

to his Coming, should ask these, or any other the like Questions; or that the Argument from ancient Prophecy should appear so light and trival to those who know no better Use of it.

*Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning*; and whatever Degree of Light he thought fit to communicate to our first Parents, or to their Children in After-times, there is no doubt but that *He* had a perfect Knowledge at all Times of all the Methods by which he intended to rescue and restore Mankind; and therefore all the Notices given by him to Mankind of his intended Salvation, must correspond to the great Event, whenever the Fullness of Time shall make it manifest. No Reason can be given why God should at Times, or at any Time clearly open the Secrets of his Providence to Men; it depends merely upon his good Pleasure to do it in what Time and in what Manner he thinks proper. But there is a necessary Reason to be given why all such Notices as God thinks fit to give should answer exactly in due Time to the Completion of the great Design: It is absurd therefore to complain of the antient Prophecies for being obscure; for it is challenging God for not telling us more of his Secrets. But if we pretend that God has at length manifested to us by the Revelation of the Gospel the Method of his Salvation, it is necessary for us to shew that all the Notices of this Salvation given to the old World do correspond to the Things which we have heard, and seen with our Eyes. The Argument from Prophecy therefore is not to be formed in this Manner: *All the antient Prophecies have expressly pointed out and characterized Christ Jesus.* But it must be formed in this Manner: *All the Notices which God gave to the Fathers of his intended Salvation, are perfectly answered by the Coming of Christ.* He never promised or engaged his Word in any other Particular relating to the common Salvation, but what he has fully made good by sending his Son to our Redemption. Let us try these Methods upon the Prophecy before us. If you demand that we should shew you, *a priori*, *Christ Jesus* set forth in this Prophecy, and that God had limited himself by this Promise to convey the Blessings intended by sending his own Son in the Flesh, and by no other Means whatever, you demand what I cannot shew, nor do I know who can. But if you enquire whether this

Prophecy, in the obvious and most natural Meaning of it, in that Sense in which our first Parents, and their Children after, might easily understand it, has been verified by the Coming of *Christ*, I conceive it may be made as clear as the Sun at Noon-day, that all the Expectation raised by this Prophecy, has been completely answered by the Redemption wrought by *Jesus Christ*. And what have you to desire more than to see a Prophecy fulfilled exactly? If you insist that the Prophecy should have been more express, you must demand of God why he gave you no more Light; but you ought at least to suspend this Demand till you have a Reason to shew for it.

I know that this Prophecy is urged farther, and that Christian Writers argue from the Expressions of it to shew that *Christ* is therein particularly foretold: He properly is the *Seed of a Woman* in a Sense in which no other ever was; his Sufferings were well prefigured by the *bruising of the Heel*, his complete Victory over Sin and Death by *bruising the Serpent's Head*. When Unbelievers hear such Reasonings, they think themselves intitled to laugh; but their Scorn be to themselves. We readily allow that the Expressions do not imply necessarily this Sense: We allow farther, that there is no Appearance that our first Parents understood them in this Sense, or that God intended they should so understand them: But since this Prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in *Christ*, and by the Event appropriated to him only; I would fain know how it comes to be conceived to be so ridiculous a thing in us, to suppose that God to whom the whole Event was known from the Beginning, should make choice of such Expressions, as naturally conveyed so much Knowledge as he intended to convey to our first Parents, and yet should appear in the Fullness of Time to have been peculiarly adapted to the Event, which he from the Beginning saw, and which he intended the World should one Day see; and which when they should see, they might the more easily acknowledge to be the Work of his Hand, by the secret Evidence which he had inclosed from the Days of old in the Words of Prophecy. However the Wit of Man may dispise this Method, yet there is nothing in it unbecoming the Wisdom of God. And when we see this to be the Case, not only in this Instance, but in many other Prophecies of the Old Testament, it is not without Reason we conclude, that