OBSERVATIONS UPON THE PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS; WITH AN APPENDIX IN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS OF HOME LATE WRIERS

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Observations upon the Prophecies Relating to the Restoration of the Jews; With an Appendix in Answer to the Objections of Home Late Wriers by Joseph Eyre

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JOSEPH EYRE

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WITH

AN APPENDIX,

In Answer to

The OBJECTIONS of some late Writers.

By JOSEPH EYRE.

Hear the Word of the LORD, O ye Nations, and declare it in the Isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a Shepherd doth his Flock. JRR.XXXI. 10.

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PREFACE

TO THE

READER.

HE Prophecies of the Old Testament seem to have been less studied, and more misunderstood, than any other part of the sacred writings; and indeed this is nothing more than what might have been expected from the very nature of them. Prophecies, by which I here mean predictions of things surve, are for the most part expressed in obscure terms, or set forth in an allegorical manner in visions, by visible representations of beasts, birds, &c. It is no wonder therefore, that such Prophecies as relate to events yet surve, should be either not understood at all, or misinterpreted.

In the first ages of Christianity, they who attempted any explication of the facred Prophecies, confined themselves chiefly to such as seemed to them to relate to the first coming of our Lord and Saviour, and to the calling of the Gentiles, which began to be accom-

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plished in those days. As to the rest of the predictions, which are by far the greater part, they either paffed them by, or applied them in an allegorical way to the events abovementioned, or to the state of the Christian Church at that time. Nor are these their misapplications to be wondered at, as the obscurity of many of the scripture Prophecies seems to have been defigned on purpose, that they should not be generally understood, till at, or near, the times of their accomplishment. After the first ages, when the church, by an accession of wealth and power, was so corrupted as to mind little else but the enriching itself, to the neglect of scriptural studies in general, it is not strange the study of the Prophecies should be discouraged, and almost wholly neglected; for which also another reason may be given, viz. that those few who applied themselves to the explication of them, during this long continued ecclefiaftical tyranny, feldom failed to find in them fome predictions of the groß errors and superstitions which were promoted and upheld by their ecclefiastical supe-Upon these accounts it is, that, during the papal tyranny, we have so very few, and those erroneous explications of the Scripture Prophecies in general. But when the Reformation began to take place, and the facred fcripture,

feripture, which had been long thut up from the people, was again laid open for the perufal of all Christians, the study of the prophetical parts began to revive, and some very confiderable advances were made toward a right understanding of them. Many of them were with great judgment proved to be already accomplished, and the events to which they related pointed out, and also probable conjectures advanced concerning some of those which are yet future. Amongst those who have successfully laboured in this branch of theology, I know none who deferves more to be remembered than our countryman JOSEPH MEDE, who was the first (of English writers at least) who gave us any confistent or probable explications of the Prophecies. His many learned and judicious interpretations of the Prophecies, in the Revelations to St. John and Daniel, will make this evident to any one who shall consult his works, which I would recommend to every person who is defirous of making a progress in prophetic studies. Since his time we have had several learned and judicious expositors, who have, in some points, improved upon him; amongst whom I cannot forbear mentioning Dr. NEWTON, the present bishop of Bristol, whose Dissertations on the Prophecies are, upon the whole, perhaps not