; Christ was raised up, and sent to be a Saviour and Redeemer of his people, from a worse than Egyptian bondage: as Moses was faithful in the house of God, so Jesus; they are compared together, but the preference is given to Christ, Heb. iii. 2—6. The words of God were put into the mouth of Christ; the doctrine he preached was not his own, but his Father's; he spoke not of himself; what he spoke, as the Father said unto him, so he spoke; and he spoke all that he received from him, and that he commanded him; and so was faithful to him that appointed him, John xii. 49, 50, and xv. 15; and therefore to be hearkened to, as his Father directed his apostles to do; saying, *This is my beloved Son; hear ye him*: plainly referring to the prophecy in Deuteronomy.

The qualifications of Christ for his prophetic office were also foretold; which lie in the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which he received without measure: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek*, Isa. lxi. 1; from which passage of Scripture Christ preached his first sermon, at Nazareth; and having read the text, said, *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears*, Luke iv. 16—21. These are also several names of Christ, by which he is called in the Old Testament, which refer to his prophetic office; as a messenger, the messenger of the covenant, whose work it was to explain it, and declare the sense of it; the same with the Apostle of our profession, *an interpreter, one among a thousand*; an interpreter of the mind and will of God, who lay in his bosom, and has revealed it, and whose business it was to preach righteousness, even his own, in the great congregation, and has done it. He goes by the name of Wisdom, who cries and calls to the sons of men, and gives instructions to them, Prov. viii. 1, 2. He is called a Counsellor; not only because he was concerned in the council of peace, but because he gives counsel and advice in the gospel, and by ministering of it, both to saints and sinners, Isa. ix. 6. He is represented as a Teacher, of the ways of God and of the truths of the gospel, called his law, or doctrine, Isa. xlii. 4. Likewise, as a Speaker, who has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season, Isa. l. 4. Moreover, he is called a Light to

lighten the Gentiles, as well as the Jews; and to give a clear knowledge of the truth as it is in himself, Isa. xlii. 6. And likewise, a *Witness of the people*, Isa. lv. 4; and to bear witness to the truth he came into the world; and a faithful witness he is, John xviii. 37. All which belonged to and pointed at the prophetic office of Christ, and have all appeared and met in our Jesus; yea, the very places and more particular parts of Judea, where he was chiefly to exercise as a prophet, were foretold; Isa. ix. 1, Matt. iv. 12—15.

II. The evidence and proof of Jesus being that Prophet that was to come, are the miracles which were wrought by him; upon Christ's working the miracle of feeding five thousand persons with five loaves and two small fishes; some of the Jews that saw the miracle, were convinced, and said, *This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world*, John iv. 14. And upon his raising from the dead the widow's son of Nain, as he was carrying to the grave, they said, *A great Prophet is risen up among us*, Luke vii. 16. So Nicodemus was convinced that Christ was a *Teacher from God*, from his miracles, John iii. 2. The Jews expected, that when the Messiah came, he would do many and great miracles, as they had just reason for it; for it was foretold he should, Isa. xxxv. 4—6; wherefore, when they saw what kind of miracles and what numerous ones were wrought by Christ, some of the Jews were convinced by them that he was the Christ, John vii. 31. When John sent two of his disciples to Christ, to inquire of him, whether he was he that should come, or whether they were to look for another, he bids them go and tell John what they had seen and heard, meaning the miracles wrought by him, which he particularly mentions, and closes the account, with saying, *The poor have the gospel preached to them*; plainly intimating, that he was that Prophet that should preach glad tidings to the poor; and his miracles were a confirmation of it, Matt. xi. 2—5. And he frequently appeals to his miracles, not only as proofs of his Deity, but of his Messiahship; which miracles were true and undoubted ones; they were such as exceed the laws and power of nature; what a mere creature could never perform; nor could they be attributed to diabolical influence; for Satan, had he a power to work miracles, would never assist in them, to confirm doctrines subversive of his kingdom and interest, as our Lord argues, Matt. xii. 24—26. Nor did Christ ever work any miracles to serve any temporal interest of his own, but purely for the good of men, and the glory of God; and these were openly and publicly done, and liable to the strictest examination; so that there could be no fraud nor deceit in them. The next thing to be considered is,

III. The parts of the prophetic office executed by Christ; and which lay,

i. In foretelling future events; as he is God omniscient, he knew all things future, even the more contingent, and did foretell them; as of a colt tied at a certain place, which he bade his disciples go and loose; and intimated to them, what would be said by the owners of it, and what they should say to them; and of a man's carrying of a

pitcher of water, whom his disciples were to follow, which would lead them to the master of the house, where the passover was to be provided for him and them, Mark xi. 2—6, and xiv. 13, 16. But more particularly and especially, Christ foretold his sufferings and death; and the kind and manner of it, crucifixion, Matt. xx. 18, 19, John xii. 31, 32; the means by which his death should be brought about, by one of his disciples betraying him into the hands of his enemies: he knew from the beginning who would betray him; and declared to his disciples in general, that one of them would do it; and to Judas in particular he directed his discourse, and bid him do what he did quickly: and when the time drew nigh for the execution of the scheme Judas had formed, Christ said to his disciples with him, *He is at hand that doth betray me*; and immediately Judas appeared with a great multitude, and a band of soldiers, to seize on Jesus, upon a signal given them, John xiii. 18, 21, Matt. xxvi. 46, 47. Christ foretold the behaviour of his disciples towards him, upon his being apprehended, that they would all be offended with him and forsake him; and that particularly Peter would deny him thrice before the cock crew: all which exactly came to pass, Matt. xxvi. 31—75. Likewise, his resurrection from the dead, on the third day; which he gave out, both in more obscure and figurative expressions, and in more plain and easy ones, and directed to the sign of the prophet Jonah, as a token of it; and notwithstanding all the precautions of the Jews, so it came about, who owned, that in his lifetime he predicted it, John ii. 19; Matt. xvi. 21, and xii. 39. He spoke beforehand of the treatment and usage his disciples should meet with from men after he was gone; that they should be delivered up to councils, and scourged in synagogues, and be brought before kings and governors for his sake; and that they should be put to death, and those that killed them think they did God good service: all which came to pass, and was fulfilled in all his disciples, Matt. x. 17, 18. He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem; the signs going before of it, its distresses, and what followed upon it, Matt. xxiv., which in every particular was accomplished, as the history of Josephus abundantly shows. To observe no more, the Book of the Revelation is a prophecy delivered by Christ to John concerning all that was to befall the church and world, so far as the church was concerned with it, from the resurrection of Christ to his second coming; the greater part of which has been most amazingly fulfilled; and there is the utmost reason to believe the rest will be fulfilled in due time.

ii. Another part of the prophetic office of Christ, lay in the ministration of the word; which is sometimes in Scripture called prophecy, and this was not only exercised by Christ, in interpreting the law, giving the true sense of it, and pointing out its spirituality and extensiveness, and vindicating it from the false glosses of the Pharisees, but chiefly in preaching the gospel; for which he was in the highest degree qualified; and was most assiduous in it, preaching it in one city, and then in another, whereunto he was sent, and that throughout all Galilee, and other parts, and which he delivered with such authority,

as the Scribes and Pharisees did not, even the whole of it; declaring all that he had heard of the Father, and who spoke his whole mind and will by him; and so sealed up prophecy: hence no regard is now to be had to the pretended prophecy and revelations of men, inconsistent with the word of God, and which he taught freely, boldly, and without fear or respect of persons, as the Jews themselves acknowledged, Matt. xxii. 16; and with such wisdom, prudence, and eloquence, as never man spake, John vii. 46; and with such gracefulness, and such gracious words, grace being poured into his lips, as was astonishing to those that heard him, Luke iv. 22; and this part of his prophetic office, lay not only in the external ministry of the word, but in a powerful and internal illumination of the mind, in opening the heart, as Lydia's was, to attend to the things spoken; and in opening the understanding, to understand the Scriptures, and to receive and embrace the truths thereof; the word coming not in word only, but with power, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance.

IV. The time when this office was executed by Christ; and it may be observed, that this office may be considered as executed either immediately or mediately. — 1. Immediately, by Christ, in his own person, by himself; and this was here on earth, in his state of humiliation; for he came a Teacher from God; being sent and anointed by him to preach the gospel; and on which office he entered quickly after his baptism, and continued in the exercise of it until his death; but only to the lost sheep of Israel, to whom he was sent, and to them only did he give his apostles a commission to preach the gospel during that time; for he was a *minister of the circumcision*; that is, a minister to the circumcised Jews, and to them only, Rom. xv. 8. — 2. Mediatly, by his Spirit, and by the prophets of the Old Testament, and by the apostles and ministers of the New; and in this sense he exercised the office of a prophet both before and after his state of humiliation. — 1. Before his incarnation: he did indeed sometimes personally appear in a human form, and preached the gospel to men, as to our first parents in the garden of Eden, immediately after their fall; declaring, that the seed of the woman, meaning himself, would break the serpent's head: and thus the gospel, strictly speaking, *began to be first spoken by the Lord*, Heb. ii. 3. And so, under the name of the Angel of the Lord, and very probably in a human form, he appeared to Abraham, and preached the gospel to him; saying, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*, Gen. xxii. 15—18. He was with the thousands of angels at mount Sinai, even he who ascended on high, and led captivity captive: he was with Moses in the wilderness, to whom he spoke at Sinai; and gave unto him the lively oracles of God, Acts vii. 38. But at other times we read of his preaching by his Spirit unto men; Noah was a preacher of righteousness, even of the righteousness of faith; and Christ preached in him, and by him: he, by his Spirit, went and preached to the ungodly world, to those who were disobedient in the times of Noah; the same who in the times of the apostle were spirits in prison: and as Christ was spoken of by all the holy prophets that were from the beginning of the world, so he, by his Spirit, spoke

in them, and testified of his own sufferings, and the glory that should follow, 1 Pet. iii. 18—20. — 2. Christ continued to exercise his prophetic office, after his state of humiliation was over, and he was raised from the dead, and had glory given him; for he appeared to his disciples after that, and expounded to them the Scriptures concerning himself, and opened their understanding, that they might understand them; and spoke unto them of the things concerning the kingdom of God, and instructed them in them, and renewed their commission to preach and baptize, and enlarged it, promised his presence with them, and with their successors to the end of the world; and by them, and not in his own person after his ascension to heaven, he went and preached peace to them that were nigh, and to them that were afar off, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ speaking in and by his ministers; so that they that hear them, hear him; and they that despise them, despise him: and so he continues, and will continue, to exercise his prophetic office in and by his ministers, and by his Spirit attending their ministrations, throughout all ages, to the end of time, until he has gathered in all his chosen ones.

OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE OF CHRIST.

I. CHRIST was to be a Priest; this was determined on in the purposes and decrees of God: God sent him forth *προεθερο*, foreordained him, *to be a propitiation*, Rom. iii. 25; that is, to be a propitiatory sacrifice, to make atonement and satisfaction for sin; which is one part of Christ's priestly office; on which, redemption by his blood is founded; to which he was *verily foreordained before the foundation of the world*, 1 Pet. i. 18—20. The sufferings and death of Christ, whatever he endured from Jews and Gentiles, were all according to the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*; and were no other than what his *hand and counsel determined before to be done*, Acts ii. 23, and iv. 27, 28; and which he endured in the execution of his priestly office; of which, the decrees of God are the spring and rise. To this office Christ was called of God; he did not glorify himself to be called a high-priest, but his divine Father, whose only-begotten Son he is, called him to take upon him this office, invested him with it, and swore him into it, in the council and covenant of peace; for he was made a Priest with an oath, to show the importance, dignity, validity, and perpetuity of his priesthood: to all which Christ agreed; saying, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not*; "I foresee that sacrifices of slain beasts, offered by sinful men, will not be, in the issue, acceptable to thee; nor be sufficient to atone for sin; *but a body hast thou prepared me*, in purpose, council, and covenant; which I am ready, in proper time, to assume, and offer up a sacrifice to divine justice," Heb. x. 5. And these eternal decrees, and mutual transactions, are the basis and foundation of Christ's priesthood; and made it sure and certain.

In the prophecies of the Old Testament Christ is spoken of as a