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Watson, Richard
A Collection of theological tracts, in six volumes
COLLECTION
OF
THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,
IN SIX VOLUMES.

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SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

M.DCC.XCI.
TO THE

QUEEN.

MADAM,

No original work of mine could possibly have been so deserving of Your Majesty's attention, as this Collection of other men's labours undoubtedly is. Our Infancy is indebted to that Sex of which Your Majesty is the highest Ornament, for the first principles of Religious Education; and as one of the main objects of this
this publication is—the preserving Youth from Infidelity—I cannot do the Public a greater service than by requesting Your Majesty to give it your protection.

The interests of civil Society require that we should pay deference to persons of Rank, even though they happen not to be persons of Merit. But this is a limited and constrained deference; it is paid with reluctance; and is both in kind and extent wholly unlike that which all good Citizens are ambitious of shewing to Your Majesty. My character has hitherto, I trust, never been esteemed that of a Flatterer; nor do I fear the imputation of it, in saying, That to Your Majesty’s Rank alone I would not have given even this mark, worthless as it may seem, of my Veneration and Respect.

I verily believe Your Majesty to be one of the best Wives, and one of the best Mothers, in England. The Time is approaching,—distant may it be! when the recollection of the example which You have shewn to Women of every Rank, in these great points of female Duty (the greatest on which Women of the highest Rank ought to build their worth of character), will give Your Majesty far more comfort than I can possibly describe; but not more than I, in conjunction with Thousands
DEDICATION.

Thousands in every part of the Kingdom, heartily wish and pray Your Majesty may at all times, and especially at that time, enjoy.

I am,

MADAM,

With the greatest and most sincere Respect,

Your MAJESTY's

Most obedient Servant,

RICHARD LANDAFF.
CONTENTS
OF THE
FIRST VOLUME.


This Book deserves to be generally known; it has been for some Years out of Print, and much fought after by the Clergy: I thought I should do them an acceptable Service in making it a part of this Collection.


These two Volumes were published in French, the First in London, and the Second at Amsterdam, much about the same Time that they made their Appearance in English. They were spoken of with Respect in the Acta Eruditorum for 1688; were translated into German at Nuremberg in 1702; and have been always held in great Repute for the Plainness and Erudition with which they are written. The Author was a French Refugee of distinguished Learning and Integrity; the Reader will meet with a good Account of his Life and Writings in the Biographia Britannica.
IN publishing this Collection of Theological Tracts I have had no other end in view, but to afford young persons of every denomination, and especially to afford the Students in the Universities, and the younger Clergy, an easy opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the grounds and principles of the Christian Religion than, there is reason to apprehend, many of them at present are. My first intention was to have admitted into the Collection, such small tracts only in Latin or English, on Theological Subjects, as had sunk into unmerited oblivion; but, on mature reflection, I thought it better to consult the general utility of the younger and less informed Clergy, than to aim at gratifying the curiosity, or improving the understanding, of those who were more advanced in years and knowledge. Instead therefore of confining myself to single tracts, I have not scrupled to publish some entire books; but they are books of such acknowledged worth, that no Clergyman ought to be unacquainted with their contents; and by making them a part of this Collection, they may chance to engage the attention of many who would otherwise have overlooked them. It would have been an easy matter to have laid down an exten five plan of study for young Divines, and to have made a great shew of learning by introducing into it a Systematic Arrangement of Historians, Critics, and Commentators, who, in different ages and in different languages, have employed their talents on Theological Subjects. But there is a fashion in study as in other pursuits; and the taste of the present age is not calculated for the making great exertions in Theological Criticism and Philology. I do not consider the Tracts which are here published as sufficient to make what is called a deep Divine, but they will go a great way towards making, what is of more worth—a well-informed Christian. In Divinity, perhaps, more than
in any other science, it may be reckoned a virtue aliqua necire; for what Quintilian observes of historical, is certainly very applicable to an abundance of Theological writings.——Persequi quidem quod quisque umquam vel contemptissimorum hominum dixerit, aut nimia miferiae, aut inanis jactantiae est; et detinet atque obruit Ingenia, melius aliis vacatura.

If any thing can revive a sense of Religion in the higher classes of life; preserve what still remains of it amongst men of middling fortunes; and bring back to decency of manners and the fear of God, the lowest of the people; it must be—the Zeal of the Clergy. But Zeal, in order to produce its proper effect, must be founded in knowledge: it will otherwise (where, from some peculiar temperament of body or mind, it happens to exist at all) be unsteady in its operation; it will be counteracted by the prejudices of the world, the suggestions of self-interest, the importunities of indolent habits; or it will be tainted by Fanaticism, and instead of producing in every individual sober thoughts of his Christian duty, it will hurry into dangerous errors the ignorant and unthinking, and excite the abhorrence or derision of men of sense. I have therefore, in selecting the works which compose this publication, not so much attended to the discussion of particular doctrines, as to the general arguments which are best adapted to produce in the Clergy, and in others who will consider them, a well-grounded persuasion that Christianity is not a cunningly devised fable, but the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. That Clergyman who is a Christian, not because he happens to have been born in a Christian country, but from rational conviction, will never think himself at liberty to make light of his calling; to suit his instructions to the vicious propensities of his audience; to scandalize his profession by a conformity with the ungodly fashions of the world; to be ashamed of the Cross of Christ, though he should see it attacked by the subtlety of Sophists, or ridiculed by the wanton audacity of profane men. A deficiency of Zeal indeed in religious concerns does not always proceed, either in the Clergy or Laity, from a want of Knowledge: sensual appetites, ungoverned passions, worldly customs, all combine together in making most men languid in the performance of even clear and acknowledged duties; yet it must be confessed, that a firm belief in the truth of Christianity resulting from a comprehensive view of the proofs by which it is established, is the most probable mean of producing in all men integrity of life; and of animating, especially, the Ministers of the Gospel, to a zealous and discreet discharge of their pastoral functions.

Young
Young men who are ordained from Country Schools are frequently, when settled in their Curacies, at a loss what course of studies to pursue: and many of them, as well as many of those who have had the benefit of an University-Education, are unhappily in no condition to expend much money in the purchase of Theological books, even if they knew how to make a proper selection. Both these difficulties are, I hope, in some degree obviated by this publication; which contains nearly as much matter as three times the number of ordinary volumes of the same size; and the matter itself has been taken from Authors of such established reputation, that he who will take the pains to read and digest what is here offered to him, will have acquired no considerable knowledge in Divinity. But in Divinity, as in every other study, a man must think much for himself; those who have gone before in the same pursuit may point out the road to him, but that is the main good they can do him: if he loiters in his progress, waiting for the vigilance of others to push him on, he will never get to his journey's end. The Lectures of Professors and Tutors are doubtless of great use in every science; but their use does not consist so much in rendering the science intelligible, if we except the first Elements of the abstract Sciences, as in directing the attention of the Students to the best books on every subject; and if to this they add a frequent examination into the progress which the Students have made, they will have done all that reasonably can be expected from them. The Republic of Letters is in very different circumstances in the present age from what it was three centuries ago: the multiplicity of books which, in the course of that period, have been published in every Art and Science, has enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, and given every man an opportunity, if he be not wanting to himself, of becoming skilled in that branch of Literature which he shall think fit to cultivate. And to speak the truth, though there may be some dark points in Divinity which the labour of Learning may still illustrate, yet new books are not so much wanted in that Science, as inclination in the younger Clergy to explore the treasures of the old ones.

A young man destined to the Church, who thinks that he has completed his Education as soon as he has taken his first degree in Arts, and quitted the walls of his College, is under a very great mistake. His memory may have been flocked with a great abundance of Classical Knowledge; his mind may have been expanded by a general acquaintance with the several branches of Natural Philosophy; his reasoning faculties may have been strengthened
strengthened by Mathematical Researches; the limits of his understanding may have been in some degree ascertained by the study of Natural Religion; in a word, he may have been admirably fitted to become a Divine: but if, after this preparation, he frops short, giving himself up to rural amusements, misspending his time in idle avocations, blunting his faculties by senfual indulgencies, indolently or arrogantly acquiescing in the knowledge he has acquired, he will never be one.

I am far from wishing to divert the attention of the Undergraduates from that course of studies which is established in this place. There is no University, I believe, in Europe, where the degree of Bachelor of Arts is more honourably obtained than in the University of Cambridge: the sedulity with which the young men, in general, pursue the plan of study which is prescribed to them, is highly commendable; and, if I recommend it to them to let Theology make a part of that plan, it is not from an opinion that Theological studies are more proper for their time of life than any of those in which they are engaged: but from an apprehension, that if they do not make some progress in Divinity, during the first years of their Academical Education, they will have no opportunity of doing it before they will be placed in situations which require a great proficiency in it. The Statutes indeed of the University, and of many private Colleges, though they point out Theology as the ultimate End of all our studies, do not order us to study Divinity till we have studied almost every other branch of Science: but it ought to be remembered that, at the time these Statutes were made, young men were admitted into the University about the age of fourteen; and consequently commencing Masters of Arts about the age of twenty-one, they had a considerable interval, even after taking their second degree in Arts, in which they might prepare themselves for entering into holy Orders.

It is not the reading many books which makes a man a Divine, but the reading a few of the best books often over, and with attention; those at least who are beginning their Theological studies should follow this rule. I have no scruple therefore in recommending it to the Students in the Universities, to read this Collection twice or thrice over before they take their first degree; the doing this will give little interruption to their other studies; and if it should give a great deal, their time will not be misemployed. Let them dedicate a small portion of every day, or the whole of every Sunday, to this occupation; and, in the course of three or four years, they will easily accomplish the task; and, when it
it is accomplished, they may offer themselves to the Bishops to be
ordained, with a becoming confidence that they are not wholly
unprepared; and they may undertake the most important of all
human Duties—the Cure of Souls—without being alarmed by
a consciousness of their inability to discharge it as becomest
the servants of the most high God. When I thus express myself
concerning the fruits which may be expected from the course of
study here pointed out, I am far from insinuating, that it will su-
percede the necessity of studying the Scriptures themselves, with
the best assistance which can be obtained from Commentators:
on the contrary, I am persuaded that one part of Scripture is
best interpreted by another, and that no sort of reading can con-
tribute so much to the producing of a steady faith, a rational
piety, a true Christian charity of mind (the great ends of all our
studies, and all our pursuits!) as the frequent reading of the
Scriptures.

But the students who are designed for the Church, are not the
only ones to whom I would recommend the practice of setting
apart some portion of their time for religious inquiries; I would
press it with the greatest earnestness and sincerity on the young
men of rank and fortune. I would especially intreat them to
peruse with unprejudiced minds, the whole of this Collection;
but particularly, and with the strictest attention, the First, Fourth,
and Fifth Volumes of it: they will there find such convincing
proofs of the Christian Religion, as will preserve them, I trust,
from that contagion of infidelity which is the disgrace of the age.
It is a very wonderful thing, that a being such as man, placed on
a little globe of earth, in a little corner of the universe, cut off from
all communication with the other systems which are dispersed
through the immensity of space, imprisoned as it were on the spot
where he happens to be born, almost utterly ignorant of the va-
riety of spiritual existences, and circumscribed in his knowledge
of material things, by their remoteness, magnitude, or minuteness,
a stranger to the nature of the very pebbles on which he treads,
unacquainted, or but very obscurely informed by his natural fa-
culties of his condition after death; it is wonderful, that a being
such as this should reluctantly receive, or hastily reject, the
instruction of the Eternal God! or, if this is saying too much,
that he should hastily, and negligently, and triumphanty con-
clude, that the Supreme Being never had condescended to instruct
the race of man. It might properly have been expected, that a
rational being, so circumstanced, would have sedulously inqui-
red into a subject of such vast importance; that he would not have
have suffered himself to have been diverted from the investigation by the pursuits of wealth, or honour, or any temporal concern; much less by notions taken up without attention, arguments admitted without examination, or prejudices imbibed in early youth, from the profane ridicule, or impious jestings of sensual and immoral men. It is from the influence of such prejudices that I would guard that part of the rising generation which is committed to our care, by recommending to them a serious perusal of the Tracts which are here presented to them. Let them not refuse to follow this advice, because it is given to them by a churchman; he can have no possible interest in giving it, except what may result to him from the consciousness of endeavouring to discharge his duty, and the hope of being serviceable to them in this world and the next. They need not question his veracity, when he speaks of religion as being serviceable to them in this world; for it is a trite objection, and grounded on a misapprehension of the design of Christianity, which would represent it as an intolerable yoke, so opposite to the propensities, as to be utterly destructive of the felicity of the human mind. It is, in truth, quite the reverse; there is not a single precept in the Gospel, without expecting either that which ordains the forgiveness of injuries, or that which commands every one to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, which is not calculated to promote our happiness. Christianity regulates, but does not extinguish our affections; and in the due regulation of our affections consists our happiness as reasonable beings. If there is one condition in this life more happy than another, it is, surely, that of him who founds all his hope of futurity on the promises of the Gospel; who carefully endeavours to conform his actions to its precepts; looking upon the great God Almighty as his Protector here, his Rewarder hereafter, and his everlasting Preserver. This is a frame of mind so perfective of our nature, that if Christianity, from a belief of which it can only be derived, was as certainly false, as it is certainly true, one could not help wishing that it might be universally received in the world. Unbelievers attempt to make profelytes to infidelity, by predating upon the minds of the unlearned in Scripture knowledge, the authorities of Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Helvetius, Hume, and other Deistical writers. It is proper that young men should be furnished with a ready answer to arguments in favour of infidelity, which are taken from the high literary character of those who profess it; let them remember then, that Bacon, Boyle, Newton, Grotius, Locke, Euler,—that Addison, Hartley, Haller, West, Jenyns,—that Lords
Nottingham,
Nottingham, King, Barrington, Lyttelton, with an hundred other laymen, who were surely as eminent for their literary attainments in every kind of science as either Bolingbroke or Voltaire, were professed believers of Christianity. I am quite aware that the truth of Christianity cannot be established by authorities; but neither can its falsehood be so established. Arguments ad verecundiam have little weight with those who know how to use any others, but they have weight with the lazy and the ignorant on both sides of the question. But though I have here suggested to young men a ready answer to such of their profligate acquaintance as may wish to work upon their prejudices in favour of infidelity; yet I hope they will not content themselves with being prejudiced even in favour of Christianity: they will find in this Collection, such solid arguments in support of its truth, as cannot fail to confirm them, on the most rational grounds, in the belief of the Gospel Dispensation. They may wonder, perhaps, if religion be so useful a thing as is here represented, that their parents should have seldom or never conversed with them on the subject.—If this should be the fact, I can only say, that it is a neglect, of all others, the most to be regretted. And indeed our mode of education, as to religious knowledge, is very defective; the child is instructed in its catechism before it is able to comprehend its meaning, and that is usually all the domestic instruction which it ever receives. But whatever may be the negligence of parents in teaching their children Christianity, or how forcibly forever the maxims and customs of the world may conspire in confirming men in infidelity, it is the duty of those to whom the Education of youth is intrusted, not to despair: their diligence will have its use; it will prevent a bad matter from becoming worse; and if this foolishness of preaching, into which I have been betrayed on this occasion, has but the effect of making even one young man of fortune examine into the truth of the Christian Religion, who would not otherwise have done it, I shall not repent the having been instant out of season.

Disce, O Miseri, et causas cognoscite rerum
Quid sumus, et quidnam visuri gignimur: ordo
Quis datus;—quem te Deus effe
Jussit.——

These were questions which even the Heathen Moralists thought it a shame for a man never to have considered. How much more cenrurable are those amongst ourselves who waste their days in folly
PREFACE.

Folly or vice, without ever reflecting upon the providential dispensation under which they live, without having any sublime piety, any purer morality, any better hopes of futurity than the Heathens had?

In recommending this Collection to the careful perusal of the younger Clergy, I would not be understood to vouch for the truth of every opinion which is contained in it; by no means; there is no certainty of truth but in the word of God. Their Bible is the only sure foundation upon which they ought to build every article of the faith which they profess, every point of doctrine which they teach. All other foundations, whether they be the decisions of councils, the confessions of churches, the precepts of popes, or the expositions of private men, ought to be considered by them as fandy and unsafe, as in no wise fit to be ultimately relied on. Nor, on the other hand, are they to be hastily rejected, as of no use; for though the Bible be the one infallible rule by which we must measure the truth or falsehood of every religious opinion, yet all men are not equally fitted to apply this rule; and the wisest men want on many occasions all the helps of human learning to enable them to understand its precise nature, and to define its certain extent. These helps are great and numerous; they have been supplied in every age, since the death of Christ, by the united labours of learned men in every country where his religion has been received. Great Britain has not been backward in her endeavours to establish the truth, and to illustrate the doctrines of Christianity: she has not abounded so much in systematic Divines as Germany and Holland have done; yet the most difficult points of Theology have been as well discussed by our English Divines, as by those of any other nation. In proof of this, I might mention the works of Pearson, Mede, Barrow, Burnet, Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Clarke, Tillotson, Taylor, Benson, Jortin, Secker, and an hundred others; but the sermons preached at Boyle's Lecture, and the Collection of Tracts against Popery, render every other argument in support of the observation wholly unnecessary. The freedom of inquiry too, which has subsisted in this country during the present century, has eventually been of great service to the cause of Christianity. It must be acknowledged that the works of our Deistical writers have made some few converts to infidelity at home, and that they have furnished the Esprits forts of France, and the Frey-Geißers of Germany, with every material objection to our religion, which they have of late years displayed with much affectation of originality: but at the same time, we must needs allow,
that these works have stimulated some distinguished characters amongst the Laity, and many amongst the Clergy, to exert their talents in removing such difficulties in the Christian system, as would otherwise be likely to perplex the unlearned, to shipwreck the faith of the unstable, and to induce a reluctant scepticism into the minds of the most serious and best intentioned. Some difficulties still remain; and it would be a miracle greater than any we are instructed to believe, if there remained none; if a being with but five scanty inlets of knowledge, separated but yesterday from his mother Earth, and to-day sinking again into her bosom, could fathom the depths of the wild and knowledge of Him which is, which was, and which is to come,—the Lord God Almighty, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

We live in a disolute but enlightened age; the restraints of our Religion are ill suited to the profligacy of our manners; and men are soon induced to believe that system to be false, which we wish to find so; that knowledge, moreover, which spurns with contempt the illusions of fanaticism and the tyranny of superstition, is often unhappily misemployed, in magnifying every little difficulty attending the proof of the truth Christianity, into an irrefrangible argument of its falsehood. The Christian Religion has nothing to apprehend from the strictest investigation of the most learned of its adversaries; it suffers only from the misconceptions of fciolists, and silly pretenders to superior wisdom: a little learning is far more dangerous to the faith of those who possess it, than ignorance itself. Some, I know, affect to believe, that as the restoration of letters was ruinous to the Romish Religion, so the further cultivation of them will be subversive of Christianity itself: of this there is no danger. It may be subversive of the Reliques of the Church of Rome by which other churches are still polluted; of persecutions, of anathemas, of ecclesiastical domination over God's heritage, of all the silly outworks which the pride, the superstition, the knavery of mankind have erected around the citadel of our faith; but the citadel itself is founded on a rock, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, its master-builder is God; its beauty will be found ineffable, and its strength impregnable, when it shall be freed from the frippery of human ornaments, cleared from the rubbish of human bulwarks. It is no small part of the province of a teacher of Christianity, to distinguish between the word of God, and the additions which men have made to it. The objections of unbelievers are frequently levelled against what is not Christianity,
Christianity, but mere human system; and he will be best able to defend the former, who is least studious to support the airy pretensions of the latter. The effect of established systems in obftructing truth, is to the last degree deplorable: every one sees it in other churches, but scarcely any one suspects it in his own. Calvin, I question not, thought it almost impossible that the Scriptures could ever have been so far perverted as to afford the Romanists any handle for their doctrine of Transubstantiation, or that the understanding of any human being could have been so far debased, or rather so utterly annihilated, as to believe in it for a moment: yet this same Calvin followed St. Augustine in the doctrine of absolute personal reprobation and election, inculcating it as a fundamental article of faith, with nearly the same unchristian zeal which infatuated him when he fastened Servetus to the stake. A thousand instances of this blind attachment to system might be taken from the Ecclesiastical History of every century; indeed the whole of it is little more than the history of the struggles of different sects to overturn the systems of others, in order to build up their own; and the great lesson which every sect, and every individual of every sect, ought to learn from its perusal, is—Moderation. Want of genuine moderation towards those who differ from us in religious opinions, seems to be the most unaccountable thing in the world. Every man, who has any religion at all, feels within himself a stronger motive to judge right, than you can possibly suggest to him; and, if he judges wrong, what is that to you? To his own manner he standeth or falleth; his wrong judgment may affect his own salvation, it cannot affect yours; for, in the words of Tertullian—nec alii obeñt aut prodeñt alterius religio: this you must admit, unless you think it your duty to instruct him; but instruction may be given with moderation; and considering that the Bible is as open to him as it is to you, you ought not to be over certain that it is your duty to press your instruction upon him; for what is, ordinarily speaking, your instruction, but an attempt to bring him over to your opinion? This principle should be received with great caution, or it may do much mischief; for it is on this principle that the Roman Catholics light up the fires of the Inquisition, and compass sea and land to make a profelyte—a profelyte! to what we Protestants believe to be the delusion of Satan, the very canker of Christianity, the grand apostasy from the Gospel foretold by St. Paul. The Catholics however in this point act consistently; for, believing in the infallibility of their church, they have a plea for their
their zeal in bringing every one within its pale, which can never be urged by Protestants, with any shadow of justice and propriety.

There are many questions in Divinity, in the investigating of which the mind fluctuates with an irksome uncertainty, unable to perceive such a preponderance of argument as will warrant it in embracing as true, either the one side or the other. This hesitation arises, in many cases, from our not understanding the full meaning of the language, be it common or figurative, in which a doctrine is revealed. In some, it proceeds from our attempting to apprehend definitely, what is expressed indeterminately or clearly, what God hath not thought proper clearly to reveal; in others, it is to be attributed to an indecision of temper, to which some men are peculiarly subject: but let it originate from what cause it may, it is far more tolerable than an arrogant temerity of judgment. A suspicion of fallibility would have been an useful principle to the professors of Christianity in every age; it would have choked the spirit of persecution in its birth, and have rendered not only the church of Rome, but every church in Christendom, more shy of assuming to itself the proud title of Orthodox, and of branding every other with the opprobrious one of Heterodox, than any of them have hitherto been. There are, you will say, doubtless, some fundamental doctrines in Christianity.—Paul, the Apostle, has laid down one foundation; and he tells us, that other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus—The Christ. But this proposition—Jesus is the Messiah—includes, you will reply, several others, which are equally true. I acknowledge that it does so; and it is every man’s duty to search the Scriptures, that he may know what those truths are; but I do not conceive it to be any man’s duty, to anathematize those who cannot subscribe to his catalogue of fundamental Christian verities. That man is not to be esteemed an Atheist, who acknowledges the existence of a God, the Creator of the universe, though he cannot assent to all the truths of natural religion, which other men may undertake to deduce from that principle: nor is he to be esteemed a Deist, who acknowledges that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world, though he cannot assent to all the truths of revealed religion, which other men may think themselves warranted in deducing from thence. Still you will probably rejoin, there must be many truths in the Christian religion, concerning which no one ought to hesitate, inasmuch as, without a belief in them, he cannot be reputed a Christian.—Reputed! by whom? By Jesus.
Jesu Christ his Lord and his God, or by you?—Rash exposto

itors of points of doubtful disputation; intolerant fabricators

of metaphysical Creeds, and incongruous Systems of Theology! Do you undertake to measure the extent of any man's understand

ing, except your own; to estimate the strength and origin of his habits of thinking; to appreciate his merit or demerit in the use of the talent which God has given him, so as unerringly to pronounce that the belief of this or that doctrine is necessary to his salvation? It is undoubtedly necessary to yours, if you are persuaded that it comes from God; but you take too much upon you, when you erect yourself into an infallible judge of truth and falsehood. We, as Chris
tians, are under no uncertainty as to the being of a God; as to his moral government of the world; as to the terms on which sinners may be reconciled to him; as to the redemption that is in Jesu Christ; as to a resurrection from the dead; as of a future state of retribution; nor with respect to other important questions, concerning which the wisest of the Heathen Philo
sophers were either wholly ignorant, or had no settled notions. But there are other subjects on which the Academicorum εκτοκοι may be admitted, I apprehend, without injuring the foundations of our Religion: such are the questions which relate to the power of Evil Spirits to suspend the laws of nature, or to actuate the minds of men; to the materiality or immateriality of the human soul; the state of the dead before the general resurrec
tion; the resurrection of the same body; the duration of future punishments; and many others of the same kind. Some one will think that I here speak too freely, and accuse me, probably, as an encourager of sceptical and latitudinarian principles. —What! Shall the church of Christ never be freed from the narrow-minded contentions of bigots; from the insults of men who know not what spirit they are of, when they would flint the Omnipotent in the exercise of his mercy, and bar the doors of heaven against every foot but their own? Shall we never learn to think more humbly of ourselves, and less despicably of others? to believe that the Father of the universe accommodates not his judgments to the wretched wranglings of pedantic Theologues; but that every one, who, with an honest intention, and to the best of his ability seeketh the truth, whether he findeth it or not, and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of him? I have no re

gard for latitudinarian principles, nor for any principles, but the principles of Truth; and Truth every man must endeavour to investigate for himself; and, ordinarily speaking, he will be most successful
successful in his endeavours, who examines, with candour and care, what can be urged on each side of a greatly controverted question. This sort of examination may, in some instances, produce a doubt, an hesitation, a diffident suspension of judgment; but it will at the same time produce mutual forbearance and good temper towards those who differ from us; our charity will be enlarged, as our understanding is improved. Partial examination is the parent of pertinacity of opinion; and a sordid propensity to be angry with those who question the validity of our principles, or deny the justness of our conclusions, in any matter respecting philosophy, policy, or religion, is an infallible mark of prejudice; of our having grounded our opinions on fashion, fancy, interest; on the unexamined tenets of our family, sect, or party; on any thing rather than on the solid foundation of cool and dispassionate reasoning.—Hicacos intra muros peccatur et extra—Churchmen as well as DifTenters, and diffenters as well as churchmen, are apt to give a degree of assent to opinions beyond what they can give a reason for; this is the very essence of prejudice: it is difficult for any man entirely to divest himself of all prejudice, but he may surely take care that it be not accompanied with an uncharitable propensity to stigmatize with reproachful apppellations, those who cannot measure the rectitude of the Divine dispensations by his rule, nor seek their way to heaven, by insinulating on the path which he, in his overweening wisdom, has arrogantly prescribed as the only one which can lead men thither.

This intolerant spirit has abated much of its violence in the course of this century amongst ourselves: we pray to God that it may be utterly extinguished in every part of Christendom, and that the true spirit of Christianity, which is the spirit of meekness, peace, and love, may be introduced in its stead. If different men, in carefully and conscientiously examining the Scriptures, should arrive at different conclusions, even on points of the last importance; we trust that God, who alone knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him that is in error. We trust that he will pardon the Unitarian, if he be in an error, because he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an Idolater, of giving that glory to another which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worshipper of Jesus Christ be in an error, we trust that God will pardon his mistake, because he has fallen into it from a dread of disobeying what he conceives to be revealed concerning the nature of the Son, or commanded concerning the honour to be given him. Both are actuated by the same principle.—THE FEAR
PREFACE.

OF GOD; and, though that principle impels them into different roads, it is our hope and belief, that, if they add to their faith charity, they will meet in heaven.—If any one thinks differently on the subject, I will have no contention with him; for I feel no disposition to profylete others to any opinion of mine: esteeming it a duty to speak what I think, I have no scruple in doing that; but to do more is to affect a tyranny over other men's minds; it is to encounter not only the reason, but the passions, prejudices, and interests of mankind; it is to engage in a conflict, in which Christian charity seldom escapes unhurt on either side.

Too much pains cannot be taken by the Clergy in examining the external and internal evidences of the truth of the Gospel, in order that they may generate in their own minds a full conviction of the unspeakable importance of the work in which they are engaged; but that conviction being once produced, their time will be far more usefully employed in discharging their pastoral office with fidelity, than in weighing the importance of all the discordant systems of faith, which have in different ages and countries, not merely occupied the attention of Schoolmen and Monks, but unheathed the swords of princes, and polluted the temple of Christ with more blood than was ever shed on the altars of Moloch, or in honour of Vitzlliputzu, the God of Mexico. Happily for our age, this spirit of persecution is well nigh extinguished; for notwithstanding the sad fate of the Calas family in France; notwithstanding the demon of fanaticism which spread its delusion over London and Edinburgh, on the relaxation of the laws against Popery; notwithstanding the burning zeal of a few furious bigots amongst every sect of Christians; still may we foretel, from observing the signs of the times, that the era is approaching very fast, when Theological Acrimony shall be swallowed up in Evangelical Charity, and a liberal toleration become the distinguishing feature of every church in Christendom. The ruling powers in Protestant and Catholic states begin at length every where to perceive, that an uniformity of sentiment in matters of religion is a circumstance impossible to be obtained; that it has never yet existed in the church of Christ, from the Apostolic age to our own; and they begin to be ashamed of the fines, confiscations, imprisonments, tortures, of all the unjust and fanquinary efforts which they have severally made use of to procure it. They perceive too that a diversify in religious opinions may subsist among the subjects of the same state, without endangering the common weal; and they begin to think it reasonable, that no
no man should be abridged in the exercise of natural rights, merely on the score of Religion. These enlarged sentiments proceed not, I would willingly hope, from what the Germans have called Indifferentism in Religion; but partly from a perfect knowledge of its true end, which is Charity; and partly from that consciousness of intellectual weakness, which is ever most conspicuous in minds the most enlightened; and which, wherever it subsists, puts a stop to dogmatism and intolerance of every kind.

The Books and Tracts which I have here printed, are all of them so well known, that there is little need to give a long account of any of them. I have chosen them out of a great variety, which suggested themselves to my mind; but I have no expectation that every one should be pleased with the choice which I have made. I once knew a Divine of the Church of England, of great eminence in it, and deservedly esteemed a good scholar, who, having accidentally taken up, in a friend's apartment, a book written by a Dissenter, hastily laid it down again, declaring, that "he never read dissenting Divinity." I ought to apologize to Men of this Gentleman's opinion, for having made so much use of the works of the Dissenters in this Collection; but the truth is, I did not at all consider the quarter from whence the matter was taken, but whether it was good, and suited to my purpose; it was a circumstance of utter indifference to me, whether it was of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, provided it was of Christ.

As this Collection will probably fall into the hands of some, who may wish to become acquainted with the sort of Questions which are usually maintained by those who proceed to the degree of Bachelor or Doctor in Divinity, I thought it might be of service to them, if I put down a few of those which have been publicly disputed on in the Theological Schools at Cambridge, within the last twenty-five or thirty years. I have not observed much order in arranging the questions: the reader will remark, that they are not all of equal importance; and, what he may judge more extraordinary, he will perceive, that the same doctrine is not maintained in them all. With regard to their importance, that must be expected to be variable, as they have been proposed by men of very different talents and judgements. A sameness of doctrine might indeed have been secured by the Professor, without whose approbation no question can be proposed for disputeation: but I, for my part, (though some will probably blame me for it) have thought it more liberal and reasonable to suffer this contrariety,
contrariety, in some instances, to take place, than to oblige men to support what they did not believe, or to preclude them from supporting what they did believe to be revealed in the Scriptures. Truth, I hope, has not suffered from this conduct: the mere acceptance of a question is not understood to lay the Professor under any obligation to support it in the disputation; if he thinks it not founded in the word of God, it is his duty to endeavour to shew the Respondent wherein he is mistaken; and if he be not able to do that, still there is no fear of error being established by his inability to detect it, when it is considered before what a learned audience the disputation is held; that the Respondent must either be a Bachelor of Divinity, or a Master of Arts, of four years standing; and that three Masters of Arts are the regular Opponents at every Divinity Act.
PREFACE.

QUÆSTIONES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ
IN ACADEMIA CANTABRIGIENSII,
AB ANNO 1755 USQUE AD ANN. 1785,

Publicè disputatae sub Praedidio S. Theologiae Professorum Reg.

THOMÆ RUTHERFORTH, RICARDI WATSON.

QUÆST.

1 NON fuit Deo indignum mortis poena fancire, ne primi hominum generis parentes unius cujusdam arboris fructu veferentur.

2 Quod genus humanum fit laboribus et morti subjectum propter Adam peccatum, docetur in facra pagina, nec est rationi contrarium.

3 Lapsus olim suisse Angelorum patet ex facris literis.

4 Verus erat serpens, per quem Eva decepta fuit; sed facultatibus, quæ ipfì non essent naturaliter insita, utebatur.

5 Universalis serpentum cultus apud Gentiles ad confirmandam generalèm interpretationem Diaboli sub serpenti forma latentis, prout in facris Scripturis traditur, aptè convenit atque inde derivari videtur.

6 Praæscientia divina non erat causa lapsús Adami.

7 Peccatum originis non est in imitatione Adami situm, sed est vitium et depravatio naturæ cujuslibet hominis ab Adamo propagati.

8 Lapsus Adami humanam naturam ad peccatum procliiviorem redidit.

9 Christus ante erat quam humana natura ab eo induebatur.

10 Non fuit indignum Filio Dei, hominum generis redimendi causa, humanam naturam induere.

11 Sacrificia jussu Dei principio sunt constituta.

12 Sacrificia principio constitueta sunt ut essent typi mortis Christi.

13 Remissio peccatorum per Mediatorem et Sacrificium vicarium haud Deo est indigna.

14 Satisfaciæ pro peccatis hominum per mortem Christi non repugnat rationi.

15 Christum ipsum inson tem, a Deo ad mortem datum esse pro fontibus, est credibile.

16 Quod traditur in facris Scripturis de lapsu, redemptione, et futuro flatu humani generis, non contradicit divinis perfectionibus.

17 Christiana revelationis inventa superat rerum divinarum numero et certitudine.

18 Ratio sola nullam potest invenire conditionem, qua Deus velit hominibus dare peccatorum veniam et impunitatem.
Mors Christi est propria et plena satisfactio pro peccatis hominum.
Chri tus pro omnibus est mortuus.
Opera ju torum vitam æternam per se non merentur.
Justitia Christi non est hominibus imputatur, ut Dei judicio, ipsi cen saunt eam præstitisse.
Coram Deo homo reputatur justus non propter meritum suum, sed propter meritum Jesu Christi, per fidem in ejus nomine.
Neque docent sacrae Scripturae, neque articuli Ecclesiae Anglicanae, Christi justitiam nobis imputari in justificationem, sed fidem solam.
Paulus et Jacobus, quamquam de hominum justitiae verbis discrepare videantur, sententiis tamen non discrepant.
Justificatio nec sine fide et poenitentia potest comparari, nec sine fidei et poenitentiae fructibus conservari.
Sacrae Scripturae nullibi docent homines per fidem solam, bonorum operum fructibus carentem, suprema die justificantos.
Non est ea religionis Christi ratio, ut omnibus qui per eam justi apud Christum habantur, certa salutis consequendae fiducia in hac vita ingeneretur.
Fides Christiana nec cum ab hominibus sustipiatur, nec postquam suscepta sit, rationis usum asperrurn.
Fuit Moses verus Prophet a Deo missus.
Non fuit a Dei natura alienum Israelitas in populum sibi peculiarem eligere.
Moses pæm vitæ æternae Israelitis ostendit.
Distributio praemiorum et pænorum temporali um quæ promissa fuit in libris Mosaicis, non erat pro meritis singulorum, nec in rebus administrandis ita erat acta.
Colligi non potest ex libris Mosaicis veteres Judæos æterna imperium supphlicia apud inferos pati.
Lex Mosaic a non ideo Deo indigna conscend a est, quia docet, Deum iniquitatem patrum in filios visitare.
Pæna talionis, quam lex Mosaic a constituit, non fuit Deo legislatore indigna.
Licentia falsos Deos colendi non fuit Israelitis concessa.
Quod religio Judaica nit minus perfeleta quam Christiana, id nihil probat contra divinam hujus et illius originem.
Israelitæ, spoliis Aegyptiorum auferendis, legem naturæ non violabant.
Non erat Deo indignum Canaanæos Israelitis exscindendos tradere.
Filia Jepthæa non fuit immolata.
Per legem Mosaicam Judæis non licuit pro victimis homines immodmare.
Mandatum Abrahamo datum de immolatione Isaa ci ad mortem Christi represens tandum, haud alienum fuit divinae sapientiae aut justitiae.
Non fuit Deo indignum diras Noachichas in Chamum conficere.
Nullæ in libro Psalmorum obnunciantur diræ, quæ ostendant eos non fuiffe divino instinctu conscriptos,
Scriptura
Scriptura qua docemur "Deum cor Pharoahonis obfirmaffe" nihil in £e continet contra Dei benignitatem; quantum ex ratione aut revelatione tunc temporis Israelitis concessa colligi potest.

Hominibus qui ante diluvium vixerunt non licuit, el ace caula, animalia maftare.

Diluvium olim fuiffe univerfale traditur in sacra Scriptura, nec est historiae vel civili vel naturali contrarium.

Veritas miraculorum, quae in Veteri Teftamento traduntur, cum idololatria moribusque depravatis Judæorum confantem potest.

Vaticinia quibus denunciavit Moæs, Palestiarn ob inobedientiam Judæorum incultam ab hisftero remque futuram esse, hodie impleuntur.

Deus cum dixerit Israelitis, fe prophetam Moæs similem ex fratribus eorum effe excitaturum, hoc promisso simulatem defignavit.

Aliquæ extant prædicitiones, temporibus Moæsi antiquiores, quæ ad Chriftum sunt referendæ.

Ex veterum prophetarum prædictionibus duo Meffiae, alter Davidis alter Josephi filius, non erant in mundum venturi.

Sceptrum quod non ante erat a Judæis disceffurum quam Shiloh adwentnit, poteftatem tribus regendæ designabat.

Israelitæ circumcisionis ritum ab Agyptiis non receperunt.

Mare rubrum, Israelitis per illud tranfeuntibus, ad utrumque iatus inftar muri per miraculum fetit.

Confusio linguarum Babylonica absque Dei interventu explanari nequit.

Miracula sunt idonea argumenta divinae missionis.

Miracula fuisse olim edita fatis probari potest ex humano testimonio.

Credibile est, Deum poffe miracula facere, et interdum velle, et hum uno testimonio patet fecifse.

Miracula non nisi a Deo, aut a Creatura particulari ejus juflu et potentia agent e, efficiuntur.

Magi Ägyptiis vera coram Pharoahone miracula fecerunt.

Tentatio Chrifti in deserto fuit vifio a Deo misfa.

Tentatio Chrifti in deserto non fuit vifio a Deo misfa.

Nec per viutionem, nec per Diabolum, sub qualibet externa forma, fimi liter autem ac homo Chriftus tentabatur.

Miracula in Evangelii tradita historiam cum ipfis conjunctam adeo non infirmant, ut abfque illorum ope rerum geftarum series explicari nequeat.

Chrifti Apoftolis vita defunctis credibile est effe feflasse miracula.

Extraordinaria Spiritus fanefi dona ftabim poft tempora Apoftolorum in Ecclesia Christiana non ceffaverunt.

Spiritus sanefi est perfona.

Chriftianorum officium Spiritum Sanefium colere et precari.

Dantur in Chrifto fidelibus certa quædam Spiritus sanefi auxilia.

Fidei et virtutis adjumenta quæ homines a Spiritu sanefi habent, corum libertatem non tollunt.
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73 Spiritus sanctus interiora fidei ac virtutis adjuncta hominibus ita suppediram solet, ut nullo animi tactu percipientur.

74 Interiores quaedam, Christianae Religionis fucipienda ac praestandae adjuncta, hominum animis a Spiritu sancto subministratunt.

75 Ad Thesauriarn Christianam plene et perfecte intelligendam animo equis ut litteris doctrinisque imbuto.

76 Veritas Christianae Religionis evidentia non a Spiritu sancto insipiatur, sed ex recto rationis usu pendet.

77 Diversa revelationum genera, pro varia rerum et hominum conditione, diversis hominum moribus et ingenii accommodatur.

78 Confilium divinum de redimendo hominum genere, prout Christi temporae accedebant, gradatim aperiebatur.

79 In libris Veteris Testamenti praedictur Christiana Dispensatio.

80 Christus et Apostoli abroganda leges Mosaicae de divina legislatoris auxiliiate non detrahunt.

81 Religionem quam Christus humano generi tradidit non continetur leges naturali detrahtenda.

82 Non est res non offerens quam qualsequie religionem colat.

83 Error in doctrinam religionis speculativam non est innocent.

84 Post Canonem Scripturae confignatum nova revelationes non sunt expectandae.

85 Meffias per veteres prophetas Judaeis promissus non futurus erat rex terebratis.

86 Veritas Christianae revelationis patet ex impletione praedictionum veterum prophetarum.

87 Jesus Nazarenus fuit verus Meffias a Deo promissus.

88 Praevisiones veterum prophetarum non ita citantur in Novo Testamento, quae singulae structum a caeteris ostendenter Jesum esse Meffiam.

89 Claudia Hierotheymatana et status populi Judaici hodiernus pro magno argumento eit veritatis Christianae Religionis.

90 Deus nullam, legi aut vaticinacione significavit, fe nolle Judaeorum quenquam in uliam Christianorum civitatem cive adscriptitium recipi.

91 Propagatio fidei Christianae ante Constantini tempora probat auctoritatem ejus divinam.

92 Conuersio Divi Pauli ortum suum non debutit superstitioni, sed miracula a Deo editis et veritati Christianae Religionis.

93 Ex vita et moribus Christi et Apostolorum Christianae religionis veritates probari potest.

94 Miracula Christi una cum doctrina probant divinam ejus munitionem.

95 Miracula Christi ipsa per se valent ad probandum divinam ejus munitionem.

96 Ad stabilendam revelationis doctrinam non fatis valet interna evidentia.

97 Diffensiones Christianorum, de rebus quae in religione Christiana continentur, non offendunt religionem ipsam esset falam.

98 Variantes lectiones et menda auctoritatem Sacrae Scripturae non labefaciant in rebus ad haec et mores spectantibus.

99 Diffensiones
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99 Diffensiones inter Apostolos de circunnicione gentium divinam Christiānæ religionis auctoritatem non impugnant.

100 Caeteri Apostoli cum Paulo consentiebant, Judæos sine obtemperanda lege Mofaica posse per Christium salutem confecuir.

101 Auctoritas testimoniī quœ Religio Christī confirmatur temporum longinquitate non imminuitur.

102 Nihil in Evangelio Matthæi traditur ex quo probari possit, id scriptumuisse post eum Hierosolymitanum.

103 Apostoli nihil tradiderunt, ex quo intelligamus credidisse eos munere sūrse temporibus sīnum esse habiturum.

104 Religio Christiāna non ideo vituperanda est quod nihil de amicitia privata vel de amore patriæ præscribit.

105 Divina Christiāna religionis auctoritas non imminuitur ex eo quod nondum universalis innotuit.

106 Jesuitae Christi causam male agunt tolerando ritus et ceremonias, quas apud Sinas in honorem Confusii, parentum, caeterorumque majorum esse celebrare.

107 Magistratius jus non competit subditos coercendi ad cultum illum divinum celebrandum, lege licet stabilitum, quem ipsi vel ratione vel revelationi haud contenteum cenfent.

108 Non est libertati Christiānae alienum ut in rebus indifferentibus ad cultum Dei spectantibus ecclesiae auctoritatem habeat.

109 In fidei controversiis nulla datur ecclesiae auctoritas quæ jus tollit privati judicii.

110 Christiānum hominum qui se ad civitatis suæ religionem confor- mare nolint, jus nullum violatur si e munere civilibus leges excludantur.

111 Indulgentia Pontificiis non per conceffa nec rationis, nec sacrī literis, nec reipublicæ saluti repugnat.

112 Vis externa non eft hominibus adhibenda propter religionem quam profinentur.

113 Unaqueque ecclesiae jure postulare potest, ut ii quibus publice docendi munus committat, religionis Christiānae institutionibus, ejus auctoritate comprobatis, afferrent.

114 Et ratione et sacrī Scripturīs contenteum est ut homines ecclesiae divitiā potestati civili subjiciantur.

115 Non est Chrisliānis interdictum, ut quavis de causa fidem suum ullo jurejurando ne astringant.

116 Nulla in civilibus hominum officiis mutatio est facta per Christi religionem.

117 Non est a Christi religione alienum civilii auctoritate recipiæ stabili.

118 Christiāna religio incrementa sua in primis ecclesiae seculis non debuit causis, ut vocantur, secundis, sed partim internæ sub excellebitatem, partim auctoribus sui potestati divinae.

119 Perplicitas facrorum liberorum non efficit ut supervacancem sit homines ad religionem Christi instituere.

120 Ministriis ecclesiae debetur aliquid adpendium.

121 Forma régiminis in ecclesia Anglicana constitut, et verbo Dei et ecclesiae primitivae usu sanctit.
122 Ecclesiasticci regiminis in Anglia et in Scotia constituti, neutra forma, aut juri hominum naturali aut verbo Dei repugnat.

123 A Christi et Apostolorum institutione patet, ordinem suffisse Episcopatus a Presbyteriatu diversum, coque superiorem.

124 Statæ precum formulœ sunt maxime conformes facris Scripturis et ecclesiæ primitivæ praxi.

125 Liturgiae in diversis ecclesiis diversæ, modo facris literis haud adverfentur, non sunt improbandæ.

126 Precatio Dominica est formula quam omnes Christi discipuli in Deo precando adhiberent.

127 Precationis et publicæ et privatae tantum in nomine Christi sunt peragendæ.

128 Creaturam cultu religioso prosequi non licet.

129 E Stephani martyris moribundi precibus patet Jesum Christum esse Deum.

130 Christus summo cultu, quem Deo Patri reddimus, colendum est.

131 Christus qui Mediator novi fœderis est adaequatum objectum cultus religiosi.

132 Fidei in tres personas ejusdem substantialis, potentiae, et æternitatis, Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, unius Dei cultus non repugnat.

133 Mysterioria revelationis non offendunt cam non esse a Deo traditam.

134 Deo indignum non sit ut instituta positiva in religione traderet.

135 Positiva religionis præcepta non minus obligant quam moralia.

136 Duo tantum novi fœderis sacramenta instituit Christus.

137 Confirmatio, peenitentia, ordo, matrimonium, et extrema unctio pro sacramentis Evangelici non sunt habenda.

138 Cœna Dominica Epuli sacrificalis rationem non habet.

139 Nullum in mißa fit sacrificium quo peccata viventium ac mortuorum expiantur.

140 Animus Christianus necessario præcedit dignam Eucharistiam perceptionem.

141 Eucharistia usque ad secundum Christi adventum ab ejus discipulis celebrari debet.

142 Calix Laicis non est denegandus.

143 Doctrina pontificiorum de transsubstantiatione nec rationi, nec sennuum testimonio, nec facris Scripturis consentaneum est.

144 Transubstantiatio non est æque credibilis ac Trinitas personarum in una essentia.

145 Leges Anglicanæ quæ vetant munera reipublicæ cuiquam deferri qui nolit Eucharistiam percipere juxta ecclesiæ Anglicanæ praescriptum Eucharistiae religionem non polluunt.

146 Reclita in ecclesia Anglicana fæcitur ne quis nisi flexis genibus coe nam Domini capiat.

147 Religio Christiana postulat ut qui eam fuscipiant aqua baptizentur.

148 Baptismus parvulorum omnino in ecclesia retinendus est, ut qui cum Christi institutione optime conveniat.

149 Lex Christi non postulat ut omnes qui baptizentur in aquam immersantur.
150 Aquae aperfio seu affutio in baptismate adminiftando non irritum reddit sacramentum.
151 Omne peccatum quod Christiani post baptismum committant, si pene nitendo corrigitur, eos a salute non excludit.
152 SABBatum erat, ante legem per Mosem traditam, a Deo constitutum.
153 Praecepta Mofaica de modo observandi Sabbatum Christianos non obligant.
154 Sabbatum ab ultimo die septimanae recte est inter Christianos ad primum tranflatum.
155 Ad diem Dominicum religiose observandum cuncti Christiani tenentur.
156 DOctrina absoluta prædestinationis cum divinis pugnat attributis.
157 DOctrina prædestinationis et elefectionis ad futurum aut miseriæ aut felicitatis statum ex sacra Scriptura colligi nequit.
158 Praedestinationis Paulina tota spectat ad Gentium vocationem.
159 In libris novi fœderis nihil de prædestinatione traditur quod dili gentiam hominum in officiis praefandis jure imminuat.
160 Sacrae Scripturae nullibi docent eos qui de Chrifto nunquam audire non posse salutem æternam confequì.
161 Salus nostra in fide in Chrifto redemptoris confequar.
162 DOctrina ecclefiæ pontificiæ de purgatorio nullis vel sacra Scripturae vel rationis nititur fundamentis.
163 Sanctorum et Angelorum cultus et invocatio apud pontificios est idololatria.
164 Ipse jejunandi actus per se et sua natura vim et rationem religionis non habet.
165 Confeffio privata facerdoti facta non est ad fallum necessaria.
166 Plebi et indocetis færorum librorum lectio non est interdicenda.
167 Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus constitutus fuit a Chrifto totius ecclefiæ monarcha.
168 In facris libris continentur omnia quæ sunt ad salutem necessaria.
169 Sacra Scriptura est unica Christianæ fidei norma.
170 Nullus est in ecclefiæ judex infallibilis controverfiarum.
171 Characteres hominis peccati in posteriore Paulina ad Theffaloni cenfes epiftola expressi Pontifici Romano apprime conveniunt.
172 Pars historica Novi Testamenti quæ continet eventus divinam opem non exposcentes jure fidem nostram vindicat.
173 Datur status medius inter mortem et refurrectionem.
174 Non datur status medius inter mortem et refurrectionem.
175 Nec felicitas beatorum perfeta nec miseria impiorum extrema erit ante refurrectionem et generale judicium.
176 Jobi de vindice suo videndo fiducia ad spem vitæ futuræ referenda est.
177 Refurrectionis Chrifi probatur testibus fide dignis.
178 Refurrectionis mortuorum patet ex parabola Divitis ac Lazari.
179 Anima a corpore soluta in statu separatœ manet ad refurrectionem.
180 Refurrectionis quæ patetfacta et promiffa est in Evangelio est resurrectionis corporis.
181 Æterna felicitas non patet nisi ex revelatione.
182 Poena improborum erunt aeterna.
183 Beatos in statu glorie se mutuo agnitus esse, nec ratione nec facris
Scripturis refrigeratur.
184 Ex Evangeliiarum et Apostolorum scriptis minime patet qui in
historiis suis servari dicuntur eos ideo vitam aeternam confec-
turos.
185 Christus vera daemonia ejecit.
186 Orculorum responsa antiquitus reddita non a sacerdotum praeeligis
aut humano quolibet artificio, sed a daemonum quos Deus Eth-
nicos illudere paffus est malignitate.
187 Diaconi non ad civile tantum, sed ad sacrum etiam munus initio
funt consti.tuti.
188 Bona Christianorum non sunt omnibus communia.
189 Nec peccavit Christus, nec peccare potuit.
190 Non neceditate quadam impulsi, sed confilio suo obsccutus Judas,
Christus in pontificem manus tradidit.
191 Particularis providentiae doctrina cum ratione et facris Scripturis
consonat.
192 Praecepta de charitate inimicorum quae in facris libris traduntur,
nature hominum apte convenient.
193 Locutus sub novo fceedere Christianis sanguine vesci.
194 Epistola ad Hebraeos a Paulo scripta est.
195 Manus Ebal fuit, in quo Israelitae a Deo justi sunt aram extruere
postquam Jordanem transi?issent.
196 Judaei recte recularunt ne Samaritani templum Dei secum ædifi-
carent.
197 Apostoli omnes intellexerunt linguas Sancti Spiritus afflatu.
198 Christi bene merita afficiunt præsentibus et probos, non impœniten-
tes et reprobos.
199 Praecepta Evangelii quae ad mores spectant tendunt ad humanam
felicitatem promovendam.
200 Christus in mundum venit ut homines non solum doceret, sed redi-meret.

These Questions may be sufficient to give the Reader some
notion of the Subjects which have of late engaged the attention
of the Disputants in the Divinity Schools at Cambridge.
I will afford him an opportunity of contrasting our labours with
those of our Predecessors, without taking upon me to determine
whether we shall derive credit or dishonour from the comparison.
If he should think that we have in some instances a more en-
larged view of the Christian system, and more liberal notions
concerning the manner in which dissentients from our particular
mode of faith and worship ought to be treated than they had, I
will take the liberty to say, that there is room for improvement
in both these points.
In 1634 were published at Cambridge—Determinationes Questionum quarundam Theologicarum, in Academia Cantabrigiensis publice disputatarum—by Doctor Davenant, then Bishop of Salisbury, and formerly Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity.

INDEX QUAESTIONUM.

QUÆST.

1 CONCUPISCENTIA in renatis est peccatum.
2. Papittrum preces pro defunctis sunt inanes.
3 Vere credentes certi esse possunt de sua salute.
4 Nulla est temporalis Papæ potestas super reges in ordine ad bonum spirituale.
5 Infallibilis determinatio fidei non est annexa cathedrae Papali.
6 Ceaa Jesuitarum obedientia est illicita.
7 Non licet Proteffanti salva conscientia missæ interesse.
8 Opera pœnalia non sunt divinae justificationis satisfactoria.
9 Non datur liberum arbitrium in non renatis, ad bonum spirituale.
10 Opera reatorum labe peccati sunt iniquitatis.
11 Civilis juridiciio jure conceditur personis ecclesiaficiis.
12 Renuente magistratu, non licet populo reformationem ecclesiae moliri.
13 Missæ pontificia non est sacrificium propitiatorium pro vivis et mortuis.
14 Antiqui Patres non meruerunt Chrifti incarnationem, nec aliquid ejus circumstantias.
15 Tota poteftas facerdotum est spirituallis.
16 Pronitas ad malum non fluit ex principiis integrae naturæ.
17 Jesuitici pontificii non possunt esse boni fubitati.
18 Cultus religiosus creaturae est idololatria.
19 Rex in regno suo est minor solo Deo.
20 Ecclesia Anglicana juriuitime obligat ad ceremonias.
21 Ecclesia Romana est apostolica.
22 Decretum non tollit libertatem.
23 Sacramenta non conferunt gratiam ex opere operato.
24 In effentia divina nec alius nec accidentis.
25 Praæcipientia divina non est cauæ lapsus humani.
26 Subjectum divinæ prædestinationis est homo lapsus.
27 Papitae tenentur interesse factis Proteftantium.
28 Papæ jurisdiciio non est universalis.
29 Fides implicita non est falutifera.
30 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
31 Omne peccatum est sua natura mortiferum.
32 Confilia quæ vocantur Evangelica, habent quandoque vim praee-cepti.
Doctor Tuckney was elected Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge in 1655; his Prelectiones Theologicae, necnon Determinationes Questionum variarum insignium in Scholis Academicis Cantabrigiensibus habitae—were published at Amsterdam in 1679.

QUÆSTIONES DETERMINATÆ.

1 MAGISTRATUM gerere non repugnat Christi institutis.
2 Humana Christi natura non est ex unione hypostatica Divinum proprietatem particeps.
3 Religio non est vi et armis propaganda.
4 Infallibilitas nulli competit creaturæ.
5 Electio est proflus gratuita.
6 Omne peccatum est sua natura mortale.
7 Ad ministerium ecclesiae sustupiendum ordinarie requiritur legitima vocatio.
8 Christiano licet ex intuitu mercedis operari.
9 Meritum Papisticum ex S. Scriptura non probatur.
10 Purgatorium Papisticum est fictitium.
11 Pœnæ propter peccatum æternæ non sunt iniquæ.
12 Persamæ nec ratione fundatur nec Scriptura.
13 Peccata praeterita et futura non simul remittuntur.
14 Fraudes que vocantur piaæ sunt illicitæ.
15 Nullus affensus constituit rationem fidei justificantis.
PREFACE.

16 Ad redemptionis nostræ *auctóris* tam activa quam passiva Christi spectat obedientia.
17 Deus reputat pro justis non nisi reverà justos.
18 Reclitudo primi parentis non sicut donum supernaturale.
19 Beati in statu glorie se mutuo sunt agnitori.
20 *Auctóris* non est licita.
21 Vere silest certe esse possunt de salute.
22 Credentes tenentur ad obedientiam legis.
23 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
24 Cognitio fana neceflario credendorum est pars religionis essentialis.
25 Regnum Christi personale in terris non est expectandum.
26 Miniftris conjugium non est interdicendum.
27 Intellectus vi fola nativi luminis non percipit salutariter doctrinam Evangelii.
28 Fides justificans a bonis operibus sejungi nequit.
29 Praecepta Evangelica de vita instituenda sunt rectae rationi consensus.
30 Renati in hac vita non possunt perfecte legem Dei adimplere.
31 Externus judex infallibilis in controversiis fidei, nec datur, nec requiritur in ecclesia.
32 Bona opera sunt necessaria ad salutem.
33 Concupiscencia in renatis est peccatum.
34 Quintum Danielis imperium non restat adhuc expectandum.
35 Interna Dei illuminatio non tollit usum neceflarium ministerii Evangelici.
36 Officia ecclesialia sunt lingua vulgo nota celebranda.
37 Verbum Dei externum est ordinarium medium conversionis ad salutem.
38 Indulgentiae pontificiae non nituntur verbo divino.
39 Christus est Patri *opusculum*.
40 Status in quo homo nec justus sit nec injustus non datur.
41 Jacobi sententia de justificatione non est adversaria Paulinæ.
42 Usura legitima non est illicita.
43 Sacrificia sub et ante Mosaicam eceonomiam typi fuerunt Jesu Christi.
44 Divortium matrimoniale non solvit vinculum.
45 Culpa remissa non retinetur poena.
46 Non licet gladio animadvertere in haereticos.
47 Promulgatio est de essentialis legis divinæ.
48 Principes nulli terreno foro sunt obnoxii.
49 Externa silest profeffio dat jus ad sacramenta.
50 Lectio S. Scripture non est interdicenda Laiciis.
51 Characteres Antichristi in Scriptura expressi præcipue conveniunt pontifici Romano.
52 Satisfactio Christi pro peccatis est congrua justitiae et gratiae divinæ.

I once intended to have digested the whole of Theology into a connected series of propositions, with references to such Authors, ancient and modern, as had treated the affirmative and negative side of each, with the greatest clearness and precision.
The mere enunciation of a proposition conveys a degree of useful knowledge; and the various questions which suggest themselves on every important subject in Divinity might be stated with such precision, and made to depend on each other, that they would comprehend in a short compass the marrow of many a bulky treatise, and would at the same time give such a regular and complete view of the whole subject, as constitutes the chief utility of Systematic Treatises. I had made some little progress in this work, when I was seized with a disorder, three years ago, that has rendered me unequal to the exertions which its completion would require. If any person should be induced to undertake a work of this nature, he will find his endeavours much assisted by the Aphorismi per universam Theologiam Breviores, of Cocceus, and by his Aphorismi contra Socinianos et contra Pontificios; by the Colatus Questionum præcipuarum, quæ inter Socinianos religiæque Ecclesiæ reformatae, simul ac Pontificiæ Theologos ventulantur, published in Bishop Barlow's Remains; by a small tract intitled Questiones præcipue, æque unde propostra, de Universal Doctrina Christianorum, Bruxæ 1617; by the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas; for notwithstanding the ridicule which, in these days, attends the mere mention of the Angelic Doctor, I will venture to affirm, that in that work there are, mixed indeed with many difficult subtleties and perverse interpretations of the Scripture, not a few Theological questions of great moment stated with clearness and judgment; by Doddridge's Lectures; by the Theses Theologicae of Hoffius, and of Le Blanc; by the Syntagma Theism in Academic Valenciensi disputaturum; by the Works of Episcopius, Limborch, Turretin, Curcellæus, Buddeus, Calvin, Arminius, Beccius; and by our English Divines, of whom it may be said in general, that they have illustrated particular doctrines of Christianity with more strength of argument, and perspicuity of language, than are to be met with in the writings of the Divines of any other nation.
THE PREFACE.

The Reader is here presented with the plan which Dr. Taylor followed, in leading his pupils to a just and rational acquaintance with the principles of Religion, founded upon an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures.

The importance of this service, and his accountableness in a great measure for the event, were considerations of the last moment, and caused him to compose, and deliver his academical instructions with the utmost circumspection. To his own judgment, after the strictest revival, the principles here advanced, appeared just and scriptural; but he did not therefore presume they were absolutely free from error; much less did he think himself authorized, as a public tutor, to impose his sentiments on young minds with an overbearing hand. That he might do justice to his pupils, and himself, he always prefaced his lectures with the following solemn Charge, which does honor to the Author, and affords a noble precedent to seminaries of learning.

I. "I do solemnly charge you, in the name of the God of Truth, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and before whose judgment-seat you must in no long time appear, that in all your studies and inquiries of a religious nature, present or future, you do constantly, carefully, impartially, and conscientiously attend to evidence, as it lies in the holy Scriptures, or in the nature of things, and the dictates of reason; cautiously guarding against the fallacies of imagination, and the fallacy of ill-grounded conjecture."

II.—"That you admit, embrace, or assent to no principle, or sentiment, by me taught or advanced, but only so far as it shall appear to you to be supported and justified by proper evidence from Revelation, or the reason of things."

III.—"That, if at any time hereafter, any principle or sentiment, by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced, shall, upon impartial and faithful examination, appear to you to be dubious or false, you either suspect, or totally reject such principle or sentiment."

IV.—"That
IV.—“That you keep your mind always open to evidence.—That you labour to banish from your breast all prejudice, prepossession, and party-zeal.—That you study to live in peace and love with all your fellow-christians, and that you steadily assert for yourself, and freely allow to others, the unalienable rights of judgment and conscience.”

Is it possible to adjust the terms between a tutor and his pupils more equitably? But it must here be observed, that Dr. Taylor ever meant, the liberty he claimed for himself, and allowed to others, should be directed by a serious frame of mind, and a real desire to promote practical religion. The enlarged view he had of divine things penetrated his own heart, and had a manifest influence over his practice. He laboured to explain and vindicate the doctrines of Revelation for this reason, that he might most effectually serve the cause of vital Religion.

It were to be wished, that those who are students for the ministry, who choose to consult his writings, may imbibe the same spirit of genuine piety. This will be a never-failing source of weight and credit: and without it, other qualifications will be insufficient for religious improvement.

The Doctor’s whole life being devoted to an impartial study of the Scriptures, not by way of speculation and amusement, but for the most valuable purposes to himself and others, it is no wonder to find him so earnestly recommending them to the serious attention of Christians. This is the important subject of those chapters, which immediately follow the Scheme of Scripture Divinity.

The Editor submits the whole (as the Author would have done) to the candor of every intelligent Reader; desiring that what is here advanced, may be regarded no further than shall appear conformable to truth and Scripture, in suberviency to the best interest of Mankind.
SCHEME
OF
SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of Christian Theology.

CHRISTIAN Theology, or Divinity, is the science which, from Revelation, teacheth the knowledge of God, namely, his nature and perfections, his relations to us, his ways and dispensations, his will with respect to our actions, and his purposes with respect to our being; in order to form in our minds right principles, for our direction and comfort, and in our conversation right practice for securing his favour and blessing.

In natural religion we take our proofs from the natures of things as perceived, considered, and compared by the human mind; but now we advance upon the authority and sense of writings and books; I mean, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, acknowledged by the whole Christian world as a true revelation from God, and as the standard of faith and doctrine.

That God would reveal to us, by such ways as he in his wisdom judgeth most proper, such things as are needful for us to know and to do, for the improvement and happiness of our nature, is perfectly agreeable to his wisdom and goodness, who is our Father, and delighteth in our well-being; and is also perfectly suitable to our circumstances, as mankind are ignorant and weak, and very liable to error and deception. It is consonant to the nature of things, that a father should instruct his child, and that persons of knowledge and learning should teach the ignorant. How much more that God, whose understanding is infinite, and without whom we can know nothing at all, should teach and instruct us all!

And that his instructions should be configned to writing, is also very fit and proper; as this, in fact, is the surest method of preserving them in...
in the world. Tradition from one generation to another is no safe conveyance. The experiment hath been sufficiently tried in the ages before the flood; wherein, though tradition was then greatly favoured by the longevity of mankind, yet we find, that both the Religion of Nature and traditional Revelation were both so far loft, that in the space of 1656 years the earth was filled with violence—for all flesh had corrupted his way upon earth. Gen. vi. 11, 12. And both would have been entirely lost, had not God in an extraordinary manner interposed. Likewise after the flood, notwithstanding any tradition from Noah, idolatry soon overspread the nations, and rendered it expedient for God to devise a new constitution, to prevent a second universal corruption and apostacy. And so false and faithless is Tradition, that for many ages in the Jewish nation, and for many ages under the Gospel, Tradition was, and still is, so far opposed to Revelation, as to obscure and disparage it, and make the commandment of God therein of no effect. Insomuch, that had not a written Revelation by Divine Providence been introduced into the world, and preserved in it, true Religion would have been banished out of it.

The benefit of Revelation is very great: but then it must be faithfully used; otherwise it will be turned against itself, and made the patron of Falsehood and Delusion. Which, in fact, hath been the case. Men, either weak or wicked, have perverted the Scriptures, and reduced them to a subserviency to either their lusts, or preconceived opinions. The latter was remarkably the case in the first ages of Christianity. When any of the Philosophers were converted to the Christian Profession, they generally brought along with them the schemes and notions of the particular sects to which they were attached; those influenced their minds in the study of the Scriptures, and inclined them to wrest the Scriptures into a consistence with their preconceived opinions. Hence it is, that many notions inconsistent with the word of God, and with each other, have been handed down to us from the earliest times under the sacred character of sound Christian Doctrine. And in our own times, we find men pleading the authority of Scripture for a variety of opposite and contradictory sentiments, which therefore cannot all of them be founded upon Scripture.

For the Holy Scriptures, being a Revelation from God, the most perfect and invariable standard of Truth, though written by different persons, living in remote ages, during the space of about 1500 years, from Moses to John, who wrote the Revelation; yet, being a Revelation from God, must be perfectly consistent in all their parts and principles, views and sentiments, express in uniformity of language. For if the language were multiform and various, the sense would necessarily be obscure, and the understanding confounded, and so the ends of Revelation would be defeated. And if, notwithstanding the great changes in customs, dispositions, interests, and religious sentiments, which must, and actually did, happen in so long a tract of time, we do find, that one consistent scheme, in one consistent uniform language, is carried on in all the writings, which compose the Scriptures, we may strongly conclude, that they are a Revelation from God; not the produce of human wisdom, which could never in ages so remote, and for the greatest part so illiterate, have combined
bined to carry on a regular, uniform scheme of religious principles and sentiments, in the same language or modes of expression; but the inspiration or dictates of one Spirit, the Spirit of God. Hence it follows,

I. That in explaining the Scriptures, consistency of sense and principles ought to be supported in all the several parts thereof; and that, if any part be so interpreted as to clash with any other, we may be sure such interpretation cannot be justified. Nor can it otherwise be rectified, than by faithfully comparing Scripture with Scripture, and bringing what may seem to be obscure into a consistency with what is plain and evident.

II. The sense of Scripture can no otherwise be understood, than by understanding the force and import of Scriptural language. And the force and import of Scriptural language can be settled in no method more authentic, than by collating the several passages in which any phrase or expression occurs. Thus, in every view, Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.

III. Figurative expressions should be carefully distinguished from those that are literal; and vice versa. The oriental, and consequently the Scriptural tropes and figures of speech, are very bold, and different from the European.

IV. Single sentences are not to be detached from the places where they stand, but to be taken in connexion with the whole discourse. The occasion, coherence, and connexion of the writing, the argument that is carrying on, the scope and intent of the paragraph, are to be carefully attended to.

V. We should always interpret Scripture in a sense consistent with the laws of natural religion; or with the known perfections of God, and the notions of right and wrong, good and evil, which are discoverable in the works of creation, and in the present constitution of things. The language of Nature is most certainly the language of God, the sole author of Nature. And however the Divine Wisdom may diversify the circumstances of supernatural Revelation, yet the law of Nature, as it is founded in the unchangeable natures of things, must be the basis and ground-work of every constitution of religion, which God had erected. Whence it follows, that the study and knowledge of natural Religion is a necessary introduction to the study and right understanding of Revelation. And we may further conclude that supernatural Revelation, in all its parts and principles, as it certainly is, so it always should be, interpreted and understood in perfect harmony with natural Religion, or the dictates of Reason.

But mistake me not; I do not mean, that the law or religion of Nature is commensurate to Revelation; or, that nothing is to be admitted in Revelation, but what is discoverable by the light of Nature, or by human Reason. So far from that, that the whole of Revelation, properly so called, could never have been discovered by human Reason. And therefore in matters of pure Revelation, it is a very false and fallacious way to begin first with what our Reason may dictate and discover; because our Reason, unassisted by Revelation, in such cases, can discover nothing.
nothing at all. For instance, the consequences of Adam's transgression upon his posterity; the covenant made with Abraham; the nature and mission of the Son of God; the grant of blessings, and of eternal life by him. Concerning those things, we could have known nothing at all, had not God revealed them to us. And in such matters of pure Revelation, the first thing we have to do, is to inquire, not what human Reason can discover, but what God has discovered, and declared in Scripture. But at the same time it is true, that God hath discovered nothing in Scripture inconsistent with what he has discovered in the nature of things exposed to the view of all mankind. And therefore, if we understand any thing in revealed religion, in a sense contradictory to natural religion, or to the known perfections of God, and the common notions of good and evil, which he hath written upon all our hearts, we may be sure we are in an error, and mistake the sense of Revelation.

I. He who would effectually study the word of God, ought, above all things, to be deeply sensible of the infinite value of true knowledge and wisdom; and how absolutely necessary it is to his eternal happiness, to cultivate and improve his intellectual powers, in the use of all those means which God hath put into his hands. The Scriptures are given us, not for amusement, or mere speculation, in perusing the curious remains of antiquity, the language, manners, and Theology of some celebrated ancients; but they are all, from beginning to end, pointed directly at our hearts and lives, to make us wise unto salvation. There we find every rule of the most consummate wisdom, and every principle of truth and comfort; and the whole is designed to refine our nature into its proper excellence, to guide us into the paths of purity, peace, and righteousness; to make us happy in ourselves, and a blessing to all about us; and finally to qualify us for the full enjoyment of God for ever.

But if we are cold and indifferent to any attainments in true wisdom; if we choose to dream, or jest and trifle away the important season of life, despising the glorious advantages we enjoy, while we eagerly pursue the low and transitory things of this world, in neglect of ourselves, of God, and immortality, of all that is truly great and good and excellent, we shall receive little or no advantage from any explications of the Holy Scriptures. We shall not value or relish them, we can have no ground to expect the divine blessing to assist our studies, but have reason to fear we shall be left to ourselves, to wander from God, from truth, and life, in deplorable ignorance and folly. Attend, therefore, to the voice of Divine Wisdom, Prov. ii. 1, &c. My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments within thee, [lay them up as a treasure [אֲשֶׁר in thy heart] so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart unto understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding [as we do for those things, which we most of all desire, and most of all stand in need of]: If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures [as covetous men seek money, andransack the whole world for the treasures, in which they delight: If thus you value, and study to advance the improvement of your minds in knowledge and wisdom]: Then shalt thou understand the fear
fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God [which of all understanding is infinitely the most excellent].

II. But this sense of the value of Divine Knowledge, and this desire to obtain it, must be understood in a connexion with a sincere endeavour to live agreeably to it. For should a person, under the greatest advantages of learning, and with the utmost assiduity study the Scriptures, he will be, after all, but a poor proficient in Divine Knowledge, if he do not bring it home to his heart, and reduce it to practice. It is not speculation, but practice and experience, which renders a man truly skilful in any business. So in Religion, no man can be truly wise and knowing, but he who liveth wisely and virtuously. If ye continue in my word, (faith our Lord, Job. viii. 31.) then shall ye know the truth, and the truth shall make you free [from the darkness of ignorance and error, and the servitude of absurd lufts and passions]. Job. vii. 27. If any man will do his, God's, will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. [He shall see it in its true light, and be convinced that it is perfectly divine.] For (Psal. xxv. 14.) the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant. But (Dan. xii. 10.) the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise [the pious and virtuous] shall understand.

This is to make you sensible, that a sincere desire of true knowledge is a necessary disposition in entering upon the study of the Scriptures; and the obedience to God's commands, in the course of a pious life, is necessary to enlarge and establish the judgment in the knowledge of divine truths.

III. To the effectual study of Scripture, it is necessary, that our minds and hearts be unbiased, unprejudiced, open to the truth, and always quite free to discern and receive it. If our spirits are under the power of prepossession and prejudice, we cannot be well disposed for searching the Scriptures. For instance, if a person, in matters of religion and conscience, is ambitious to gain reputation in the world, or solicitous only to please and recommend himself to a party, how should he study the word of God with the sincere and single view of discovering and embracing the truth, when he is pre-engaged, and all his care is to find what will please his fellow-creatures, and suit his own mean and selfish purposes? Job. v. 44. How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, whose ruling principle is the desire of temporal honour, and the favour of men, and seek not the honour which comes from God only, the honour of a good conscience, and of upright conduct? Or, if we resign our understandings and confinences to the authority of human decisions and decrees; or imbibe the bigotry of a party, which determines a person to retain pertinaciously a fet of religious notions, without considering, or examining, how far they are agreeable to the word of God, our understandings and judgments are locked up, and no longer at liberty to discover the truth.

It is owing to this malignant cause, that great numbers of learned men, who call themselves Christians, will not allow themselves to make inquiry, whether the worship of saints, images, relics, bread, and innumerable other absurd doctrines, and superstitious practices, are agreeable to the truth and purity of the Christian Religion. The error and
iniquity of this conduct in Papists we see and detest. But the same moral cause will in all cases produce the same effects. If we act upon the same vicious principles; if we indulge the like prejudices, and in the same manner wilfully shut our eyes, we shall be more faulty than Papists, because it is contrary to our profession, as Protestants; and shall be equally incapable of seeing the truth and glory of our holy Religion. In studying the Scriptures we should always keep our minds open to evidence, and further discoveries of truth; which is the only way to be more and more solidly establisht in our religious principles; for in no other way can we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesús Christ. Moreover, this is the only possible mean of reducing the Christian world to unity both of hearts and sentiments.

IV. Prayer to God, the Father of Lights, the Fountain of all Illumination, is necessary to the successful study of the Scriptures. Prov. ii. 6. The Lord alone gives wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. Nor hath he appointed any means, how excellent ever in themselves, which exempt us from a dependence upon his blessing. All our springs are in him; and his gracious influences render our endeavours, of any kind, successful. And therefore, when we address ourselves to the study of the holy Scriptures, we should make our supplication to God, that he would open our eyes, that we may behold wonderful things out of his law. Or, in the Apostle's words, (Ephes. i. 17, 18.) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give unto us the spirit of wisdom, and revelation, in the knowledge of him; that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may have just apprehensions of the riches of his wisdom and grace, and that our hearts may be duly impressed with a deep and lafting sense of them.

CHAP. II.

Of the Divine Dispensations, in Scripture called the Ways and Works of God.

The Ways of God מנהנ אידע frequently signify the Rules of Life, which he hath given us to observe. Psal. cxix. 3. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways, i.e. in the law of the Lord, ver. 1. And the Works מנהנ of God may signify the mere operation and productions of his power. But both these words have a more restricted and emphatical signification. רה a Way, signifies also a course of action, a custom, constitution or institution, which any person, or number of persons form to themselves. Prov. viii. 22. The Lord possessed me, Wisdom, in the beginning of his Way, before his Works of old. Prov. xii. 26. The way of the wicked, their course of action, seduceth them. Hos. x. 13. Because thou didst trust in thy way, the schemes and methods,
methods, political or religious, of thy own devising, and in the multitude
of thy mighty men. Amos viii. 14. *The manner, the way, i. e. the
religious constitution, of Beeribeja liveth, subsists, flourishest, not-
withstanding the opposition made to it.  Eloq signifies to constitute, or-
Eccl. iii. 11.

Hence Ways and Works signify the appointments, constitutions, or
Dispensations of God. By which are meant, "The schemes or me-
"thods devised or contrived by the wisdom and goodness of God, to
"discover, or shew himself, his nature and will, his beneficence, hol-
"ness and justice, to the minds of his rational creatures, for their in-
"fruction, discipline and reformation, in order to promote their hap-
"piness." These are the great ends of the Divine Dispensations; and
these the principal points to be attended to, in the explications of
them.

The great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given existence
to a world of moral agents, such as we are. He therefore is our Fa-
ther, and we are his offspring, whom he hath created in love, that in
a right and virtuous use of our rational powers, we may be qualified for
honour and enjoyment in the heavenly world. This seems to be the
highest design the Divine Goodness can form, and the highest excellency
to which our nature can attain. And this may be considered as the
basis of all the Divine Dispensations from the beginning of the world.
For without pious and virtuous dispositions we cannot be qualified for
honour and enjoyment. But pious and virtuous dispositions cannot be
forced upon us, by any external power whatever; they must, in some
degree, be the effect of our own attention and choice. It is, therefore,
becoming the Father of our Spirits, and suitable to beings of our ca-
cpacities and circumstances, that proper means be provided for our in-
struction and discipline. For inference, as God is not the object of any
of our senses, and can be seen only by our understandings, it is proper
that he should set before us, in the frame and furniture of the world, s uch
vivable and various displays of his Being, Power, Wisdom, Justice, and
kind Regards, as may engage our attention, discover his eternal God-
head, and lead us to the acknowledgment, adoration, love, and dutiful
obedience of our Creator, Father, and Benefactor. These are the
works, the dispensations, or constitutions of Nature; whereby our Fa-
ther, as in a glass held before our eyes and thoughts, has shewn him-
selves to us for our instruction in piety and virtue.

But besides the constitution of universal Nature, there are a variety of
dispensations, which are more immediately relative to mankind. As the
being born of parents, to supply the several generations of the world,
whence result fundry relations and duties; the being sustained by food,
covered and sheltered by clothes and habitations, healed by physicians,
taught by the learned and skilful; the infirmities, appetites, and passions
of our constitution; the forming societies for mutual help and commerce;
the institution of government, or the subordination of some to the au-
thority of others, for preserving good order, for the protection of vir-
tue, and the restraint and punishment of vice. Add to these, wars, pesti-
lence,
Of the Divine Dispensations.

Ch. II.

Of famine, earthquakes, and such like events; all these may be reckoned among the Divine Appointments, or Dispensations; some for the exercise of our rational powers in right action; some for discipline, correction, and reformation; but none merely for destruction, except where reformation cannot be effected.

But those Ways, or Dispensations, which in Scripture are considered as the great hinges of Divine Providence, on which his dealings with mankind have turned; or, as the principal events, by which the great purposes and councils of God's will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto. Because right conceptions of these, under their several views, circumstances, and connexions, will greatly contribute to the explaining of Scripture-Theology, and also mark out the proper order and method, in which it may be studied. Let us therefore here, at first setting out, take a general survey of them.

I. The Creation of the World, as above.

II. The Formation of Man after the Image of God.

III. Man, being created capable of enjoying the honours and felicity of heaven, was to be disciplined and proved, in order to his being confirmed in the habits of virtue and holiness; without which, neither man, nor any other rational being, can be fit to see, or enjoy, the Lord. Accordingly, the first most remarkable of God's works, in the newly-created world, was to put the Man, whom he had formed, upon a trial suitable to his circumstances.

IV. Under which trial, man, yielding to temptation, sinned, and so became subjected to the threatening of eternal death.

V. Which heavy doom, God, not willing to destroy his creature, was pleased in mercy, not only to mitigate, but also, man having altered his moral state, thought fit to introduce a new dispensation of grace, in the hands of a Mediator; at the same time, subjecting the human race to a laborious life, to diseases, and to death temporal; and this, in much goodness, to subdue the fleshly Principle, to give a taste of the bitter fruits of sin, to prevent the opportunities and occasions of it; and, by increasing the vanity of the creature, to turn his regards more steadily to the all-sufficient Creator.

VI. But men multiplying in the earth, abused the grace of God, and in about 1656 years time became so wicked, that all flesh had corrupted his way, and the earth was filled with violence. Then, to purge the world from iniquity, and to recover it to a state of righteousness, God created a new thing in the earth, and, by a deluge of water, destroyed that wicked generation, preferring the only Family that remained uncorrupt in the old world, in order to propagate piety and virtue in the new. At the same time, and for the same good purposes, he reduced human life into much narrower bounds.

VII. Not long after the deluge, to prevent a second general corruption, God introduced another dispensation, by confounding the language of mankind; which divided the world into several distinct societies, and, consequently, kept them under a stricter government, and better preserved their liberties, than if the world had been one great Empire.

VIII. Thus the outrage of violence and rapine was, in a good measure, cured. But now mankind fall into a different iniquity, namely, that
that of idolatry; whereby, within 400 years after the flood, the worship and knowledge of the one supreme God was in danger of being utterly lost. To prevent this, the Divine Wisdom erected a new dispensation by calling Abraham from among his idolatrous kindred, and constituting his family the storehouse and standard of divine knowledge. To them he spake and revealed himself at sundry times, and in divers manners, and separated them from the rest of the world, by peculiar laws and religious ceremonies, to secure them from the idolatrous practices of their neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar people, distinguished above all other nations, but with a view to the future great benefit of all nations. And to this day, blest be God, we experience the happy effects of this noble scheme, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very being of the Gospel church.

IX. The family of Abraham, by the divine conduct, was led into Egypt. And when they had been there, under grievous oppression, 215 years, and were grown numerous enough to be a nation, God set himself at the head of them, as their King. And, in a country much esteemed for learning and arts, whither men of genius and curiosity resorted from all other parts, upon this stage, so proper, because so public, God, as the king of Israel, combated the king of Egypt, and his fictitious gods, and displayed his infinitely superior power both to destroy and to save, by many plagues inflicted upon the land of Egypt, and by bringing out the Israelites in opposition to all the forces of the king, and all the obstacles of nature, and settling them, after they had been sufficiently disciplined in the wilderness, in the land of Canaan. Here God set up his peculiar kingdom amongst them; and they alone of all the nations of the earth were the subjects of it, and happy in its singular privileges and blessings; but, at the same time, were exercised with various providential dispensations. The general rule of which, was this: while they adhered to the worship of the true God, they were always prosperous; when they declined to idolatry, they were either oppressed at home, or carried captive into other countries.

X. The long captivity in Babylon was not only a punishment to the Jews, but also a means of publishing the knowledge of the true God over all the Babylonish empire, as appears very evidently in the Book of Daniel. And the division of the Grecian empire, which put an end to the Persian, after the death of Alexander, caused a new dispersion of the Jews, especially into Asia minor, Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, and Libya, where their synagogues were very common. And lastly, when they were subjected to the Roman power, their God and religion became more known over all the Roman empire. Thus the way for the kingdom of the Messiah was gradually prepared. For though the knowledge of God, received from the Jews, made no public reformation of Pagan idolatry, yet it greatly disposed men to receive the Gospel when it should be preached unto them. Some became Jews, many renounced idolatry, and worshipped no other but the living and true God, who, in the Acts of the Apostles, are called, devout Proselytes, Greeks, those that feared God.

XI. Thus we are brought to the coming of Christ, who came in the fulness of Time; for he came as soon as God, by the various methods of his pro-
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providence, had prepared the world to receive him. When God had made ready a people prepared for him, then Christ came, and fully explained the nature, laws, extent, and glory of the kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and most excellent designs of divine wisdom, by giving himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sin of the world.

XII. Then the great mystery of God, the calling of other nations, besides the Jews, into his kingdom and church, was opened, and made manifest by the preaching of the Gospel. For which purpose, he sent out his apostles, furnished with proper powers and credentials, especially the gift of tongues, whereby they were enabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to people of different countries. And by this means, the glad tidings of salvation, and the glorious light and privileges of the Gospel, have reached even to us in Great-Britain, who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth.

XIII. But as Christ came to restore, to explain, and by the most glorious discoveries, and the richest promises, to enforce the law of nature, the true religion of all nations; and consequently, as his design was to erect an universal religion, which should recommend itself to all people, under their several political distinctions, and which, therefore, was to interfere with no political establishments, but should leave them, in every country, just as it found them, teaching the nations only to observe the eternal rules of righteousness in the hope of eternal life; I say, upon this grand, noble, and extensive plan, the Jewish polity would be sunk to a level with all other national governments; and the Jew, on account of any prior national advantages, would have no more claim to the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God, than any of the Gentiles, or nations, who, in any of the most barbarous and despised parts of the earth, should receive the faith of the Gospel. For in the Christian religion there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ, i.e. the faith and obedience, or true religion, which Christ taught, is all, and in all, Col. iii. 11. Thus the Jew is fallen from his superior claims and privileges; and he falls by that very method of divine wisdom and grace, which brought salvation to all other nations. Thus the diminishing of the Jews is the riches of the world, and the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, (Rom. xi. 12, 15.) or the opening a door for the whole world to come into the peculiar kingdom of God.

This is the idea we ought to have of the rejection of the Jews. The grace of God was, and still is, as free to them as to other people, upon their embracing the Gospel; but their political constitution from henceforth gave them no distinction, or privileges in the kingdom of God, above the rest of mankind. And in no long time after the publication of the Gospel, their polity and civil constitution, which otherwise would have remained in full force, and have obliged them to obey its laws, as much as the constitutions of the other kingdoms of the world obliged their several subjects, was quite overthrown, by the destruction of the temple, and the expulsion of the Jews out of the land of Canaan. Which they have not been able to recover, but remain dispersed over the face of the whole earth to this day. Thus the Gospel dispensation was erected, and spread and prevailed everywhere.
XIV. The next of God’s works was the permitting and managing a grand apostacy and corruption of religion in the Christian church, foretold by the Apostles, and at large in the book of the Revelation. After the apostles were removed out of the world, it pleased God to leave the professors of the Gospel, in matters of religion, to their own ignorance, passions and prepossession. Thus the Christian faith, by degrees, was depraved, till the Man of Sin arose, a tyrannical, usurped power, domineering over, and imposing upon conscience, forbidding the use of understanding, and intoxicating the inhabitants of the earth with false and delusive learning, worldly pomp and splendor, religious forcery, and cruel perfection of the truth. This, as it was the propretest mean of producing the most eminent and noblest characters, was to be a long and severe trial of the faith and patience of the saints. In the times of this sad dispensation, it is certain, we are now living; but, we hope, towards the latter end of it. Through the whole course of it God hath variably appeared, both in wrath upon the corrupters of religion, and in mercy for the comfort and support of those who opposed it. And thus the wheels of providence moved on, till the morning of reformation appeared in our happy land, which, for some centuries, hath been gradually advancing, and still continues to advance, towards the perfect day. For a spirit of religious liberty, which hath been long oppressed, revives and gains strength, the scriptures are more carefully studied, ecclesiastical tyranny and perfecution, under every form, more generally detected; and things seem to have a tendency towards love, unity, and concord, the most perfect state of religion in this world.

XV. This must give pleasurable to every good man, and he will cheerfully join his endeavours to bring on the next glorious dispensation, which we have in prospect, when the mystery of God, with regard to the aforesaid corrupt state of religion, shall be finished; when Babylon, in all its principles and powers, shall fall; when the holy city, the new Jerusalem, shall come down from Heaven, and God shall set up a pure and happy state of the church.

XVI. How long that state will continue, we do not certainly know. Nor have we any further clear discoveries of God’s works till the awful day of the resurrection, when the Lord himself shall in person descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and the trump of God. Then all they that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, and shall be judged, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise, under any of the changes and dispensations of this present world, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that work together with God, and endeavour to turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever.

Thus I have given a sketch of the works of God from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. And very beautiful and surprizing would the whole appear, could we see them in a full and clear light. But before we attempt a more particular explication of them in their several views, circumstances, and connexions, we must make a few general remarks, which will assist our conceptions and inquiries.
CONCERNING the foregoing dispensations, we may in a general remark, that as they are devised and executed by God—

I. They are all agreeable to the most perfect rules of righteousness and truth. Nothing false, unjust, or injurious, can be charged upon the divine constitutions. For (Deut. xxxii. 4.) all God's ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he. Psal. cxlv. 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy, steadily acting according to truth, in all his works. See also Rev. xv. 3. And therefore they are in perfect confidence with each other.

II. The ways of God are not to be considered as the effect of necessity, as if the end proposed could not possibly have been otherwise gained; but as the result of wise choice, or divine prudence, preferring such particular methods as preferable to any other, as best adapted to our circumstances, or, all things considered, as the most likely to make mankind wise and happy. For instance, it is by the dispensation of God, that our present life is sustained by food; not because it is impossible we should live in any other way, for God could sustain our life in perfect health and strength by an act of his own immediate power. Again, our food is produced by the influence of the sun, by rain, the fertility of the ground, human labour and skill; not because food could not be otherwise produced, for God could, by an immediate act of his own power, create food for us every day, as he did for the Israelites in the wilderness; but this method of sustaining our life is a contrivance of divine wisdom, to shew himself to our understandings, (for, had we been sustained by an immediate act of divine power, we should have been led to imagine, that, not God, but our own nature, had sustained itself) and to exercise our virtue and industry in providing a subsistence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the works of God, in scripture, are ascribed to his wisdom. See Psal. civ. 24. Prov. viii. 22. Ephes. i. 5, &c.—iii. 9, 10.

III. Affirmedly all the dispensations of God are calculated to promote virtue and happiness. This is the line which runs through the whole, as will appear in our future inquiries into the nature and tendencies of each of them. At present it may suffice to observe, that, however our circumstances may differ from those of our first parents, the end of our being is the same as theirs; and we, as well as they, are upon trial, in order to our having the habits of holiness formed in us, and our being fitted for eternal life. And though it is a sad reflection to consider, how the wickednes of men hath from time to time fatigued the patience of God, yet it must give us pleasure to observe, how his goodness hath applied various remedies to prevent, or heal, the corruptions of mankind. In what way soever men have gone astray from him, his wisdom has never been at loss to find out the most proper expedients to reclaim them. Evidently
Evidently his design is to save a sinful world, and to carry religion, both in its personal influences, and general prevalence, to the highest perfection our present condition will admit (a).

IV. The scriptural dispensations, which have been enumerated, were severally adapted to the then capacities and improvements, the moral state and circumstances of mankind. The several ages of the world may be compared to the several stages of human life, infancy, youth, manhood, and old-age. Now, as a man under due culture gradually improves in knowledge and wisdom, from infancy to old-age, so we may conceive of the world, from the beginning to the end, as gradually improving in mental and religious attainments under the several divine dispensations (b). Which dispensations have been in every period suited to the improvements in knowledge and wisdom, which then subsisted in the world. Adam, when created, may be considered as a child without knowledge, learning, and experience; and therefore the dispensation he was under, was very different from that which we are under, who enjoy the benefit and light of so many preceding dispensations.

Corollary. A preceding dispensation is intended and adapted to introduce and prepare for that which comes after it. Experience is a natural and certain mean of improving in knowledge and wisdom. This is universally true, as well with regard to communities as single persons. It is therefore agreeable to the nature of things, that in a progressive course of knowledge, and moral improvement, what we already have experienced should be a step to further advances; and consequently, in a just plan or scheme of discipline, it is fit, that what goes before, should be adapted to clear and establish what is to come after. Thus mankind, reflecting upon preceding dispensations, will be admonished and directed to reform old errors and corruptions; and thus, even the monstrous apostacy of the church of Rome may serve to introduce and establish that most perfect state of Christianity, which we expect will succeed the dispensation we are now under.

V. All God's dispensations are in a moral way, and adapted to the nature of rational agents. Exod. xiii. 17. Force and co-action destroy the

(a) Now, if such a design shall appear evidently to run through the Books of the Old and New Testament, a man may, with infinitely greater propriety, suppose the most perfect drama (where the finest design is carried on by the best chosen plot, and by the most consistent underplots, and beautiful, well-proportioned incidents) to have been writ by a number of the greatest madmen or idiots, by piece-meal, in different ages; than imagine a thread of such an end and mean running through above 40 writers, in more than 1600 years, to be the work of so many enthusiasts. Or, we may as well suppose the world to be framed by mere chance; or the most magnificent, beautiful, and convenient palace, that the imagination can figure to itself, to be built by men unacquainted with all the rules of architecture, in several distant ages, and without any model to build by, and to be supported by mere chance, through as many more; as imagine such an unity of design and mean, as I have described, to be the result of enthusiasm and accident mixed together. Ed. Barrington's Essay on the Div. Dispensations. Part I. Preface, p. 26.

(b) Ages of a Man. 6. 16. 20. 30. 40. 50. 60. 70.
the very nature of holiness; and therefore all divine methods of reformation are so wisely adjusted, as to leave human actions in their proper state of freedom. By none of his works did God ever intend to render wickedness impracticable; and he hath always provided sufficient supports for integrity and virtue. With this very sentiment prophecy in Daniel and in the Revelation is sealed up. Rev. xxii. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still. That is to say, there is no cure for the obstinately blind and wicked; neither are the ways of God intended to purify those, who will not be made clean; but, after all that God hath done, the wicked (Dan. xii. 10.) shall be left to do wickedly. And none of the wicked will understand, but only the wise will understand. But he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Hos. xiv. 9. Who is wise, and [for] shall understand these things? Prudent, and [for] shall know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right; and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall in them. The sincere and upright, who choose the way of truth, or turn from sin unto righteousness, the righteous and merciful God will never forswear. They make a wise improvement of his dispensations, and, under all trials and difficulties, he will guide and support them; and their path shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day.

Corollary. Hence we may conclude—That in computing the progress of religion, under any dispensation, the quantity of knowledge and religion is to be measured only by the improvement of the righteous; and that the wicked, how many soever, are not to be taken into the account, as making any deductions from it. Or, the advances of knowledge and religion, under any dispensation, are not to be estimated by numbers, but by the proficiency of single persons, how few soever. Noah, a single person, was, at the time of the deluge, the true standard of religious improvement in that age; though all the rest of mankind were exceeding corrupt and wicked.

VI. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world, faith the apostle James, Acts xv. 18. Then all God's works were formed and planned in his counsels, and lay under his eye in one comprehensive view; and therefore must be perfectly consistent. One uniform scheme must be laid, and one even thread of design must run through the whole. They are not the result of sudden, incoherent thoughts; but a well digested plan, formed upon the most just principles by him who seeth all his works from the beginning to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not discern one coherent design in the divine dispensations, or if we make any one part clash with the rest, we may be sure we do not understand them. Goodness was the principle of creation. God made man because he delighted to communicate being and happiness. Consequently, goodness and fatherly love, which was the beginning and foundation of God's works, must run equally through them all, from first to last.

VII. Previous notice was given of some of the principal dispensations, either for warning, or to prepare men for the reception of them. The deluge was preached by Noah 120 years before it came to pass. The Jewish dispensation was predicted to Abraham 430 years beforehand. Jeremiah foretold the Babylonish captivity; and Paul, and John at large, predict
predict and describe the grand apostacy. But the coming of the Messiah, and the gospel dispensation, run through the whole, from the beginning to the end, in a less or clearer degree of light. And it was fitting that this, which is the chief of God's works, should receive the brightest evidence from prophecy. And therefore it was not fit it should be introduced till such time as it had received that evidence; which in Scripture is called the fulness of time. Gal. iv. 4.

VIII. The dispensations of God are intended for our contemplation and study; and it is a singular advantage to form right notions of them, because they will tincture our conceptions of God, and influence our dispositions towards him. If we judge truly of God's works, we shall have agreeable and lovely ideas of the workman. His wisdom, his goodness and truth, will stand in a fair light, and we shall confess him infinitely worthy of our highest regard. Then we shall think of God with admiration, pleasure and delight, (Psal. xcii. 4. Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands) and shall serve and follow him with willing minds. But if we form such conceptions of the ways of God, as represent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconsistent with all our notions of justice and goodness, the effect of sovereign will, without either reason or love, he must stand before our thoughts in the most frightful colours. The most horrible gloom will be drawn over the perfections of the best of beings; our minds will be filled with darkness and dread; and, if we worship him at all, our worship and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of sons, but the joyless constrained drudgery of slaves.

IX. It must be remembered, that the works of God are unsearchable, and past our finding out to perfection. Psal. xcii. 5. O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep! From a just sense of the inscrutability of the divine dispensations, the apostle concludes a discourse upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this solemn exclamation: O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Rom. xi. 33. It becomes us to admire and adore the counsels of infinite wisdom, and to acquiesce where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them. Rev. xv. 3. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! We cannot comprehend the ways of God in their fullest extent, in all their largest views, and remotest connexions. He therefore that is wise will not cavil at them, nor foolishly endeavour to pry into them beyond the bounds of revelation, and of human understanding.

X. But under all our present darkness, and under every dispensation, an honest heart, sincerely desirous to know the truth, seriously inquisitive after it, meekly submissive to what God hath revealed and commanded, willing to work together with him, patiently persevering in well doing; such a temper, and such a conduct, is the best and safest guide under every dispensation; will enable us to follow God, to comply with every design of his providence, to overcome in every hour of trial, and will lead us to eternal life. To such a character, as well as to Daniel, (Chap. xii. 13.) it is the language of divine grace—But walk thou, thou honest, upright man, walk thou thy way to the end, take courage and comfort,
comfort, walk on, persevere in the path of truth and integrity; for, after all the trials and disquietudes of this world, thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, the lot of pious and faithful souls, at the end of the days.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Creation.

Gen. i. 1—26.

THIS is the work of creation. To create is to give Being to that which did not exist before; and so is no contradiction. That a thing should be and not be at the same time, is a contradiction and impossibility; but that a thing should exist now, which did not exist before, is no more a contradiction, than that my hand should move now, which did not move before.

That there is one first uncaused Cause, from which all other beings derive their existence, and upon whom they have their entire dependence, hath already been proved. Consequently, all beings, except the first Cause, must have been produced, or brought into being, by the power and agency of the first Cause. Not produced, out of nothing, but out of nothing besides the immense and unconceivable fulness of the self-existent Being, who must have in himself the power and possibility of all being; though we cannot comprehend or conceive in what manner, or by what kind of agency, he createth or communicateth existence to beings distinct from himself.

Of the Creation of all things, Moses in this chapter has given us a summary account; not in a precise philosophical manner, but so as to give the men of that age in which he wrote, just and affecting notions of this first and most stupendous work of God, so far as was necessary to the purposes of true religion, and no further. It is enough, therefore, that his account is true, so far as it goes, and not in any respect inconsistent with the most accurate discoveries which have been made in later ages concerning the system of the universe, or any part of it.

Ver. 1. In the beginning, &c. The heavens and the earth may comprehend the whole universe, or all things visible and invisible. It doth not therefore follow, that the whole universe was created all together at once, or at some one period of time. But the meaning is this; at first, when the universe was produced, it was brought into being by the sole power and wisdom of the almighty and eternal God. This is true, though the several parts of the universe may have been produced at different times, or at any distance of time from each other; and though God may still be creating new worlds in the immense bosom of space, which is not improbable: I say, it is true, that in the beginning of their existence, whenever that was, God created, and is still creating, them all;
all; the sentiment which Moses, I apprehend, would inculcate being this, that the whole universe of beings, whenever created, doth not exit by necessity or chance; but had a beginning, and was produced by the sole power of God.

But, as Moses here gives us a particular account of the formation of our earth; this phrase, in the beginning, may have a special reference to the time when our earth was created. The matter of which it consists, was produced in the state of a Chaos, (Ver. 2.) without form and void; i.e. shapeless, waste, and useless; all the parts, solids and fluids, jumbled together, and surrounded with darkness, unadorned, uninhabited. But the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; i.e. the influences and exertions of the divine power actuated this dark, confused mass, and digested, and reduced its parts to the beautiful state and order in which we now behold them.

On the first day, and the first thing after the production of the Chaos, the element of light was created. Ver. 3, 4, 5.

On the second day was created the element of air, or that body of air which we call the Atmosphere, γηρν η τοις τοις, or rather, spacious expansion of air, where the fowls do fly, (Ver. 20.) and which is spread abroad above, and all round the earth, including meteors and clouds, which are the waters above, or at the upper part of the atmosphere, in contradistinction to the waters of the sea and rivers, which are under it. Ver. 6, 7, 8.

On the third day the great God formed the element of water, by draining off the fluids of the Chaos, and caulsing them to flow into large cavities prepared to receive them; that thus the earth might become one firm, compact, voluble globe, and in a fit condition to produce grass, herbs, trees, and plants, which were then created. Ver. 9, 10, 11, 12.

On the fourth day God created the sun and moon. Ver. 14—19. The sun being the centre of our system, it seems probable that the whole solar system was produced at the same time with the earth, though the design of the writer did not lead him to take notice of the other parts of it. But we have no just ground, from his account, to suppose that all the stars, which are probably each of them the centre of a distinct system, were, on this day, all of them created. Most of them might have been created long before, and some of them since, our world came into being. For that clause (Ver. 16,) he made the stars also, in the Hebrew is no more than, and the stars; the words he made being inserted by the translators. And therefore it may be well rendered thus—Ver. 16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night with the stars. That is to say, the moon and stars to rule the night, as it is expressed, Psal. cxxxvi. 9. The conjunction sometimes hath the force of the preposition with; as Gen. iv. 20. With his weapons. 2 King. xi. 8. Jer. xxii. 7. &c.

Hitherto our globe, and perhaps the other planets, might, by the power of God, be suspended in the empty space, in a state of rest. But now, when the sun, the centre of our system, was created, and the earth was reduced to a proper state of firmness and solidity, they might be thrown into those regular and rapid motions, about the sun,
and their own centres, which, by the same power impressed upon them, continue to this day; and by their exact periodical revolutions produce that grateful and necessary variety of day and night and seasons; namely, spring and summer, autumn and winter; which are certainly the effect of the annual and diurnal motions of the earth; and therefore the annual and diurnal motions might on this day commence. Ver. 14.

On the fifth day, fifth and fowl; on the sixth day, beasts and man were created. Ver. 20, &c.

There is one difficulty remaining, namely, that light was created before the sun, Ver. 3, 14, &c. Whereas the sun is supposed to be the sole fountain of light, by emitting luminous particles from its body. But I suspect the truth of this hypothesis; and Moses may be found a more accurate philosopher than is commonly imagined. It appears from electrical experiments, that light is a distinct substance from all other, as much as air is from water; and that, by being properly excited, it may be made to appear in midnight darkness. Which shews, that it did exist in that darkness, previously to its being excited; and that it was rendered visible by being excited. Consequentially it may, and, I doubt not, doth exist, expanded through the whole visible system of things at all times, by night as well as by day; and that the sun, a fiery body, is, in our system, the great exciter, by which the substance of light is impelled, and becomes visible. For, were there no substance of light previously existing throughout the whole system, no light would appear, though ten thousand suns should at once be placed in our hemisphere. Just as the ringing of the bell produces found, not by an emanation of particles from the substance of the bell, but by exciting the air, or the sounding substance, without which the bell could produce no sound at all. As the air will not found, so the light will not appear without being excited *. Upon this

* This hypothesis, I presume, doth not interfere with any rules of optics, the rays of light being excited according to the same laws and directions by which they are supposed to be emitted. The light of a candle, upon an eminence, may be seen at least three miles at sea, in a dark night. Therefore, according to the common supposition, the flame of a candle, supposing of one inch diameter, must emit from its body instantaneously, and in every instant, while it continues to burn, as much luminous matter, or substance, as will fill a spherical space of six miles in diameter, or of 113,8976 cubical miles; which, notwithstanding the divisibility of matter in infinitum, seems to me to be incredible. It is surely more probable and rational to supposite, that the extremely agile particles of light, which fill that large space, are actuated, or excited instantaneously by the luminous body.

N.B. Dr. Taylor, some time after he had finished this scheme of scripture divinity, met with the same thought and reasoning in the ingenious author of Nature Displayed; and was not a little pleased to find an hypothesis, which he judged peculiar to himself, adopted by so deep an inquirer into nature.

That the curious reader may compare the passages, he is presented with the following extract.

"—* Light is visibly pre-existent to luminous bodies: this may seem a paradox at first sight, but it is not therefore a less evident truth.—By light

supposition the element or substance of light was created on the first day, and the divine power alone might be the exciter, which made the light appear

"we do not mean that sensation which we experience in ourselves, on the presence of any illuminated body, but that inconceivably subtle matter, which makes an impression on the organs of sight, and paints on the optic nerve those objects from the surfaces of which it was reflected to us. Light then, taken in this sense, is a body quite different from the sun, and independent on it, and might have existed before it, seeing now it does exist in its absence, as well as when present. It is diffused from one end of the Creation to the other, traverses the whole universe, forms a communication between the most remote spheres, penetrates into the inmost recesses of the earth, and only waits to be put in a proper motion to make itself visible.—Light is to the eye what the air is to the ear: Air may not be called the body of sound, and it does equally exist all round us, though there be no sonorous body to put it in motion; so likewise the light does equally extend at all times, from the most distant fixed stars, to us, though it then only strikes our eyes, when impelled by the sun, or some other masses of fire."

"The difference betwixt the propagation of sound and light consists in this, that the air, which is the vehicle of sound, being, beyond all comparison, more dense than the vehicle of light, its motion is much slower. Hence we may account for that common phenomenon, why we do not hear the sound of the first stroke of a hammer, when at a distance from it, till it is at the point of giving the following blow; whereas light is propagated with incredible swiftness, though at some small distance of time between its receiving the impulse, and its communicating it to us; seven minutes, according to Sir ISAAC NEWTON’s calculation, being sufficient for its passage from the sun down to us. This difference of velocity between the progressive motion of light, and that of sound, is sensibly demonstrated by firing a gun in a large open plain, where the spectator, at a great distance from it, will perceive the flash a considerable time before he hears the noise."

"The body of light therefore does either exist independently of the luminous body, and only waits to receive a direct impulse from it, in order to act upon the organ of vision; or we must suppose that every luminous body, whether it be the sun, a candle, or a spark, does produce this light from itself, and project it to a great distance from its own body. There is no medium between these two suppositions, and either the one or the other must be true. But to assert the latter, is to assert a very great improbability; for if a spark, which is seen in every part of a large room, fifty cubick feet in dimensions, emits from its own substance a quantity of light sufficient to fill the whole room, then there must issue from that spark, which is but a point, a body, the contents of which are fifty cubick feet. How incredible the supposition!"

"Suppose the lantern on the light-house of Messina, to be seen only eight cubick leagues, of which itself is the centre; it will follow, that an eye placed in any point of those six cubick leagues will discern it, and consequently so much space will be filled with the light of it. Now how incredible that a little fire, some few inches in diameter, should diffuse around it a substance capable of filling eight cubick leagues! Suppose the lantern concealed, and the light immediately disappears; let it be uncovered the moment after, and it will instantly be seen as far as before, and

B 3"
appear for the three first days of creation, until the sun, the instrumental exciter, was produced.

Further, we must remark, that although God is here said to create the world, yet it may be true, that he employed a subordinate agent in the formation of it; namely, the Son of God, who afterwards came into the world for the redemption of mankind. See John i. 2, 3. Col. i. 15, 16, 17. 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. But though he was the instrumental cause, yet it is true, that God made all things, because our Lord acted by a power derived from him. He that hath built all things is God. Heb. iii. 4.

So much for critical remarks. The subject naturally leads to the following reflections.

"These are thy glorious Works, Parent of Good!
"Almighty, thine this universal Frame,
"Thus wonderous fair; thyself how wonderous then!

How wonderous, how immense is the power, goodness, and wisdom, which gave existence to the stupendous fabric and furniture of the universe!

I. POWER. How vast and mighty is the arm which stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth! which sustains numberless worlds, of amazing bulk, suspend in the unmeasurable and unconceivably distant regions of empty space; and steadily directs their various rapid and regular motions! Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created all these things. He bringeth out all their hosts by number, he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one of them faileth. Isai. xl. 26. How powerful was the command, Let there be light, and there was light—Let there be a firmament, &c. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded

"consequently fill eight cubick leagues of space with fresh light: then how many times eight cubick leagues of luminous matter, will all the successive instants of illumination produce in one night's time! Sure nothing was ever more inconceivable.

"On the contrary, how simple and natural is it to suppose, that as the air exifted before the bell that put it in motion, and caused it to vibrate into sound, so, in like manner, the light existed round the fire of Mefina, before the lantern was illuminated, and only waited to be put in motion by the fire, in order to make an impression on the eyes of the mariners. The sun and stars do, by the same means, make themselves visible, without suffering any diminution of their substance, by continual emanations of luminous matter into those vast regions of space through which we behold them; God having placed between those luminous globes and us, the body of that light which we see, and which is impressed on the organs of vision, by their action and influence; but does not proceed from them, nor owes its existence to them.—The account of Mofes therefore, as to this particular, is agreeable to truth, as well as an useful lesson of caution, when he informs us, that God, and not the sun, was the author and parent of light, and that it was created by his almighty fiat before there was a sun to dart it on one part of the earth, and a moon to reflect it on the other."
mended, and it stood fast. Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9. Thus the Scriptures sub-
limely express the exertion of the divine Power in Creation; as if it
were done instantaneously, and with as little difficulty as speaking a
word.

II. And as for Goodness, what an infinite fulness of life and being,
what an immense, inexhaustible treasury of all Good, must that be, from
whence all this life and being was derived! How infinitely rich is the
glorious and eternal God! Out of his own fulness he hath brought
worlds and worlds, replenished with myriads and myriads of creatures,
furnished with various powers and organs, capacities and instincts; and
out of his own fulness continually and plentifully suppieth them with
all the necessaries of existence. And still his fulness remaineth the same,
unemptied, unimpaired; and he can yet bring out of his fulness worlds
and worlds without end. How immensely full of all life and being is
the glorious and eternal God! Thus he is good in himself, And he
doth good. He is kind and beneficent, willing to communicate being
and good. How profuse is his bounty! He might have kept, as I may
say, the whole of existence to himself; but he has liberally shared it
out among his creatures; and of all his creatures in this world, the
most liberally to us men. Survey the whole of what may be seen in
and about this globe, and say, if our Maker hath a sparing and niggardly
hand; say, if we have a churlish and unkind father. Certainly
it is his pleasure to form creatures, and furnish them with enjoyment;
and therefore his tender mercies must be over all his works.

III. His Wisdom appears illustrious in the variety, beauty, exact-
nefs, order, and harmony, in which God hath formed and fixed the
universe; in the several capacities and degrees of excellence he has con-
ferred upon his creatures; the proper stations he hath assigned to them;
the subordination and servivency of one to another, which he hath
established, for the regularity and well-being of the whole. They
are all; as they come out of his hands, just what they should be, ad-
justed in the exactest proportions to their several ends and connexion;
all in every part and respect shewing the workmanship of the pro-
foundest skill, and most curious art. The utmost stretch of human
understanding can reach but a small part of God’s works; but they
who study the wisdom of Creation, cannot but admire, and use the
words of the sacred penman, Psal. civ. 24. (where he is surveying the
several parts of our globe) O Lord, how manifold are thy works? In
Wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches!

These reflections will (1) inspire the most elevated sentiments of the
most high and mighty Creator, who is exalted infinitely above the hea-
vens, his glory is above all the earth, Psal. cviii. 5. The Lord our God is
very great, he is clothed with honour and majesty; and we should study
to magnify him in our hearts by the most raised conceptions of his tran-
scending greatness. (2) This should also fill our minds with joy, and our
mouths with his high praises. This God is our God, our maker, and
therefore our father. The first and most proper notion we ought to ent-
tertain of the great God is, that of a Father; our Father, and the Father
of the whole universe. And greatly should we be delighted with the
displays of our Father’s infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.
Of the Creation of Man.

Ch. V.

ported with joy, by an elegant prosopopoeia, the Psalmist, in the 148th Psalm, calls upon all creatures to praise God; wishing, in effect, that they had all of them understandings and tongues to declare how much skill and kindnels he has shewn in their formation and establishment. Joy and praise are the Creator's due, and should be our constant temper and practice. (3.) He who is the maker, is also the absolute proprietor, Lord, and Sovereign of all things; and therefore hath the first and highest right to our reverence, submission, and obedience; in which he is infinitely able to support us in opposition to all human power and authority. For all Power, not only his own inherent power, but also the Power of all created beings, belongs to God. From him it is originally derived, and the exercise of it depends entirely upon his will and pleasure; nor, in any instance, can it possibly act beyond the limits which he prescribes. Therefore, in the way of duty, relying upon his all-sufficiency, we need not fear what man can do unto us. (4.) In our present situation we are liable to many difficulties and distresses, from which we are not able to guard or extricate ourselves; but the almighty Creator is infinitely able to deliver his servants from any danger, and can clear a passage through all embarrassments. He can make a way even in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters. (5.) He who from his own inexhaustible fulness hath brought forth all worlds and creatures, is our Shepherd; he careth for us, and can fully supply all our wants. (6.) He can fully accomplish all the great and glorious things revealed in the Gospel. He can raise us from the dead, change our vile bodies, and clothe us with immortal honour and glory. This should not seem to us incredible, because he hath already performed things as incredible, and we have constantly exposed to our view effects of his Power no less wonderful.

C H A P. V.

Of the Creation of Man.

Gen. i. 26, to the End.

NOW we are come to the formation of Man. Here, observe, the language of the Creator is altered. Instead of, Let there be Men, God said, (Ver. 26.) Let us make Man, or, we will make Man, in our image, after our likeness. Q. d. "Now we have formed and furnished for the earth, let us make Man, the noblest of our works, to inhabit, "cultivate, and enjoy it." The superior excellency of the human nature is signified by the distinguished manner in which God is represented as addressing himself to the formation of Man. The plural number is used [And God said, let us make Man]; but according to the genius of the Hebrew language, this is only a magnificent way of expressing the majesty of God; and amounts to no more than this, And God said, I will make Man. So Gen. xi. 7. Go to, let us go down, i. e.

I will
I will go down. Thus God is called our Makers, Job xxxv. 10. Psal. cxlix. 2. Thy Creators, Eccl. xii. 1. Thy makers is thy husbands, Isai. liv. 5. which are all to be understood, and are rendered in the singular number. "Nouns appellative denoting dominion, according to the Hebrew idiom, are put in the plural instead of the singular." Should it be supposed, that the great God here speaks to some other being or beings besides himself, it must be to some subordinate beings; for neither this, nor any other passage of scripture, can justly be explained inconsistently with the unity, simplicity, or singleness of the divine nature.

Ver. 26. Let us make Man in our own Image, [Heb. in the sketch or shadow of us] after, or like, our Likeness. These words, with respect to God, are diminutive, and denote that the most perfect endowments of the human nature are but a sketch, a shadow, or something resembling the Likeness of God. And yet, with respect to other creatures on earth, it speaks high distinction, and superiority. For this sketch of the Image of God in Man must include, 1. The noble faculties of his mind; understanding and will, or freedom of choice, for the government of all his actions and passions, and his continual improvement in wisdom, purity, and happiness. 2. His dominion over the inferior creatures, expressly mentioned, ver. 26, 28. By which he is God's Representative, or Viceroy upon earth.

But divines have understood this Image of God, as consisting in righteousnss and true holiness; which they affirm, were created with Adam. Meaning, not that Adam was created with such powers as rendered him capable of acquiring righteousnss and holiness, but that he was made in this Image of God; it was concreated with him, or wrought into his nature, at the same time that it was created; and so belonged to it as a natural faculty or instinct. This they call original righteousness, which they ground principally upon the two following passages. Col. iii. 9, 10. Lye not one to another, seeing that you have [by your Christian profession] put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him. Ephes. iv. 22, 23, 24. That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. All this is supposed to relate to Adam's being originally created in the Image of God.

The old man, say they, is a corrupt nature derived from Adam; and the new man, is fallen man restored to the primitive temper, or to that righteousnss and holiness in which they suppose Adam was created. But this is wide of the Apostle's sense. It is not uncommon with him to compare the Christian church to a man, or the human body, of which Christ is the head, and we are all of us members in particular. The new man was created, when God erected the Gospel Dispensation, and broke down the middle Wall of Partition between us Jews and Gentiles, (Ephes. ii. 13, 14, 15, 16.) for to make to himself, in the Gospel, of twain, or of the two parties, believing Jews and Gentiles, one new man, or the new constitution and community, under the Gospel. To this new man, the old man is directly opposed; and therefore must signify the Gentile state or community, headed by Satan, to which, before their conversion,
version, they were joined. This is confirmed by the Apostle, Ephef. ii. 11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time passed Gentiles in the flesh, &c. And chap. iv. 17, &c. This I say—that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk, &c. They formerly belonged to the old man, the body of impure, idolatrous heathen; but now they had, by their Christian profession, put off this old man, together with all his wicked deeds, Col. iii. 9, 10, and had put on the new man, or were joined to the Christian church, or community. And therefore, they were obliged to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and to live in knowledge [true wisdom], or in righteousness and true holiness. For God created the new man, or constituted the Christian church, in wisdom and righteousness and holiness, after his own Image, or the rectitude of his nature, with this design, to promote the same rectitude among men. For (Ephef. ii. 10.) we, the new Man, or the whole body of Christians, are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God ordained, when he formed the Gospel Scheme, that we should walk in them.

But what hath this to do with Adam's being created in righteousness and true holiness? Which, in the nature of things, could not be created, or wrought into his nature at the same time he was made; because such a righteousness would have been produced in him without his knowledge and consent; and so would have been no righteousness at all. For whatever is wrought in my nature without my knowledge and choice, cannot possibly be either sin or virtue in me, because it is no act of mine; but must be a mere natural instinct, like the industry of the bee, or the fierceness of the lion. Righteousness is right action, directed by knowledge and judgment; but Adam could neither act, nor know, nor judge, before he and all his intellectual powers were created; and therefore he must exist and use his intellectual powers, before he could be righteous and holy.

We may further observe—That God made the first pair male and female, that they might multiply and inhabit the whole earth, and supply a perpetual succession of men and women, pronouncing a blessing upon the regular propagation of the human species, ver. 28. And God blessed them, &c. But this blessing, divines have supposed, was turned into a curse, by Adam's transgression; which so corrupted the human nature, that thereby and thenceforth we all come into the world under the wrath and curse of God. But that this also is a mistake, is most evident from Gen. ix. 1. where God repeats, and pronounces the very same original blessing upon the increase or birth of mankind 1600 years, and upwards, after Adam's transgression, when the world was to be restored, and replenished from Noah and his sons. This proves, that mankind, in all successive generations, have come, and will come into the world, under the very same blessing and favour of God, which was declared at the first creation of Man. It is of great importance to observe these remarks, not to produce any disgust or animosity towards those that espouse the contrary opinion, who ought to be treated with candour and forbearance, but to settle our own judgments upon right principles.

Once more; the original grant of sustenance to Man was confined to herbs, and the fruits of plants and trees, ver. 29, 30. which afterwards was enlarged, and included animal food, Gen. ix. 3.

Now
Now let us take a survey of the nature which God has graciously bestowed upon us. The body consists of a mean material, the dust of the ground; but the mind is of nobler extraction, for (chap. ii. 7.) God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Man became a living soul. Job xxxii. 8. The inspiration of the Almighty giveth us understanding; the noblest gift of our Maker. The force and excellence of which appears in a surprising variety of inventions and discoveries. It is this faculty which penetrates into the most secret recesses of Nature; judges of, and admires the beauty and contrivance of the vast fabric of the universe; and tracesthe footsteps of the most astonishing wisdom and regularity in the various situations and motions of the heavenly bodies. By this we review generations and actions, characters and events, that existed long before we were born; and dart our reflections the other way, into futurity, even as far as to the final period of this world, with all its works. By this we conceive, though but negatively, Eternity itself; and apprehend the state and felicity of beings far superior to ourselves. By this we stretch our thoughts to the highest excellency, and contemplate the nature of the infinitely perfect Being.

Our singular honour and advantage lies in our moral capacities. While instinct determines the pursuits of inferior creatures; whilst they are utterly unable to judge of causes and effects, to draw consequences, or to reason about the natures and tendencies of things, in order to avoid or embrace, and are rather acted upon than act; we deliberate, we choose our way, we feel and examine what is before us; this is good, and therefore to be chosen; this is evil, therefore to be avoided; this will improve and exalt our life, this leads to dishonour and misery. We can study and observe the precepts of Divine Wisdom; imitate the moral perfections of Deity; converse with the supreme Father, and desire, and dispose ourselves for, the everlasting enjoyment of his favour. And agreeably to these distinguishing honours of our nature, God our Maker, whose delights are with the children of men, has expressed his high regards to us, by supplying us with all proper materials for the improvement of our understandings; not only the objects of nature; but also the writings of good and wise men, especially the holy Scriptures, a rich treasury of the most excellent knowledge; containing the most surprising discoveries, the most useful instructions, the most just and noble principles and motives, and whatever is proper to cultivate and refine our spirits. In particular, the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. That God should send his well-beloved Son out of his bosom to dwell among us in our flesh, to reveal the high designs of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, to give himself a sacrifice and offering to God upon the cross, to make atonement for our sins, to raise us to the dignity of kings and priests to his God and Father, that we might reign for ever with him; this exalts the love of God to men, infinitely beyond our highest thoughts and imaginations; this raises our nature to an amazing, to an inexpressible dignity and value.

These considerations should dispose us to be pleased with our being, and thankful to our Maker for it. With pleasure we should reflect that we are men. Every person, how low soever in the world, hath that in possession, which is more valuable than thousands of gold and silver; an immense
immense treasure, to which the whole earth bears no proportion, himself, a reasonable Soul, an immortal Spirit; to which, in real excellence, the visible creation, the earth with all its material riches, the sky with all its splendid furniture, is not to be compared. Let us not measure ourselves by worldly riches. The soul is the standard of the Man, and raises him vastly above all that is earthly. How foolish then, how shameful, how impious is it to prostitute ourselves to the trifles of the world; to be fond of earthly things, and to make our reason a drudge to sensual pursuits! God has made us Men, creatures of the finest powers and faculties; he hath used us as Men, by making the most ample provision to enable us to honour his Grace and our own being. And shall we desert our Manhood? Shall we despise the rich bounty of Heaven? Shall we mingle with the dust that particle of superior life, which God hath breathed into us? Rather let us assert the dignity of our being, and make it our principal care to improve it by all the advantages God hath provided. The knowledge of God; conformity of heart and life to his will; the fruits of the spirit, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance; converse with God; the high privileges of the sons of God; the prospects of eternal glory; these are the objects of our care: as we are enlightened by the Gospel, we are obliged to make these our study, and to form our spirits according to the sublime and excellent sentiments which these inspire, that thus we may be fitting ourselves for a much higher and more perfect degree of existence in a better world.

C H A P. VI.

Of the Institution of the Sabbath.

Gen. ii. Ver. 1, 2, 3.

As soon as God had created the world, and man in it, he blessed the Seventh Day, upon which he rested from creation, and sanctified it, i. e. he distinguished it from the other six days by setting it apart to the purposes of religion. Thus the sanctification of the Sabbath is the first and oldest of God's institutions, and must have a real foundation in the nature of Man, and an immediate connexion with our being, and the great and excellent ends of it. The Sabbath and Man were, in a manner, created together. This is an indication, that although the particular time is, as it must necessarily be, of positive appointment, yet the thing itself is an article of natural religion, and stands upon the reason of things. The great end for which we are brought into life, is to attain the knowledge, and to be confirmed in the love and obedience of God; which includes all right action and virtue, all that is perfective of our nature, all that renders us happy in ourselves, and a
blessing to others; and all that can qualify us for the enjoyment of God, and fit us for immortal honour and glory. We cannot keep a due and prevailing sense of these things upon our minds, without close and repeated application of thought; and therefore, as the affairs and necessities of this present life make such constant and importunate demands upon us, that our hearts and thoughts would be unavoidably ingrossed by them, it is in the nature of things necessary, that some certain time should be publickly appropriated to the exercises of religion, instruction, prayer and praise, to fortify our minds against temptations, and to seal them with piety and virtue. And doubtless, God alone hath wisdom and authority sufficient to assign that portion of time which is proper and generally competent for those good purposes.

The Sabbath is perfectly suited to our nature and circumstances, and therefore was very properly instituted at the creation. But some of the learned pretend, that Moses here speaks, by anticipation, of the institution of the Sabbath a long time after this, when he was law-giver in Israel. This is a fiction without any foundation in the text. The historian expressly relates, that God blessed and sanctified that day on which he rested, or ceased, from creation; which, in all fair construction, must be understood of his sanctifying it, at the time when he rested from creation. That we find no other mention of the Sabbath in the summary and very comprehensive history of Genesis, is no proof that the Patriarchs did not observe it; much less that the law thereof was not all that time in force. We find not the least mention, or intimation, of the Sabbath in all the book of Joshua, nor in Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, till we come to II Kings, iv. 23; a far more particular history than the book of Genesis; and yet it is very certain that the law of the Sabbath was all that time in force, and without doubt was observed too. There are very clear intimations of regard to the Sabbath in the book of Genesis, chap. viii. 8—13. Thrice Noah sent the dove out of the ark, after he had every time waited seven days. Jacob (Gen. xxix. 27, 28.) fulfilled Leah's week. This plainly shews the Patriarchs, long before Moses was born, reckoned time by seven days, or weeks; which can be referred to no other supposable original but the institution of the Sabbath, at the creation.

The Israelites indeed, during their long continuance and servitude in Egypt, upwards of 200 years, seem to have lost their reckoning of the Sabbath, when they were constrained by perpetual and most servile labour to neglect the observance of it. However, it certainly was the appointment of God, that they should begin a new reckoning of the seventh day, and form a new epocha, namely, the falling of the manna. Exod. xvi. 5. And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, they shall prepare that manna which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. And when the people had done so, the rulers of the congregation came, and told Moses; probably inquiring into the reason, why God had given such an order, ver. 23. And Moses said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, or, this is the meaning of the Divine Command; To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Ver. 25, 26. Ye shall not then find it in the field; six days shall ye gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there shall be none. And this course continued for
for forty years, till they came into the land of Canaan: Now this was devised in much wisdom to settle and determine the day, which, otherwise, having lost their reckoning, during their long servitude in Egypt, they possibly would not easily have been brought to agree upon. For thus, for forty years together, they would be under a necessity of distinguishing the Sabbath, and of settling upon it; having little else to do, the greatest part of the time, but to gather and dress manna; and no manna falling upon that day, they must of course be assured of the day, and obliged to rest upon it. Note — the restoring and ascertaining the Sabbath, was the first point of religion that was settled, after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, as being of the greatest moment; and this, in relation to the original institution; for the law at mount Sinai was not then given.

Afterwards the ordinance of the Sabbath was inserted into the body of the moral law, under a particular emphasis, Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy. And the Jews is reminded of the antiquity of this institution, in the reason annexed to this commandment, For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, &c. And being thus ranked among the other great articles of our duty, which are of moral obligation, and are always referred and appealed to, by our Lord and his Apostles, as binding to us Christians, it must stand upon the same ground, and lay the same obligations upon our consciences. For the same truth and authority, which enacted the rest, enacted this precept also. He that said, Thou shalt have no other gods before me—thou shalt not bow down to any graven image—thou shalt not take the name of God in vain—honour thy father—thou shalt do no murder—&c. said also, Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy.

The Jewish festivals, new-moons and sabbaths, as they were shadows and figures of good things to come under the Gospel, our Lord did abolish. When the substance was come, the shadow vanished. And it is of sabbaths in this sense the Apostle speaks, Col. ii. 16. Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the sabbath-days. But the seventh-day Sabbath was no part of the Levitical law; it existed long before that, and therefore was not abolished with it. On the contrary, our Lord claims dominion over the Sabbath. Luke vi. 5. He said unto the Pharisees, that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath. Therefore the Sabbath must be an ordinance belonging to our Lord's kingdom, otherwise he could not be Lord of it. He never pretended to be Lord of circumcision, or of sacrifices; these belonged to a dispensation of which he was not Lord. But he is Lord of the Christian Dispensation, and its ordinances, and among the rest, of the Sabbath. In consequence of which Lordship,

I. He rectified the superstitious abuse of the Sabbath, and reduced it to the original standard. He reformed the traditinary corruptions of several of the commandments of moral and eternal obligation (c). But of all others, most signally, remarkably, and constantly, by words and by deeds, at the hazard of his life, he reformed the abuse of the fourth commandment:

(c) Mat. v. 21, 27, 33. xv. 4, &c.
commandment (d); which he never would have done, had the Sabbath been an ordinance that was to die in a little time with the Jewish dispensation. On the contrary, this demonstrates, that he regarded the just sanctification of the Sabbath as of perpetual obligation, and as of very great importance in religion.

II. He removed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. For we find in the Apostolical History that the Disciples met together on that day, (called the Lord’s Day, Rev. i. 10.) to break bread, or to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, which is the proper and peculiar worship of Christians, Acts xx. 7. Now this could not be done without the express injunction of the Apostles; nor could the Apostles do this without a commission from Christ. And as our Lord rose from the dead on the first day, we suppose the Christian Sabbath hath relation to his Resurrection; and so the Lord’s Day hath been kept holy by the universal Church from the Apostles days to this time.

Thus there have been three epochs, or dates, from which the Sabbath has been counted, namely, (1.) From the first day of the creation; (2.) From the first day of the falling of the manna. (3.) From the first day of the Gospel Dispensation. But still it is the seventh day makes the Sabbath, which God blessed; and the seventh, which we now observe, is as much, and as truly the Sabbath, which God sanctified, as ever it was from the beginning of the world.

The primary notion of the Sabbath, is a rest or cessation from the ordinary business of life. The design of it is to preserve true religion; which would never have been lost in the world, had the Sabbath been duly observed from the first institution of it. And therefore we find in Scripture, both under the old and new dispensations, it was applied to the purposes of religion. It is represented as a holy convocation, on which the Israelites were to assemble for divine worship, Lev. xxiii. 3: David wrote the 92d Psalm for the Sabbath-Day, and therein gives us just ideas of the work of it. On this day the Jews met together in their synagogues for religious exercises; and there our Lord honoured and sanctified the Sabbath by his presence and instructions. Mark i. 21, 22. vi. 2. Luke iv. 16, 31. xiii. 10. And all Christians, in all times and places, have assembled on the Sabbath to hear the word of God, to offer up prayer and thanksgiving, and to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, in order to employ their thoughts in pious meditations, and furnish their minds with the best principles and dispositions. A work exceeding pleasant and profitable, which demands and deserves the whole of our thought and attention. Therefore, for this good purpose, we are to rest from ordinary business, and to avoid whatever may displease our thoughts, or indispose our hearts for the heavenly work of the day.

Our Lord hath taught us so to understand this, as not to mix any thing superstitious with the observation of the Sabbath, nor to conceive of it as such a scrupulous rest, that we may not do any thing fit and reasonable, and which otherwise is a duty; works of necessity and mercy he expressly allows. Whatever cannot be deferred to another day, without loss

I conclude with a few reflections upon Isa. lviii. 13, 14. Having, in the name of God, recommended goodness, charity, and compassion, in the preceding verses, and pronounced a singular blessing upon those who exercise them, the Prophet adds, by the same authority, If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, q. d. If you conscientiously suspend the ordinary business of life, and forbear to please and gratify your own inclinations, that with a free and composed mind you may attend upon the services of religion, for which I have sanctified the Sabbath; and [if thou] call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him; if you have such a sense of the excellency and benefit of the Sabbath, that you take delight therein, accounting it a pleasure and happiness, as being consecrated to the worship of the most high God, and therefore honourable and glorious in itself; and honourable also to you, as it is a mark of the dignity of your nature, a token of your interest in the divine favour, (Exod xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12.) and of your being admitted to communion with him; if in this persuasion you shall sincerely endeavour to honour God by employing the day in the offices of devotion, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; not doing the ordinary works of your calling, nor spending the time in amusements or diversions, or in impertinent conversation; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; then thou shalt become such a proficient in piety, and gain such a sense of God and religion, as will establish in your heart a fund of holy pleasure, comfort, joy, and good hope towards God." The Prophet, in this chapter, is inculcating real, vital, acceptable religion, goodness and compassion to our fellow-creatures, and piety towards God in keeping the Sabbath; promising the like blessings to both those branches of true religion, namely, the favour of God and the constant care of his Providence. We may therefore take this from the Spirit of God, as a just description of the right manner of sanctifying the Sabbath, and assure ourselves, that he who blessed the Day, will bless us in keeping it holy.
CHAP. VII.

Of a State of Trial.

Gen. ii. 8—18.

CONCERNING the situation and rivers of the country of Eden, as here described by Moses, Bp. Patrick, in his Commentary upon this place, gives an account which seems to be not altogether improbable. The Garden lay in the country of Eden; out of, or through, which country a river went unto the Garden to water it (ver. 11.); and from thence, from the country of Eden, it parted, or was divided, and became into four heads; namely, two above, before it entered Eden, called Euphrates and Hiddekel, or Tigris; and two below, after it had passed through Eden, called Pison and Gibon, which compasseth, or runneth along by, the whole land of Cuth. ver. 13.

In the eastern part of Eden the Lord God planted a Garden furnished with all pleasant and useful fruits. And there he placed Adam to dress and keep it; for man was made for business, ver. 8, 15. Two trees in this Garden were remarkably distinguished from the rest, perhaps in appearance and situation, as well as in use, namely, the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. These, I conceive, were appointed for instruction and religious meditation; to preferve in Adam's mind a sense of the consequences of virtue and vice, or of obedience and disobedience. In this view, while he continued obedient, he was allowed to eat of the Tree of Life, as a pledge and assurance on the part of God, that he should live for ever, or be immortal; after his transgression he was denied access to it, chap. iii. 24. For the same purpose, as a pledge of immortality restored in Christ, it is used, Rev. ii. 7. xxii. 2. On the contrary, the other Tree was designed to give him the knowledge, the sense or apprehension of good and evil, or of good connected with evil, i.e. of pernicious enjoyment, destructive gratification, vicious pleaure, or such as cannot be enjoyed without transgressing the law of God. Good and Evil, I apprehend, is an hendiadys, like that Gen. xix. 24. brimstone and fire, i.e. fired or burning brimstone. 1 Chron. xxii. 5. the house must be —of fame and glory, i.e. of glorious fame. Pateris libamus et aura, i.e. aureis pateris. Δόμος may signify pleaure or profit. [See the explication of it in the Heb. Engl. Concordance.] Thus Good and Evil may denote pernicious pleaure or profit. Of the fruit of this Tree, though it appeared pleasant and inviting, Adam was forbidden to eat upon pain of death. This was to make him understand, that unlawful enjoyment of any kind would be his destruction.

These two Trees may be considered as Adam's books. He was in a kind of infantile state, void of all learning, without any theorems or general principles to govern himself by. God was therefore pleased, in this sensible manner, to impress upon his mind just conceptions of the very different consequences of obedience and disobedience. And it will be
be of great use even to us, at this day, to look into, and to meditate upon these two books of our first father.

What requires our particular attention is this, that Adam’s obedience is put upon Trial by the prohibition, ver. 17. *But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Adam had not gained the habits of obedience and holiness, but was put under this instance of discipline in order to his acquiring of them. As soon as God had made Man a moral agent, he put him upon Trial. And it is universally allowed, that all mankind are in the same state, in a State of Trial. It must therefore be of importance to have right notions of such a State.

In order to this, let it be well considered,

I. That God hath erected a kingdom for his honour, and the felicity of his rational creatures. This kingdom, our Lord informs us, was prepared from the foundation of the world. Mat. xxv. 34. There we men shall be equal to the angels, Luke xx. 36; and probably, like them, shall be placed in polls of honour and power, in some part of the universe; as is plainly intimated, Mat. xxiv. 45—47. xxv. 21. Luke xix. 17.

I Cor. vi. 2, 3. Rev. ii. 10. iii. 21.

II. Without holiness, or an habitual subjection of the Will to Reason, or to the Will of God, none can be fit to be members of this kingdom. Wickedness, in its very nature, stands directly opposed to the peace and well-being of the universe; for it is error in the mind, rebellion against God, and mischief to all within its influence. And the most benevolent of all Beings will not take error, rebellion, and mischief into his kingdom, erected for the purposes of goodness and enjoyment. Rev. xxi. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it, the holy City, new Jerusalem, (ver. 2.) any thing that defileth, any impure, vicious persons; neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; all idolaters, all that practice iniquity and deceit, are excluded out of it. But they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it; the excellent of the earth, who have purged themselves from all ungodliness and sin, and so are Vessels unto honour, sanctified and fit for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. Nothing but subjection to the Will of God, in all duty and obedience, can qualify us for the honours, felicity, and employments of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore,

III. No moral agents, merely on account of their natural powers, how excellent soever, are worthy to be admitted into the kingdom of God. Natural powers, in angels as well as worms, are the workmanship and gift of God alone; and therefore, not being the virtue, nor the effect of the virtue of the beings that are possessed of them, can be no recommendation to the continued favour and esteem of God. In order to that, the natural powers of moral Agents must not only be capable of right action, but also actually exerted in acting rightly. Otherwise, their powers, though of the noblest kind, are useless and insignificant. It is one thing to be born, or produced into the kingdom of nature, and another to be born to the habits of virtue, whereby we are rendered fit to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. The former depends entirely upon God’s sovereign pleasure, in giving life and powers, in any kind or degree, as he chooseth; the other depends upon a right use and application of the powers.
powers God hath bestowed; and is the privilege only of those wise and happy spirits, who attain to a habit of true holiness. And thus, our Lord's rule, Joh. iii. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot see, or enjoy, the kingdom of God, may extend to all created minds, whatsoever, under their several peculiar circumstances.

IV. Holiness, or virtue, cannot be forced upon us whether we will or not. The violence which overpowers and compels the Will, destroys the Will of Choice, and consequently destroys Virtue; which is no otherwise Virtue, than as it is freely chosen. That being which cannot be vicious, cannot be virtuous. If he is not free to choose evil, he is not free to choose good; for a power of being virtuous, necessarily implies a power of being the contrary. The only means, therefore, that can be used to induce a moral Agent to Virtue, are instruction, admonition, persuasion, the impression of objects or circumstances upon the mind, the suggestions of the Spirit of God, and such like methods as engage attention, and influence inclination and choice, without destroying Freedom. And a habit of Virtue, which alone recommends us to God, can be gained and ascertained no otherwise than by repeated Acts, by use and exercise, by being put to the proof under proper Trials, by refitting solicitations, surmounting difficulties, and bearing sufferings. This is the most natural way of bringing Virtue, or Holiness, to its maturity and stability. Therefore,

V. It seems agreeable to the reason of things, that all rational creatures whatsoever should, for some time, be in a State of Trial. However, this is, or hath been, the case of all we are acquainted with. The Angels have passed through a probation, doubtless adapted to their different circumstances; in which some of them abode not in the truth; they sinned; they kept not their first estate; Joh. viii. 44. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6. And our first parents, how singular, however their condition might be in other respects, were put under a particular Trial, by being forbidden to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; which must be intended to form their minds to an habitual obedience to the Law, or Will, of God.

VI. We Men are upon Trial. This is evident from Revelation, where we are represented as Pilgrims and Strangers, looking for, and travelling to a better country, 1 Pet. ii. 11. As in a warfare, where we must fight for the victory, as we hope to be crowned, Ephes. vi. 14. As in a race, where we are running for a prize, Heb. xii. 1. Cor. ix. 24, 25. As labourers in a vineyard, who have work to do in order to receive wages, Mat. xx. 1. As servants intrusted with their master's substance, for the improvement of which they are accountable to him, Mat. xxv. 14. Luke xix. 13. And God hath appointed a day, in which he will call us to an account for our present behaviour; and render to every man according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or evil. This is the strongest evidence, that we are now upon Trial. And the sense of Revelation is abundantly confirmed by our circumstances in life.

Our faculties are of the noblest kind, and we enjoy all manner of means for the cultivation of them; but not without great care, industry, and resolution. So many are the occasions of deception, and so easily are we misled in our searches after the truth, that we cannot attain...
to any clear or useful knowledge without a constant and cautious attention. Even Revelation, like the heavens themselves, is interspersed with clouds, things dark and hard to be understood. And when we have found the truth, the profession of it is attended with much inconvenience and trouble from the pride and malice of persecution. All which is wisely appointed; for, had all been plain, obvious, and easy, our integrity and sincere attachment to truth could not have been exercised and proved. The passions and appetites of the flesh; the possessions, gains, pleasures, and customs of the world; the calamities of life, diseases, disappointments, losses, dangers, enemies, fears, wants, weaknesses; all these are great embarrassments to virtue and piety, fatigue and solicit our minds from righteousness and purity, and oblige us to constant watchfulness and self-denial, in order to gain and secure the habits of holiness. Every condition, every possession is accompanied with its temptations. Wherever we are, we are in the midst of snares; and whatever we have carries some danger or other in it; insomuch that, without care and attention, we cannot preserve the purity of our minds, which yet, by the nature of things, and the command of God, we are obliged to do. This shews we are upon Trial, or in a state of discipline. For,

VII. A State of Trial necessarily requires, that different and opposite interests (as the flesh and the spirit, the law of God, and the law in our members, the present world, and a future state) should stand in competition for our affections and regards, as to oblige us to be very serious in considering, and thoroughly sincere in choosing and pursuing what is right and good. And herein lies our Trial; whether we will follow God, or forswake him; prefer our mortal bodies before our immortal souls; the gratification of our lusts, before the purity and peace of our minds; the things of this tranitory world, before the heavenly and eternal inheritance.

VIII. The end and design of our Trial is to refine and exalt our nature. James i. 12. Blessed is the man that is tried, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Heb. xii. 11. No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, &c. If indeed we are overcome by temptation, and drawn into a contempt of God, truth, and righteousness, we debaue and destroy ourselves; we prove ourselves to be unfit for the happy society in heaven, forfeit the favour of God, and shall fall into perdition. But this must be our own fault. The noble intention of our Maker is, that we should overcome temptation, and then we are happy for ever. We have stood the test, we have passed honourably through our Trials; we have approved ourselves to God, as those whom he judges fit for preference and happiness in his eternal kingdom. And shortly we shall hear, Well done, good and faithful, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Hence our Trial is compared to that of silver and gold, Job xxiii. 10. Psal. lxvi. 10, 11. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

To explain Scripture language, we must distinguish between temptation of Trial, and Seduction. Temptation of Trial, or probation, God hath wisely ordained for the exercise and proof of our virtue. So he tempted Abraham, Gen. xxii. 1. Temptation of seduction is when we are drawn into sin, James i. 13. Let no man say, when he is tempted, seduced into sin by temptation.

From
From the preceding propositions we may draw the following conclusions.

Corol. 1. Trials, of the severest kind, are no mark of God's displeasure, nor any proof that we are under his wrath and curse. Adam in his state of innocence was tried. The best of God's servants have gone through heavy Trials. Our Lord was tempted in all points as we are, but without sin, Heb. iv. 15. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth, he correteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Prov. iii. 11, 12.

Corol. 2. The appetites and passions implanted in our constitution, are not the corruption of our nature, but means of our Trial. And therefore we shall be freed from them, when that is over, 1 Cor. vi. 13. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats — but God shall destroy both it and them — xv. 44. It is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body.

Corol. 3. Whatever Trials may be the occasion of sin, may much more be the occasion of virtue and holiness. Temptation may occasion sin, but is not the cause or reason of it; for, seeing no temptation can ever make it reasonable to sin, every temptation, if the sinner chooseth, may be rejected as unreasonable. On the other hand, temptation is naturally an opportunity of exerting our virtue, and of gaining an honourable and glorious victory. Distresses and wants may fill our hearts with solicitude, and tempt us to murmur against God; but they have a tendency, being duly considered, to lead us to faith in him, and a humble patient submission to his will, the most perfect part of a worthy character. Wealth, honour, and power, may prove incentives to pride, luxury, and oppression; but they may, and ought to be motives to gratitude, and means of greater usefulness. Our appetites and passions may seduce to intemperance and debauchery; but they may be the occasion of practicing the most laudable self-government and sobriety. And so of all the rest. Rom. v. 3. We glory in tribulations; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, that hope which maketh not ashamed, or that shall never be disappointed. James i. 2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into temptations; knowing that the Trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing to qualify you for the kingdom of heaven.

Corol. 4. In a State of Trial natural evil hath a tendency to promote moral good. For under any defects of happiness, virtue may be exercised and increase. Hence it follows, (1.) That this life, notwithstanding the afflictions which attend it, is a day of salvation, or a proper and valuable opportunity of attaining eternal life. (2) That the quantity of virtue in this present world is not to be measured by the joy it giveth the possessor, or the good it doth to others, but by the circumstances of Trial under which it acteth and subsisteth. For although all holiness, by the will of God, will sooner or later be crowned with joy; and always actually brings forth good works, in proportion to the agent's power and opportunities; yet two agents, of equal virtue, may be so differently situated in the creation, that the virtue of the one shall produce a thousand times less comfort to its self, and benefit to others, than the virtue of the other. Or, the same virtue which, in this life, brings forth but one
one degree of joy and usefulness, in another world may bring forth a thousand degrees.

This stands upon two principles. 1. That holiness and happiness are essentially different, and connected only by the will of God. Hence it is, in fact, that many persons, truly virtuous and pious, have yet no comfort of their virtue. 2. The proper act of a moral agent stands in the will and choice alone, not in the external effect produced by it; and therefore the will, or choice, may be completely holy, where yet the outward act is hindered by contrary circumstances. Upon these grounds one may venture to affirm, that the virtue of Lazarus, which, under all his pains and poverty in our earth, brought forth but a small degree of joy and usefulness, might, in Abraham's bosom, be equal to the virtue of an Angel in heaven, which actually brought forth ten thousand degrees. For as a cubical foot of our grosser air might possibly expand, and fill a cubical furlong in the higher and thinner region of pure Ether; so that virtue, which can subsist under the loads and clogs of our temptations and difficulties, though its present fruits are but small, may dilate and blaze out into a glory, magnificence, and splendour, equal to that of the holiest Angels. This the Apostle Peter intimates, 1 Pet. i. 7. The tried faith of persecuted Saints will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Corol. 5. This world is not a State of Enjoyment. He that made it, and Man in it, made it for Trial. We must not therefore dream of a continued course of ease, peace, and prosperity, but must expect to meet with Trials.

Corol. 6. It is no matter in what temporal circumstances we are, if we do but acquit ourselves well and faithfully in the sight of God. Job, under all his calamities, was not a worse man, or less the care and delight of Heaven. He was then like gold in the furnace, under the discipline of Divine Wisdom and Love, in order to his being purified into a condition more illustrious and excellent. You are in plenty and prosperity. What then? This is but an instance of your Trial, and your real happiness must be measured by the effects they have upon your mind. If prosperity disposes to thankfulnes and good works, it is happy; but if it seduces you to forget God, and to indulge irregular appetites, it is hurtful and pernicious. On the other hand, you are in affliction, want, trouble, pain. What then? This is not your fixed condition; it is only one instance of a temporary Trial, which shortly will be at an end. And if your afflictions work in you greater contempt of the world, self-denial, faith, submission, heavenly-mindednes, &c. your condition is happy, and your afflictions are really better for you than any other State you may fondly wish for. But observe, this is to be understood of afflictions brought upon us by Providence, and will not justify us in bringing them upon ourselves by any faulty criminal conduct. It is nevertheless our duty, by all lawful means, to procure the conveniences and comforts of life.
CHAP. VIII.
Further Reflections on a State of Trial.

It is of the last importance to have right notions of life, as a State of Trial. For thus the whole scene, otherwise confused and unaccountable, will appear in a just and rational light. Thus we shall be convinced, that our being is given us upon the most reasonable and advantageous terms, for the highest and most excellent ends; and shall clearly understand what we have to do for the improvement and exaltation of it, free from the vain imaginations and pursuits, hopes and fears, joys and anxieties, which distract the minds of the unthinking and ignorant. What I have further to advance upon this point, is comprised in the following propositions.

I. It is a matter of great difficulty to adjust our Trials and succours, so as not to overpower our faculties by either, but leave us in the free use of them.

II. God alone hath wisdom sufficient to appoint and adjust our Trials. Because he alone understands perfectly how to adapt them to the nature of our minds, and to the designs of his goodness. Whereas we know but little of the nature of our spirits, and therefore are not able to proportion temptations to our powers, nor helps and assistances to our temptations. We are not acquainted with the work we have to do in the future world, nor the several sorts of beings with whom we may hereafter be concerned, in the way of fellowship or enmity; and therefore are by no means capable of judging, what sort or degree of Trials are proper to give us suitable qualifications. For this reason, it is plainly our duty and wisdom, humbly and patiently to submit to the Trials God is pleased to allot, and to behave well and faithfully under them; without cenfuring, or quarrelling with his disposals, which is foolish and impious. But though our understandings in this case are very defective, yet I conceive there are some general principles of which we may be, in a good measure, certain.

III. The bias of Evil in our Trials ought to be strong in proportion to the degree of virtue required of us. For the degree of virtue is to be measured by the degree of temptation which it resists. That virtue is but in a low degree, which can overcome but a small temptation; that virtue is in a higher, which can overcome a stronger temptation; and that virtue is in the highest degree, which is superior to all temptation.

IV. The degree of Virtue God expects from us, is to be proportioned to the eminent stations to which we are to be exalted in his kingdom. Or, we shall be exalted in proportion to the Virtue we have attained. Matt. xix. 28. Luke xix. 16, 17, 18, 19.

V. Our Trial seems to be appointed for a State of Confirmation—and therefore the virtue we are to attain must be such as will secure our perseverance in it; which confirmation and perseverance must stand, not upon
upon our being forcibly constrained to be virtuous, which is a contradiction, but upon the habits we have attained, or the settled good dispositions of our minds. And it seems to be the great end of our Trial in this world, that we may attain to such a degree of sanctity, experienced in a variety of Trials, as in God's wisdom appears to be of that genuine fort, which shall eventually persevere, and abide to all eternity. Of which matter our Lord speaketh in this wise, Luke xvi. 10, 11, 12. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If ye therefore have been unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, i.e. that which may at any uncertain time be taken from you, and therefore, for the sake of which it is not worth your while to do a wrong or wicked thing, who shall give you that which is your own? what you are to possess for ever, or which you are never to be deprived of. This plainly shews, that we are qualified for honours and trusts in heaven, no other-wise than by our present faithfulness, or the real good qualities of our minds; and that we are now tried in a little, that we may be faithful in much.

VI. The Judge of all the Earth hath certainly balanced our Trials with the greatest exactness and equity, that temptation may not be too violent for our weakness, and yet strong enough to put our virtue to its proper proof. Fleshly lusts war against the soul, but are conquered effectually by temperance, or keeping our bodies in subjection. The world allures our minds; but the world of glory is open to full view, to draw our regards thither. If the devil and his angels are permitted to practise his malice in perverting mankind, God hath sent forth a holy and powerful Spirit to illuminate, sanctify, strengthen, and comfort; and hath ordered his Angels, in great numbers, to be ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation. We may assure ourselves, that we are upon a fair, and even favourable, Trial; for, if we do not neglect our advantages, the means of securing our virtue, if we choose to be virtuous, do far surpass the occasion of vice and sin; and in all our conflicts more are with us, than are against us; God is with us.

VII. Our Condition is well adapted to the purposes of moral Improvement. If we consider life as a State of Enjoyment, all is in confusion and disorder, and we are easily misled into the most foul and fatal errors; but if we take life as a Trial, for the exercise of our virtue, in order to our future advancement, then every part of it will appear to be properly appointed. We have every day opportunities of shewing our sincere regards to God, by giving him the preference to the many appetites and objects which court our affections, and come in competition with him.

* Nimium vobis Romana propago
Visa potens, superi, propria [perpetua] habe si dona sufficent.

Nihilne esse proprium [perpetuum] cuiquam?

Omne quod habemus, aut mutuum est, aut proprium.

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Encid. vi. lin. 870.


Donat. in locum.
Ch. VIII. Of a State of Trial.

We have opportunities enough to learn what is sufficient for us to know. And the obscurities and difficulties in the way of truth, are not designed to debar us from it, but to exercise our integrity in our searches after it, and profession of it. All the calamities of life, pains of body, infirmities, seductions, losses, &c. are occasions of purifying our hearts, by sobriety, humility, repentance, self-denial, patience, &c. And for social virtues, we cannot suppose ourselves in any situation, where we should have more occasions, or more pressing motives to exercise every species of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures. And if our love to men must surmount both self-love, that deceitful principle in ourselves, and ingratitude, that ugly vice in others, hereby we are obliged to exercise, in the most generous, disinterested, and godlike manner, a virtue of the first rank, and the most necessary to preferment in God's creation. For he is the fittest for business and truth, under the universal Father, who most of all participates of his kind dispositions and goodwill towards the whole universe of beings.

VIII. Different persons, as they have different capacities, advantages, and opportunities, and are in different circumstances, conditions, and situations, are under different Trials. Mat xxv. 15. Luke xii. 47, 48.

IX. God alloteth to every particular person his Trial. He gives us capacities and opportunities, assigns our circumstances and outward conditions, and measures our afflictions and comforts. Therefore, whatever our Trials may be, this should calm our uneasy minds, that they are meted out to us by the same wise Hand which created and governs universal Nature.

X. Every one will be judged, and receive reward or punishment according to the circumstances of his own particular Trial; and all things relating to it, all advantages and disadvantages, will be weighed in the exactest balance, and determined accordingly. Luke xii. 47, 48. That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that was in different circumstances, and knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. Here observe, that God fully understands the degrees of the guilt, or virtue of particular persons; but we do not, and therefore should be cautious in judging.

XI. There are degrees of Trial; or temptation may be more or less intense. The sufferings of the flesh may be raised to such an height of anguish and terror, or its passions so inflamed, as to suspend the use of thought and reason.

XII. God can raise or sink our Trial as he pleases. When he sees fit, he can give a calm and quiet state; and when he pleaseth he can raise storms about us, and heat the furnace of temptation seven times more than it was wont to be heated. Job, in his Trial by prosperity, acquitted himself well; and under great pains and poverty, he finned not, nor charged God foolishly. But at length, through the unkind usage of his friends, and perhaps some other concurring circumstances, his Trial began to be so hard, that he opened his mouth, and cursed his day. Whenever the Almighty pleaseth, he can permit a Trial that will shake the strongest faith. Therefore,

XIII. No good resolutions or dispositions, no degrees of spiritual strength, which
which we have attained, is an absolute security, that we shall be for the future steadfast and unmoveable. New, or sudden Trials, stronger than any we have hitherto met with, may shake and stagger the stability of our minds. Let no man imagine, that his former victories will exempt him from a possibility of falling. It is the will of God, that every man, the best of men; in this State, should be under a constant necessity of watching. Wherefore, let us take unto ourselves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done, or overcome, all to stand. Eph. vi. 13.

XIV. All Trial is attended with danger. And therefore some, if not many, in a State of Trial, may fall into perdition; as wicked angels and men.

XV. Our danger is not from God, but from ourselves. God tempteth, or seduceth into sin, no man, Jam. i. 13, 14, 15. for this very good reason, because he cannot himself be tempted with evil, such is his abhorrence and detestation of it; and therefore cannot be inclined to draw any of his creatures into the practice of it. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away from righteousness, by his own lust, and enticed to commit sin.

XVI. All temptation is vincible to those that are willing to overcome. See Prop. VI. All the admonitions, exhortations, encouragements in Scripture, suppose and support the truth of this proposition.

XVII. We are victorious over temptation, not by our own power, but by the grace and power of God. Even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Mark xiv. 38. We are indeed under the highest obligations to use faithfully the powers we have already received, and no otherwise may we hope to be superior to temptation; but it is not our own wisdom or strength that can preserve and uphold us; for we are directed in Revelation to trust in God, and to seek unto him for succour and deliverance; which would be impertinent, were we sufficient to ourselves. Why should we ask help, when we do not want it? God alone is able to keep us from falling, and to establish us in every good work. Jude 24. 2 Theil. ii. 16, 17. And we are abundantly assured, that he will give strength in proportion to our Trials, and our faithful endeavours; and that our future honours will be great in proportion to the present greater Trials we have surmounted. If we have overcome much, we shall enjoy much. For, observe, the succours of Divine Grace do not diminish the quantity of our virtue, or reward. Whatever helps our infirmity may require, our virtue is measured by our own sincere desires and endeavours, to which the Divine Aid is proportioned. So that, in moral construction, it is all one as if we had overcome in our own strength.

XVIII. The means of conquering Temptation, on our part, are Watching and Prayer. Mark xiv. 38. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. (1.) Watch. Be not secure; expect temptation, and be sensible of the danger of it, the greatest of all dangers, the loss of the soul. Be not confident of your own strength. Keep out of the way of temptation. Avoid every snare that may intangle your minds. Indulge to no dangerous liberties; make no uncautious approaches towards folly and sin. That may be affected by slow degrees, which a man would never at
at first have contented to be guilty of. He that fears falling down a pres-
cipice, will be sure not to come near it; and he that would extinguish
the fire, should withdraw the fuel. Keep thy heart with all diligence;
reject every sinful thought and suggestion. Keep the body in subje-
tion to reason and religion by self-denial and abstinence. Beware of an un-
due attachment to the world. Your life and treasure is in heaven; and
there let your hearts be. Let the word of God dwell in you richly by
daily meditation. Psal. cxix. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart,
that I might not sin against thee. (2.) Pray. Not that we may be totally
exempted from temptation; for we came into the world for this very
end, that we might be tried and tempted. We cannot reasonably ex-
pect that God, in our favour, should alter the constitution of the world,
or of the human nature; but we should pray, that God would order
our Trials in such manner as will best promote the purity and pro-
bity of our lives. Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Remove far from me vanity and lies;
give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, &c.
The wife man doth not prescribe any condition that did not belong to
him; but, in general, is desirous of that situation in life which God
did would be most favourable to his piety and integrity. Lead us not;
suffer us not to enter, into temptation, i. e. suffer us not to fall under the
power and prevalence of temptation. The example of our Lord is of
the greatest force to direct and animate us in our conflicts; he took upon
him our nature, and went through all our Trials, on purpose to shew
us how to behave under them; and to assure us that, imitating his
example, we shall at length be partakers of his glory. And thus by his
perfect obedience, his obedience unto death, a sacrifice highly pleasing to
God, he recovered that life and immortality which Adam forfeited
by his disobedience.

CHAP. IX.

Of Law, or the religious Dispensation Adam and Eve were under
in the Garden.

GEN. ii. 17. But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil,
thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou
shalt surely die. This is Law; clear ideas of which are necessary to
the right understanding of St. Paul's writings.

Law is a rule of action, or duty, commanding or prohibiting, given
by the Sovereign to moral Agents, with the penalty of death annexed.
Transgression and die, is the language of Law. And therefore every transgres-
for, the moment he is such, is dead in law; and, for any thing in Law, he
must continue so, as long as it is true that he has violated the Law, that
is, for evermore. For the Law, which condemns him, can give him no
relief;
Of the Dispensation Adam and Ch. IX.

relief; as, in its own nature, it excludes repentance and pardon; neither of which can take place, unless Law is overruled, or the execution of it suspended by the authority and favour of the Sovereign. For Law would not be Law, if its sense or language were this, *the transgressor, who doth not repent and obtain pardon, shall die;* seeing this would be to allow transgression by Law, upon the uncertain conditions of repentance, and the Sovereign’s mercy. “You may sin with impunity, if you do but “repent, and find favour.” And so the Law would be invalidated by itself, as it would allow a conditional transgression, which would annul the annexed penalty, by suspending the execution of it for ever, in expectation of the sinner’s repentance, and the Sovereign’s forgiveness; for, as the sinner may possibly repent in any future time to all eternity, so the Law could not at any time be executed. Consequently the Law, by this means, would be rendered for ever insignificant, as it might be violated for ever with impunity. Therefore, to be consistent with itself, Law must must be conceived in absolute terms, *sin and die*, subjecting every sinner immediately to the penalty of death, which is the curse of the Law. *Gal. iii. 10, 13.* By this rule the Apostle, having proved that all flesh have sinned, concludes, that *no flesh, or no part of mankind, can be justified,* or entitled to life, before the Sovereign, by deeds or works of Law. *Rom. iii. 20.* For the Law works wrath, or subjects the transgressor to death, the curse or penalty of it, *Rom. iv. 15.* On which account it is very properly called, the ministration, dispensation, or constitution, of death; *2 Cor. iii. 7.* as it is a constitution which affords nothing but rigid condemnation for all transgressors.

Hence it follows, that death in Law is death eternal, without hopes of a revival or resurrection. For, as before proved, it is the very nature of Law, never to remit the penalty or forfeiture. The Law which now condemns the criminal, condemns him to death absolutely, and for evermore; the everlasting language of Law to every one that breaks it, and for every breach and transgression, being this, *Thou shalt die.* And this is the force of the expression *viniatur morte moriendo morieris,* in “dying thou shalt die,” in the Law given to Adam. It doth not speak of the certainty of the event, as if he should certainly die the day he transgressed, for the event shews the contrary; nor that he should become mortal from a change in his constitution, which is a random conjecture, without any foundation in the nature of his constitution, which was created mortal, or in the force of the words. For the phrase *תינעת* is an Hebraism, importing that a thing is, or is done, thoroughly, totally, in the most perfect manner, or the most intense degree, and is to be interpreted according to the nature of the subject. As *Gen. ii. 16.* לולא בלשכ וksiążka תינעת comendendo comedes, “thou mayest freely eat,” without any restraint. *Chap. xxxvii. 33.* יפרגפנ רפה רפומית יפרגפנ *discerpendo discerptus est Joseph,* “Joseph is torn all to pieces,” or most cruelly torn to pieces. *Exod. xxi. 19.* יפרגפנ יפרגפנ et medicando medicabitur, “and shalt cause him to be thoroughly healed.” Thus the force of the words, “in dying “thou shalt die,” is this, thou shalt thoroughly, utterly, totally die, or die for ever, without coming to life again. Thou hast justly forfeited
feated thy life and being, and shalt suffer a total and eternal extinction of it.

This sense and language of Law must be understood only as a declaration, that the penalty is just and due; which is all that can be done by Law as a rule of justice, declaring, in general, that he who is disobedient to his Maker hath justly forfeited his being; and that, in consequence of his disobedience, his Maker may justly deprive him of it. The Law can only declare the truth of this denunciation, as it hath no power to put it in execution: the execution of this threatening must necessarily and entirely rest in the hands and power of the Lawgiver; who therefore may mitigate, reprieve, or suspend it, as he, judging of circumstances, shall in his wisdom think proper. This is the prerogative of the Sovereign or Lawgiver, which is allowed to be fit and reasonable all the world over. For, if this were not allowed, in proper cases, there could be no such thing as pardon, or the mitigation of the sentence of Law, either with God or man; which in every nation, and throughout the whole universe, would be a state of things the most severe and the most dreadful.

Thus room is made for the exercise of favour or grace, without doing any violence to truth. The penalty indeed is due; but according to the true natures of things, there may be alleviating circumstances in the case of the transgressor; which, though Law can make no provision for them without destroying itself, yet the Lawgiver may, and, in reason and truth, ought to consider and allow, with respect to the infliction of the penalty. Wisdom and goodness ought to have place in him, and certainly do take place in God, as well as justice. Justice consists in executing the penalty of the Law according to the letter of it; which letter (2 Cor. iii. 6.) killeth, or destroys, the sinner, by subjecting him to eternal death, or to a total extinction of life; according to which rule, there could be no place for mercy, and the whole world must be ruined. But wisdom and goodness may mitigate the rigour of this constitution, not by abrogating the Law, as a rule of life; for so the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good, (Rom. vii. 12.) and can never be abrogated, being, in its general intention, agreeable to the everlasting and immutable nature of things: much less by finding out some expedient to satisfy Law and justice, which can be satisfied no other way than by the death of the offender; for justice, as used in this case, is acting strictly according to Law.

Nothing, therefore, but the execution of the Law can satisfy Justice. The wisdom and goodness of the Sovereign may do what the Law cannot do; that is to say, may suspend the execution of the sentence as long as he shall think fit; and so may leave what space he pleases for the sinner's repentance, and provide what means he shall think proper to induce him to repentance; and upon his repentance, may restore him to the assurance of eternal life, by an eternal suspension of the execution of the Law. For as to that, he cannot be limited to any space of time. If he hath a right by prerogative to suspend at all, it must be a discretionary right to suspend as long as he chooseth. This is grace, or gospel; by which
which the sinner may be restored to the hope of immortality, and actually invested in it, by the wisdom and favour of the Lawgiver. This new, or remedying constitution, the Apostle calls spirit, which quickens the sinner condemned to death by the letter of the Law, or makes him to live. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Who also hath made us [Apostles] able ministers of the New Testament [or constitution], not of the letter but the spirit; for the letter kills, but the spirit giveth life. Which spirit, he informs us, ver. 17, is the Lord, or the Gospel of our Lord. Now the Lord is that spirit, that life-giving spirit, or the latter Adam, who is a quickening, or life-giving, spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45.

That the penalty, in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely, or utterly, die, is to be understood, not of the event, as if he should certainly die, but of the demerit of transgression, that he would deserve to die; and that, notwithstanding this threatening, the Sovereign might respite the execution of it, and not only allow the transgressor the benefit of repentance, but also appoint means to lead him to repentance, and to eternal life; may be clearly proved from Ezek. iii. 18. xxxiii. 8, 11, 14, 15. Where God repeats the very same sentence of the Law upon the wicked person, whom yet, at the same time, he charges the Prophet to warn, in order to bring him to repentance, promising pardon and life in case he did repent. Ezek. iii. 18. When [םָּאֹ֣אָה֣ בַּהֲּעִנֵּ֣י וְנַחֲּ֑א, whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the wicked רַחַּ֣ם רַחַּ֣ם לַעֲשׂ֥והִי, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life. Chap. xxxiii. 8. When [whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the wicked, O wicked man, רַחַּ֣ם רַחַּ֣ם לַעֲשׂ֥והִי thou shalt surely [utterly] die, if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, &c. Ver. 14. Again, when [whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the wicked, רַחַּ֣ם רַחַּ֣ם לַעֲשׂ֥והִי thou shalt surely [totally, utterly] die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right, ver. 15. — רַחַּ֣ם רַחַּ֣ם לַעֲשׂ֥והִי vivendo vivet, he shall surely [totally, eternally] live, he shall not die.

Thus Law in the rigorous sense is to be understood; and thus it stands in connection with the pardon of transgressors, or their attainment to eternal life through the favour of the Lawgiver. That our first parents, while in the garden of Eden, were under Law, or a rule of Action with the penalty of death annexed, is manifest from the very form of the prohibition—But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt utterly die. And the Apostle Paul evidently supposes, that Adam was under Law, Rom. v. 13, 14. For until the law [of Moses] sin was [committed] in the world; but sin [though committed] is not imputed [unto death] μὴ οὖν υπάρχει όταν Law is not in being. This supposes, 1. That Law is the only constitution which subjeçeth the sinner to death. 2. That Law was not in being in the times preceding the giving of the Law of Moses. ver. 14. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses [while Law was not in being], even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression. That is to say, “Death reigned all the long space of about 2500 years from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin, as Adam “did, against Law, making death the penalty of their sin; because du- “ring that period mankind were not under Law, but under the general "covenant,
"covenant, or constitution, of grace, given to Adam immediately after "his transgression."

This evidently supposes, that Adam was under Law with the penalty of death annexed, while he was in the garden, or before he transgressed; and that the same severe constitution was again revived by Moses, after it had been suspended from the time of Adam's transgression till the Law was given by Moses. Whence the Apostle concludes, that, as Death reigned all that long period, while sin was committed in the world, and yet no positive Law subsisted, making death the penalty of sin, he concludes, I say, that men, in general, did not die for their own transgressions, but in consequence of Adam's one transgression.

It must be observed, that the Apostle Paul doth not always use Law in the rigid sense, but sometimes for the whole Jewish Code, or the Old Testament. Rom. iii. 19; sometimes for any inward principle which influenceth and governeth a man—vii. 23; sometimes for a rule in general—iii. 27; and sometimes for a rule of action, with the penalty of death annexed. Rom. v. 20, vi. 15. vii. 4, &c.

C H A P. X.

Of the Institution of Marriage.

Gen. ii. 18, to the End.

Adam's calling all beasts and fowls by names doth not imply, that he had a perfect knowledge of the natures and intrinsic qualities of all animals; an opinion destitute of all evidence; but that God gave him dominion over them, as a matter over his bond-servants, according to the force of the phrase, to call things or persons by name. Pial. cxlvii. 4. Isai. xi. 26. xliii. 1. God allowing Adam to give the creatures what names he pleased, was the form of conveying or making over to him the property of them, and dominion over them. It hath also reference to the formation of woman; that Adam, our first parent, having surveyed all other animals, and having observed that they were created in pairs, for the propagation of their several kinds, might be sensible of his own solitary, destitute condition, and of the importance of his being also provided of a mate suitable to his nature, (which, by reason of its superior excellency, could not be matched with any of the brutal kind) a companion in body and mind, fit to cohabit with him, for mutual converse, delight, comfort, and assistance, especially for propagating the human species; without which the world would have been stocked with only brutes.

And it was fitting, or agreeable to the true nature of things, that the formation of the first woman should be attended with some circumstance expressive of the nearness of that relation which was to be the fountain of
the existence of all mankind, and of all the near and dear relations to beneficial and comfortable to the life of man; and no circumstances could do that more significantly, than taking the woman out of a part of the man’s body. Thus she became another self; and this was intended as a document to all posterity, that a wife should be regarded and treated as such. *Ephes. v. 28.* So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies; be that lovetb his wife, lovetb himself.*

Ver. 23. And [when the Lord God brought to him the woman, his wife, and informed him in what manner she was produced] *Adam* said, [with much satisfaction and joy] *this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,* the dearest to me of all creatures! *She shall be called* תַּתָּ נִיְזֵשׁ Wo-

man, because *she is taken out of ניָזֵשׁ Man* [a sign of *Adam’s* property in her], *ver. 24.* And the Lord God said, *v. xix. 4, 5.* Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. Thus marriage was instituted; a sacred and ho-

nourable ordinance, of high distinction, as it is very nearly connected with the dignity and happiness of the human nature.

And by making only one woman for one man, God plainly declared, that this relation ought to subsist between two; as the Prophet well argues, *Mal. ii. 14, 15.* *And did not be,* God, make but one couple, one man and one woman, as a rule to all mankind, that should descend from them? yet *had he the residue of the spirit,* and could then have created more men and women, if promiscuous conversation had been for the greater happiness of the world. *And wherefore did he make but one couple? That he might seek* a godly seed, יָנִיְז וּרְאֵב an excellent seed; that man and wife, in chaste wedlock, in sincere and undis-

vided affection, might propagate a posterity to the honour and service of God. This is an argument against polygamy and divorce, confirmed by our Lord’s wisdom and authority, *Mat. xix. 3, 4, 5, 6.* Thus mankind are brought into the world in a way suitably to the excellency of their nature. For, considering how weak and imperfect our in-

fancy is, and in how great ignorance and dissoluteness of manners we must necessarily grow up to manhood, without good discipline and in-

struction, it is evident this world must have been the most wild and disorderedly scene imaginable, were the race of mankind propagated in a vagrant, licentious manner, without parents to own them, and by their tender care and affection to give them a good education. The production of an intelligent being, in the most helpless and exposed circumstances, and which grows up to a due degree of understanding, no otherwise than by good culture, ought to be attended with all the proper advantages in the propagator’s power. And therefore the propagation of the human species, according to the true nature of things, ought to be guarded and directed by the best exercise of reason, and not left to be done in a loose, brutal manner. God did not create man in jest; nor should the ordinary generation of a man be made a matter of lewd jest, or of lawless passion. This is the rationale of marriage, and of modesty and sobriety.

*Adam* had no choice, but his descendents have great need to exercife prudence in the choice of a relation so important and lasting. The ad-

vice and approbation of parents is, in this case, one of the best rules. *And*
And as marriage lessens the interests of parents in their children, it is generally not dutiful to alienate it to another without their knowledge and consent: nor should parents unreasonably oppose the lawful inclinations of their children.

Ver. 25. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed, being free from sin and guilt.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Tempter who deceived Eve.

Gen. iii. 1—9.

HERE Eve is deceived and tempted to transgress the law of God by some moral agent, who could speak and argue, called by Moses ὁ ἄραξας the Serpent; which, he faith, was more subtle than any other beast of the field which the Lord God had made. But a beast of the field, how subtle or fagacious foever, could not speak and reason. Who then was the moral agent that deceived Eve? St. Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 3. Speaks of the deceiver in the same manner as Moses doth; I fear, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The Apostle did not suppose the Corinthians might be corrupted by the subtlety of an irrational creature; consequently, he did not suppose that Eve was beguiled by the subtlety of an irrational creature. But St. John comes nearer to the point in Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2, where he speaks of the Serpent as a deceiver, and describes him after this manner, and the great dragon was cast out, that old Serpent; called otherwise in Scripture, the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. A dragon is a huge overgrown serpent. That old Serpent, means that Serpent which of old, at the beginning of the world, deceived Eve, and still was deceiving the world. (And in several other places of Scripture, which we shall presently have occasion to take notice of, the Devil's temptation of Eve is plainly alluded to.) Therefore this Serpent, and the Devil and Satan, are synonymous, and mean one and the same being. Hence divines have justly concluded, that it was the Devil or Satan, an evil or malignant spirit, which tempted Eve, in the body, or assuming the form and shape, of a Serpent; which then might be a very beautiful as well as fagacious animal, familiar with Adam and Eve, and much admired by them.

That there are wicked and malignant spirits, is undeniable, from Scripture. 2 Pet. ii. 4. For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but ζωγραφισεν θανάτον καταστρέφοντας cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. [Or rather, cast them down into a low, wretched condition, in chains of darkness, delivered them to be reserved.}

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unto judgment.] Jude 6. And the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Being cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, in St. Peter, is the same as being reserved in perpetual chains under darkness, in St. Jude; and may signify no more than, that they are degraded from their former high and glorious estate, and chained, or confined to, a much lower, narrower, and darker situation, without any hope of favour, unto the day of judgment; when they, with all workers of iniquity, shall be cast into everlasting fire, Mat. xxv. 41. Rev. xx. 10, 15. For any thing therefore advanced in those two places, those fallen angels may at present reside in our air, and be permitted to wander about in the earth.

It must be observed, that there is an ambiguity in both the words, ὁ ἄγγελος Saturn, and Διάβολος the Devil. The former, Satan, signifies any adversary among men and good angels, as well as among evil spirits. Num. xxii. 32. And the Angel of the Lord said,—behold, I went out to withstand thee, ὁ ἄγγελος, for an adversary, a Satan. So 2 Sam. xix. 22.—Ye sons of Zeruiah are adversaries. 1 Kin. v. 4. xi. 14. 23. 25. Psal. lxxi. 13. cix. 20. 29. Peter was Satan, an adversary, to our Lord, Mat. xvi. 23. And the unbelieving Jews were the Satan, or adversaries, who hindered St. Paul’s return to Thessalonica, 1 Thess. ii. 18. Διάβολος, Devil, signifies an accuser, slanderer. Job. vi. 70.— and one of you, Judas, is Διάβολος a Devil. 1 Tim. iii. 11. Their wives must be grave, μόνος Διάβολος not Devils, i. e. accusers, slanderers. 2 Tim. iii. 3. falsé accusers, Tit. ii. 3. Thus it may be applied to any wicked persons, who slander, accuse, and persecute the people of God. And this ambiguity in the sense of these two words, τις and Διάβολος, may render it doubtful how some particular passages of Scripture are to be understood.

That those two words are used to signify one and the same wicked spirit, who, with many others his angels, or under-agents, are conver-sant in our world, and endeavour to draw men into sin, and do mischief among us, is very evident from Revelation. As in the case of our first parents, of Job, whose children and substance were destroyed, and his body afflicted with a grievous disorder by Satan, Job i. 12, &c. ii. 6, 7; of our Lord, who was tempted of the Devil, or Satan, Mat. iv. 1, 3, 10. Mark i. 13. Luke iv. 2. Which temptation, under all its circum-stances, can never be resolved into an allegory; much less can it be sup-posoed to be all transected within our Lord’s own mind, as if the Devil, or Satan, was no other than the figurations, or thoughts, that arose in his own heart, which is very absurd. Nor can the following texts be naturally understood of any other than a real Devil or Satan. Mat. xiii. 39. The enemy that sowed the tares is the Devil, [and his instruments] Mark iii. 26. How can Satan cast out Satan? Job. viii. 44. Ye are of your father the Devil. Acts x. 38.—Healing all that were oppressed of the Devil. 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light. Heb. ii. 14. That through death he might destroy him that had the power of [subjecting our first parents, and
and their posterity, to] death, that is, the Devil. 2 Tim. ii. 16. — recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil. Jam. iv. 7. Resift the Devil, and he shall flee from you. 1 Joh. iii. 8. He that committeth sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning [of the world, alluding to his tempting our first parents into sin :] for this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. Jude 9. Yet Michael, the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses. And generally, Satan and Devil are thus to be understood in the New Testament, the few places before mentioned only excepted: though, where the Devil is principally intended, his instruments, or wicked agents among men, may at the same time be connoted.

Besides Satan, or the Devil, the Scripture frequently mentions other evil spirits, called δαίμονες, δαίμων, Δαίμονες, which we translate Devils. That these Dæmons, however understood in profane authors, do belong to the Devil’s retinue, and may be his angels or under-agents, over whom he is chief or prince, will appear by comparing Mat. xii. 22, 24. — 28. Luke x. 17, 18. xi. 15, 18. Those who in the Gospels are said to be δαίμωνες possessed by Dæmons, in Acts x. 38. are said to be oppressed of the Devil, ὑπὸ τοῦ Δαίμονος, as they were under the power of his agents. Thus we may conceive of the Devil and his angels, Mat. xxv. 41. the Dragon and his angels, Rev. xii. 7. He is the prince and head, and those dæmons are his subjects. They are often spoken of in the plural number, as being many; though Satan, or the Devil, is always in the singular, as being but one single spirit, and chief over all the rest. But, as before observed, his angels, or agents, may sometimes be included with him.

The characters which the Devil or Satan sustains in Scripture, are these, the great Dragon, or fierce Devourer, the old Serpent, full of villainous subtlety, Rev. xii. 9. The Wicked One, Mat. xiii. 38. 1 Joh. iii. 12. A Murderer and Liar, Joh. viii. 44. Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do. He was a murderer from the beginning, [in effecting the death of Adam and his posterity; and thus he may be said to have had the power of death, Heb. ii. 14.] and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, [as he was to Eve] and the father of it. The Accuser of the Brethren, Rev. xii. 10. [See Job i. 6.—13. ii. 1—7.] A roaring Lion, [the lion roars only when he is hungry, Psal. xxi. 13. Ezek. xxi. 25.] seeking whom he may devour. The Prince of the World, meaning, as it is corrupt and wicked, John xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. The Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience, the idolatrous heathen, Ephes. ii. 2. Here the Devil is represented as a prince, or sovereign, at the head of a kingdom which stands in opposition to, and is at war with, the kingdom of Christ; who was manifested as his antagonist, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, 1 John iii. 8.

The Dæmons are characterized as the Devil’s angels, Mat. xxv. 41. As unclean Spirits, Mark v. 2, 8, 12. Luke iv. 33, 36. viii. 27, 29. Evil, wicked, Spirits, Luke viii. 2.
These vicious spirits, the Devil and his angels, when permitted, are capable of doing any mischief to the estate, body, or mind, 1 Sam. xvi. 14. Job i. 12, &c. ii. 6, 7. Mark iii. 23, 26. Luke xiii. 16. 1 Cor. v. 5. 1 Tim. i. 20. Nor is there any absurdity, any thing inconsistent with the Divine Goodness, in supposing that evil spirits may inflict calamities and disorders upon mankind: for they are only instruments in God's hands, under his direction and control, as much as any other cause whatever; and so must come under the same rules as any other means which Providence may employ in distressing or destroying human life, as storms, inundations, the passions and powers of wicked men, a putrid air, vitiated humours in the body, &c. In all these cases, whatever is the instrumental, God is the appointing and directing cause; and it would have been all one, whether he had sent a good or evil angel, or had only changed the temperature of the air, to destroy the Israelites by pestilence, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16; or to slay Sennacherib's army, 2 King. xix. 35. 2 Chron. xxxii. 21. In correcting or punishing by diseases, or other diffidences, God may use what instruments he pleaseth.

Thus far we may go upon this part of the subject, and not much further. The world of spirits lies so far out of our sight, that we can know no more of them, than what is revealed; nor have we principles sufficient to enable us to form clear and complete notions of everything said concerning them even in Revelation.

That which most of all requires our attention, is, that the Devil delighteth in seducing mankind to sin against God, and takes every advantage, and uses every wise to effect his wicked purpose. Rev. xii. 9. The great dragon, called the Devil and Satan, deceiveth the whole world. Mat. xiii. 39. The enemy that sowed them, the tares, i. e. wicked men, is the Devil. Of which we have a specimen in his temptation of our first parents. He concealed himself in the body, or shape, of a Serpent, probably at that time a creature admired by Adam and Eve for its beauty and sagacity. He first addressed the woman, when alone, and at a distance from her husband; and first endeavoured to weaken her sense of the obligation of the Divine Prohibition, by representing it as uncertain or unreasonable, ver. 1. Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden? "Surely you mistake him; it can never be so; for why should ""God debar you of any of the innocent and delightful fruits this gar- ""den yields?" The woman exposed herself to the greatest danger by deliberating with the Tempter, upon a matter which she should not have heard so much as called in question without abhorrence. But she was not aware of his wicked design; and therefore, in much simplicity, gave him a full account of the law they were under, ver. 2, 3. Which only gave him, on the other hand, an opportunity of contradiction it by a most bold and impudent lie, ver. 4. Ye shall not surely die. Yea, he assures her, they should receive great advantage by eating the forbidden fruit, ver. 5. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. To favour his affection, he perverts the word of God, by wresting the name God had given the tree; as if it had been called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, because God was aware it would endow them with the most exalted and extensive knowledge; whereas it had its name upon a very different account.

Thus
Thus Satan persuades men to have hard thoughts of God, as if he envied our happiness, and laid the restraints of his law upon our appetites out of ill-will; but infinite Goodness is not capable of envy. Thus he tempteth us to be uneasy in the condition Providence has allotted us, and prompts us to be ambitious of things too high for us. And thus he deludes with false hopes of benefit and advantage from sin; and, when this last point is gained, we fall an easy prey to the Tempter. ver. 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat. "She saw it was to be desired to make one wife." What wrought this opinion in Eve was, possibly, the assurance the Serpent gave her, that he which, she very well knew, before was, like other brutes, dumb and irrational, was, by the admirable virtue of the fruit, advanced in speech and reason, as she saw, to an equality with herself, the most excellent creature in the earth; and, therefore, she needed not doubt but it would, in the same proportion, exalt the human nature to the high perfection of the angelic order. This would pass for demonstration with her, who knew not that it was an evil spirit that acted and spake in the Serpent. But this is only my own conjecture.—And she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat: being, probably, persuaded (besides the arguments the Serpent used with Eve) by the strong affection they had for each other. Thus the Devil, by tempting our first parents to transgress the law, subjected them, and their posterity in them, to eternal death. Thus he was a murtherer, and may be said to have had the power of death. Heb. ii. 14.

CHAP. XII.

Reflections on the Devil's Temptations.

By searching the Scriptures we have found, that there is a malicious Spirit which, by Divine Permission, ranges about this world, attended with many more of the same depraved nature; and, as any opportunity offers, is endeavouring to draw men from the practice of virtue, into all wickedness and alienation from the truth.

To prevent any cavils against the scriptural account of this wicked Spirit, let it be well observed,

I. That we cannot be sure, from any unassisted knowledge or observation of our own, that this earth is not frequented by numerous spirits of a nature much superior to the human. Our knowledge even of the animals which naturally belong to our globe, hath been, and probably still is, very defective. Without the help of microscopes, we could never have discerned vast tribes of insects, which we now plainly see do live and
and move even in our own bodies, and in all parts of the earth and water; and even with this advantage of sight, there may still be a world of smaller animals, which our senses cannot reach. Much more may myriads of spirits be mixed amongst us, which come not under our observation. Therefore, as without the aid of microscopes we should never have discovered the most numerous part of the inhabitants of our earth; so neither, without the light of Revelation, can we be ascertained, what spirits are and act in the region of the air. And Revelation is a mean as proper, at least, for discovering the one, as our own artificial inventions for discovering the other. But Revelation informs us, that angels, both good and bad, are conversant in this world; which may be true, though we have no distinct, sensible perceptions of their existence and operations. Under former dispensations of religion they might appear, and act in a sensible manner; but under the present dispensation they may, for wise reasons (particularly, because we are now sufficiently instructed in their nature and agency), be wholly invisible: nor may we be capable of distinguishing their secret internal impressions from the suggestions of our own minds; or the external, kind affinities of good angels, or the malicious injuries of evil angels, from the common course of Providence.

II. That we are now upon trial hath been already proved; and that our trial is well and wisely adjusted, cannot be doubted. We ourselves are by no means capable of judging what kind of trials are most suitable to our own spirits, because we know but little of the nature of them. To settle the kind and degree of our Trials, belongs entirely to him who alone understands the nature of our minds, and the designs of his own wisdom. Therefore, if we are shocked when we hear God hath permitted many evil spirits to range our world, and to exercise their malice in tempting mankind, we are really shocked at our own ignorance, seeing this method of trial, as well as the rest, is under regulations of infinite wisdom, and designed for the purposes of infinite goodness.

Objection. "Suppose God hath for wise ends permitted such beings to mingle among mankind, is it not very strange that any should be found so malicious as to employ that permission to the worst of purposes? How can we suppose any spirits, any intelligences, especially of a superior nature, so far abandoned to all sense of goodness and virtue, as to endeavour without ceasing the corruption and perdition of their fellow-creatures?"

Answer. That wickedness exists in the universe, is too plain from the flate of things in that part of it which we inhabit; where we see great numbers, in spite of their own reason and understanding, and of all the instances of God's love and goodness, and of all the most evident and powerful arguments to virtue and piety, who not only are very vicious themselves, but take an unnatural pleasure in tempting and corrupting others, and making them as bad as themselves. It cannot then be hard to suppose, that there are other spirits, in other circumstances, who, in the same manner, oppose God; that is to say, oppose truth and virtue. For the Devil opposed and setteth himself against God, not by might and power, as if he were able to contend with the Almighty, but only
as he opposeth virtue and truth; just as wicked men do among ourselves. Indeed, we men are under strong temptations from the flesh, and the objects that relate to it; but the spirits we are speaking of, may be under as strong temptations of some other kind, that we are not acquainted with; they may, by some sinful pursuits and compliances, have funk themselves into the last degrees of moral pravity, and even be more wicked than the wickedest man in the earth, more blind to the goodn∇fs of God, and more fearless of his wrath. Nor are superior natural abilities an absolute security against the very worst moral corruption; for we do actually find, that great knowledge and understanding are so far from always making men good and virtuous, that, on the contrary, these are often in a high degree the instruments of sin and disobedience; being wholly employed in finding out pleas and pretexts for the most abandoned iniquity.

Thus you see it is very possible such vicious spirits may be, may be mixed among us, and be permitted to tempt us; and, according to Scripture representations, they are very dangerous enemies. For,

I. Satan is continually going about seeking all advantages against us, Job i. 7. The Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Satan answered, and said, —From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And from the query in the next verse, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? and also from what our Saviour faith to Peter, Luke xxii. 31. Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; it appears, that he is inquisitive into the characters of men, and busily seeks, and gladly lays hold of any occasion to try, and, if possible, to overthrow their integrity. 1 Cor. vii. 5. Defraud you not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

II. We may suppose a spirit of superior faculties to be very subtle in understanding our various constitutions and inclinations, and the particular sins to which our circumstances do expose us; and in laying his baits, and addressing his temptations accordingly.

III. Such a tempter can apply a great variety of machinations, devices, [Aces, 2 Cor. ii. 11.] and wiles [παράδοσις, Ephes. vi. 11.] to deceive. This is seen in the case of Eve. And in tempting our Lord, it is very observable, how he varied his devices, and shifted the scene of temptation, to fix, if possible, some flain upon his spotless mind. He can put himself into any shape, either of terror, or pleasing allurement; either as a roaring lion, or an angel of light, [2 Cor. xi. 14.] Sometimes he works by his agents, employing those who are already infrared to draw in others; so Eve was his tool to tempt Adam: sometimes injecting into our minds unrighteous, impure suggestions, [Luke xxii. 3; Acts v. 3.] sometimes taking the word out of our heart, [Luke viii. 12.] or mixing tares with the good seed, [Matt. xiii. 25.] and corrupting our minds from the simplicity that is in Christ.

But then, all this must be understood under the following restrictions.

1. That the Devil can neither hurt us, nor so much as attempt to hurt
hurt us, further than God permits. He is not like the pretended evil
god of the Manichæes, eternal, self-existent, almighty, and independent,
but as much under the power of God as the weakest reptile under our
feet. When God gives him a commission, he cannot act beyond it;
and when he has no commission, he is chained up and can do nothing.
He is therefore no other than an agent, entirely and always in God's
hand, to be used as he sees fit.

2. Nor can he any ways pollute our minds, further than we ourselves
do consent. If God permits, possibly he may work upon the humours
of the body, he may inflame our passions, abuse our imaginations, or
suggest evil things to our thoughts; but unless we willingly admit
those impressions, he cannot possibly stain our consciences with sin.

3. God hath not only furnished means and strength to resist him, but
hath appointed that, if we do resist him, he shall be conquered and van-
quished. Jam. iv. 7. Resist the Devil, and he will, he shall, he must, flee
from you; not by his own choice, but by the will and power of God.
The God of our peace and safety shall bruise Satan under our feet. And such
a victory shall turn to the praise and glory and establishment of our
virtue. Hence it follows,

1. That it must be our own act and deed if we are overcome by the
temptations of the Devil. It is common for people to consider them-
selves as altogether passive in this case, and to ascribe the wickedness
they commit to the power of temptation; whereas, in truth, so far as
we are tempted effectually, we are active, we consent and agree to the
temptation, we are drawn away of our own lust and enticed, Jam. i. 14.
Satan tempts, yet can have no advantage over us but what we choose to
give him. And therefore,

2. It must be an aggravation of any crime, that it was done under
the power and influence of this wicked spirit. For we must be the
children of disobedience, we must have abandoned ourselves to wicked-
ness, before Satan can work in us. If Satan can fill our hearts, consider
in what a wretched condition we must be. We must have abused the
faculties of our minds; we must have despised all the riches of Divine
Goodness; we must have shut our eyes against the light of saving truth,
hardened our hearts against the fear of God, feared our consciences,
stifled many and strong convictions, done despite to the Spirit of Grace;
we must have withdrawn ourselves from God, till he hath forsaken us;
we must have advanced from one degree of iniquity to another, till our
hearts are prepared to be the seat and residence of the unclean spirit,
the murtherer, the father of lies, the prince of darkness. A condition
unspeakably deplorable!

With men of virtue and piety he hath no power, though he may vex
and assault them, but only with the vicious; and they not only imitate
his wickedness, which is bad enough, and constitutes him their father,
but likewise are under his government, which is still worse, and constit-
tutes him their prince and ruler. Most dreadful case, to be the children
of such a father, the subjects of such a prince, the children of perdiction,
the subjects of the enemy of all righteousness! To have the powers of
our minds, designed for the noblest acts and enjoyments, under the do-
minion of error and lust; to have the spirits created for eternal happiness
in
in union with God, in slavery to the vilest of beings; to have the souls for whom Christ shed his blood, to deliver them from iniquity, to purify them into the Divine Image, and to prepare them for everlasting salvation,—to have those souls quite insensible to all that is true and excellent, heavenly and divine, guided by the grand deceiver, in the power of the destroyer, and by him pushed on in the way of iniquity to eternal perdition; how frightful is the reflection! how dreadful must the state of such souls be!

To prevent our falling into such a sad condition, and to secure ourselves from the encroachments of this wicked spirit, let us ever be mindful that we have such an enemy, and that, without due care and circumspection, we shall fall under his power. Let us carefully guard our hearts, and observe well the temper and frame of our minds, that we may reasonably restrain every inordinate affection, and immediately reject every evil thought and suggestion which starts up in our minds. Be sober, be vigilant. Nothing gives this adversary greater advantage than sensual indulgences. Mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts. Shun all intemperance and excess; and never dare to venture, how little ever, into the way of temptation and sin. And let us be sure to keep close to God in prayer, and other exercises of religion. Thus we shall put ourselves under the banner of the Prince of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

C H A P. XIII.

Of the Consequences of Adam's Transgression.

Gen. ii. 7, to the End.

We are now come to a very grand point in Theology, the Fall of Man, or the Consequences of Adam's Transgression upon himself and his posterity. Which Consequences Divines, both Papist and Protestant, have generally, and for a long tract of time, represented to be those that follow, namely, "the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to, or charged upon, all his posterity—a total defect of that righteousness wherein he is supposed to have been created—the corruption of the human nature, whereby all mankind are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which corruption of our nature is the source of all wickedness that is committed in the world.—Further, by Adam's Transgression all mankind were deprived of communion with God—and all, as soon as ever they come into the world, under his displeasure and curse, being by nature the children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, justly liable to all punishments
punishments in this world, and in the world to come, to an ever-
lafting separation from the comfortable presence of God, the most
grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell-fire
for ever."

This is an affair of the most dreadful importance, and requires to be
examined with all possible care and impartiality; for an error in this
point will affect the whole scheme of Christianity, pervert and abuse
our confciences, and give us very wrong notions of God and of our-
selves. Upon this article I have examined the Scriptures, with diligence
and impartiality, in the treatife entitled — The Scripture Doctrine of
Original Sin, proposed to free and candid Examination — in the study
of which this is a proper place to excrifie your thoughts and judg-
ments.

[* Adam having transgressed the law, not only loft a claim to life,
but became obnoxious to death, which was death in law, or eternal
death. And had the law been immediately executed, his posterity, then
included in his loins, must have been extinct, or could have had no
exiflence at all; for, the covenant of innocence being broken, there
was no covenant or constitution subsisting upon which Adam could have
the least hope of the continuance of his own life, and consequently,
could have no prospect of any posterity. Thus in Adam all die. While
things were in this state, under broken law, and before a promise of fa-
vour, or grace, in this interval, for any thing Adam could know, he, and
the whole world in him, were utterly loft and undone for ever. But
our merciful God and Father had quite different views; he graciously
intended to make Adam's fin, and his being exposed to eternal death,
an occasion of erecting a new dispensation, a dispensation of grace in
the hands of a Mediator. According to which, Adam was assured that
he should not immediately die, but should live to have a posterity by his
wife. So Adam understood what the Lord God said, ver. 15. And
upon this he gave his wife a new name, (ver. 20.) וָיָהַ לִחיִי, or Life-
giving, for joy that mankind were to be propagated from her, when
he expected nothing but immediate death in confequence of his trans-
gression.]

[† God graciously intended, after Adam's Transgression, to erect a
dispensafion of grace, for the redemption of mankind; which grace
was declared, and, consequently, which dispensation was eftablihed,
( Gen. iii. 15. And I will put enmity, &c.) before the fentence of death
was pronounced upon Adam (ver. 19. Dust thou art, and to dust thou
 shalt return). Death therefore, in that fentence, stands under the new
dispensafion, or the dispensation of grace, and for that reafon cannot be
Death in Law, or eternal death; but death in Dispensation, or death
appointed for wife and good purposes, and to be continued only fo long as
God should think fit. And thus also all die in Adam; thus by man came
death; thus by one man fin entered into the world, and death by, or in con-
sequence

* Take this in, as a note, p. 18 of Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, at
the paragraph, 1. Whereas Adam had before, &c.
† Take this in, as a note, p. 66 of Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, at
No. Immediately upon the annulling the firft covenant, &c.
quence of, his sin. But it was the high and glorious purpose of God, that his beloved Son, the seed of the woman, having, in our flesh, performed the most perfect and complete obedience, should be invested with dominion and power to raise all men from the dead, and to give eternal life to all them that tread in the steps of his obedience. Thus, as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead; for, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Thus, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification. For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous. Rom. v. 18, 19.]

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**CHAP. XIV.**

*Of the Origin of Sacrifices.*

Gen. iv. 1—6.

Here Cain and Abel perform an act of religious devotion, by way of Oblation or Sacrifice. The question is, whether this kind of worship was of divine or human institution. They who are of the latter opinion allege, "that we read of no command from God for sacrificing; therefore men did it of their own heads, out of a grateful inclination to return unto God some of his own blest things, and to acknowledge him the absolute proprietor of all their enjoyments; though they had no directions from him about it." Answer. This seems highly improbable. For how came Abel to offer his Sacrifice in faith of God's acceptance, (Heb. xi. 4.) if his faith had nothing to warrant it but his own imagination? Human imagination, or opinion, never was, or ever can be, either the ground or object of faith. It is said, Gen. iv. 4, that God had respect to, or shewed his approbation of, both Abel and his offering; or in the Apostle's words, he obtained witness, that himself was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, that they were right, and offered in a right manner. On the other hand, he cenured Cain as having presented his Oblation in such a manner as was not pleasing to God; which evidently supposes a previous institution, and a rule which Cain was, or might have been, acquainted with. For, had there not been such a rule given, how could he have been blamed for not observing it? It is absurd to say, he transgressed a rule of his own imagination and invention.

The institution not being mentioned in a history so concise, argues nothing. Other things are also omitted, as religious assemblies, Enoch's prophecy, Nahab's preaching, the peopling of the world, or the increase of Adam's family. Things well known, or generally supposed, when
the historian wrote, needed not to be mentioned, but might be taken for granted. The only proper and conclusive argument would be to prove, "that in those early days they had no communication with, or revealsa-
tion from God; and therefore, having no way of knowing what the
mind of the Lord was, were under a necessity of inventing something
of their own." But this is far from being the case. God, in some
visible form, frequently appeared, and made his mind known to Adam,
and to all the succeeding Patriarchs mentioned in the book of Genesis,
for the space of 2315 years; yea, he conversed and reasoned with and
instructed Cain himself. When therefore Adam, and all the other Pa-
trarchs, had the fullest opportunity of knowing from God himself;
what kind of worship was most acceptable to him, there was no need
of their own invention; and it is absurd to suppose that they followed
no other guide.

In the infancy of the church they wanted direction, and without
doubt were directed in every thing relating to religion especially, so far
as was agreeable to that dispensation. Doubtless Adam was instructed
by God to sacrifice; and it is not improbable that those beasts, with
the skins of which Adam and Eve were clothed, Gen. iii. 21. were slain
as Sacrifices. God certainly instructed our first parents in the faith and
worship which the alteration in their circumstances required. Having
made a most gracious covenant with them, (ver. 15) it is not unreasonable
to suppose, that he also signified to them, that they should, for a
perpetual ratification and assurance of it to their faith, offer to him Sa-
crifices; for by the blood of Sacrifices covenants were ratified in after-
times. The eating of the tree of life, was a covenanting action, (affur-
ing immortality to their continued obedience) suitable to a state of
innocence. But the manifestation of a living creature, (expressing the
deadly nature of sin, at the same time that it assured them of eternal
life through a sacrificed Redeemer) was more suitable to a state of
guilt.

Ver. 3. Cain brought מְעִי of the fruit of the ground, &c. ver. 4. And
Abel also brought of the fìrstlings of the flock, &c. "As there were some
solemn times of making their devout acknowledgments to God; so,
I doubt not, there was some set place, where they assembled for that
purpose. For the Hebrew word for brought, is never used in rela-
tion to domestic, or private Sacrifices; but always in relation to
those public Sacrifices which were brought to the door of the taber-
nacle of the congregation. As Lev. iv. 4. He shall bring מְעִי
the bullock to the door, &c. Which occurs all along, especially in
the ninth chapter of that book.

"And therefore, I suppose, they brought these Sacrifices, here men-
tioned, to some fixed [public] place, where the Shechinah, or glorious
presence of God appeared. For, as they must have some settled place,
where they [publicly] performed sacred offices, it is most reasonable
to think it had, in those early days, respect to the Shechinah, or Di-
vine presence, as well as afterwards under the Mosaic dispensation,
[when the Divine Presence resided] in the tabernacle and temple.
And therefore they are said to appear before God, [Exod. xxiii. 17.
"xxxiv. 24]
That some visible token of the presence of God appeared in their religious assemblies in those earliest days of the church, and spake and conversed with them, as occasion required, is evident enough. So the Lord God appeared frequently and familiarly to Adam. He held a conference with Cain in such a manner as plainly shews it was no extraordinary thing. And when the sons, or children, of God came together to present themselves before the Lord, the Lord is represented as discoursing with Satan about the character and circumstances of Job. Job i. 6—12. 1—7.

While men were not so numerous, but that they might all assemble together at one place, probably the Shechinah stately appeared among them every sabbath. But when they were so numerous, that they could not ordinarily meet together once a week, and therefore were under a necessity of performing their worship in separate and remote places; yet the Shechinah, or token of the Divine Presence, might still remain and appear as usual in that original place, where Adam and his immediate descendents had first attended upon divine service, and where the Patriarchs, in a right line descended from Adam, had their place of residence. There, probably, Noah built his altar, and there the Lord conversed with him. Gen. viii. 20, &c. ix. 1—18. There Rebekah went to inquire of the Lord, Gen. xxv. 22, 23; and she received an answer, probably, from the Shechinah or Divine Presence.

From all this it seems not unlikely, that Cain and Abel's Offerings were performed before the whole assembly of Adam's family (which then must have been considerably increased), and that the divine acceptance of the one, and rejection of the other, was signified by some visible mark, which appeared and was observed by the whole congregation. It would add very much to Cain's disgust to find himself so openly disparaged, and sunk so much in the favour of God, and the esteem of the whole family, below his younger brother; over whom, on that sole account, as he was the first-born, he claimed pre-emience, and expected, whatever his character was, pious or impious, to have been preferred before him.

The mark by which the Lord God testified his acceptance of Abel and his Sacrifice, was, probably, a stream of fire issuing from the Shechinah, which consumed his Sacrifice. So Gen. xv. 17. A smoking furnace and burning lamp, i.e. the Shechinah, passed between the pieces of the Sacrifice, and consumed them, in confirmation of the covenant. And we have many other examples of this kind in sacred History; as when Moses offered the first great burnt-offering, Lev. ix. 24; when Gideon offered upon the rock, Judg. vi. 21; when David stayed the plague, 1 Chron. xxii. 26; and Solomon consecrated the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 13; and when Elijah contended with the Baalites, 1 Kings xviii. 38, &c. whence the Israelites, Psal. xx. 3. with all prosperity to their king, pray that God would accept [חותנ turn into ashes] his burnt-offering.

Ver. 6, 7.

* Bishop Patrick's Comment, in loco.
Ver. 6, 7. The Lord God reproved Cain for the digust and indignation he had conceived against his brother, instrusting him in terms of divine acceptance. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? Most certainly — For I have an impartial regard to true piety, wherefoever I find it. But if thou dost not well, sin (i.e. the punishment of sin, as ver. 13, and chap. xix. 15, and several other places,) lieth couching at the door, ready to fall upon thee; and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. Three things are here suggested to appease his resentment. 1. That the reason of his not being respected was not in his brother, but in himself; for, if he had done well, he would have been as much respected. 2. That, if he did ill, he had no reason to expect the Divine favour, but the reverse. 3. That this should not alter his civil right, nor give Abel any authority over him, but he should still retain the privilege of his birth-right. Note — This shews, that the privileges of his birth-right had been previously settled, either by divine appointment, or approbation.

But the rancour of Cain's mind could not thus be cured. Being of the Wicked One, the murtherer, who had lately attempted to destroy all mankind, he took an opportunity, and slew his brother. Possibly the next sabbath, Abel's place being empty in the assembly of Adam's family, the Lord addressed himself to Cain, charged him with his crime, and, in punishment of it, banished him from the country where Adam and his family resided; by rendering the ground barren to him, infomuch that, notwithstanding all his endeavours, it should not yield him any increase. This would necessarily oblige him to go seek a subsistence in some other place. To this sentence Cain remonstrates as too severe, [and by the bye, his familiar, indeed too familiar, manner of anfwering the Shechiniab, shews, that such appearances of the Divine Presence were common and customary] apprehending he should thereby be hid from the face of the Lord, (ver. 14.) or deprived of his care and inspection, and considered by all mankind as a strolling brute, exposed to their hatred, and in continual danger of being destructed. But God, who for wise and holy ends often protects and prolongs the lives even of very wicked men, intended that Cain should live; either that he might have space to repent, or, being impenitent, might remain a monument of Divine Justice; and therefore, before the whole assembly, threatened a worse punishment than Cain's to the man who should, by killing him, defeat the divine sentence, or frustrate his grace.

And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, &c. In the Hebrew it is, And the Lord set, or exhibited, a true token to Cain, that no one who met him, should kill him; i.e. gave him some pledge or assurance, declared either in words, as by an oath, or by some outward token, that his life should be preserved. So the spies gave Rahab a token, רֹאשׁ רְאוֹשׁ, that her life, and the lives of all her relations, should be preserved. Joshua ii. 12—14. This token to Rahab seems to have been a solemn oath; for the scarlet cord was not a token to Rahab, but to the spies, to distinguish her house. N.B. I do not find in Scripture, that רֹאשׁ ever signifies a mark, or brand, impressed upon a man's body, but always some external assurance, or pledge given by God. Gen. ix. 13. xvii. 11. 1 Sam,
HAVING had occasion, in the foregoing chapter, to mention
the Shechinah, (a rabbinical word from נָשָׁה to dwell,) which is
used to signify a glorious Appearance, covered, or attended with a
cloud, denoting the extraordinary presence of God, who is necessarily
everywhere present; this may be a proper place to examine the Script-
ture upon the point of Divine Appearances. They are mentioned in
both parts of the holy Scripture; sometimes without taking any notice
of a visible glory, and often expressly mentioning it; as in the following
places. Gen. xv. 17. The smoking furnace and lamp of fire, יִקְנָה, are justly supposed to correspond to the cloud and pillar of fire, after-
wards mentioned, as representing the Divine Presence. Probably, in
a visible glory the Lord appeared to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1; and to
I saac, chap. xxvi. 2; and certainly to Moses in the bush, Exod. iii. 2.
The Shechinah was also in the cloud and pillar of fire, Exod. xiii. 21.
For it was the same cloud that afterward rested upon the tabernacle,
when it was set up, and is called the Cloud of the Lord. Exod. xli. 34.
Numb. x. 34. For the glory of the Lord was within the tabernacle upon
the mercy-seat, as the cloud was on the outside of it. Exod. xli. 34–35.
And it is there described, as in Exod. xiii. 21, that it appeared as a
cloud upon the tabernacle by day, and as a fire by night. Exod. xli. 38.
Numb. ix. 15, 16.
Thus it conducted and guarded them in their journeys, [and then
alone was ordinarily seen by the whole congregation] Exod. xli. 36.
Numb. ix. 17, 18, &c. [Isaiah alludes to this chap. iv. 5, 6.] And, as
thus the token of the Divine Presence went before them, the Lord is said
to go before them, and to lead them by this cloud. And out of this cloud,
or rather from the glory of the Lord, within the tabernacle, the Lord
spake unto Moses what he spake and delivered in the books of Exodus,
Leviticus, and Numbers. Numb. vii. 89. And when Moses went into the
(tabernacle of the congregation, to speak with him [God], then he heard the
voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat, that was upon the ark
of the testimony, between the two Cherubims, and he spake unto him; agree-
ably
ably to what God had said, Exod. xxv. 22. I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. And there, as upon a throne, between the Cherubims, the glory of the Lord had its residence in the holy place in Solomon's temple, after it had taken possession of the house, at the consecration of it. 1 King. viii. 10, 11. [and there it continued till the Babylonish captivity.] Hence God is said to dwell between the Cherubims. 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 King. xix. 15. Psalm. lxxx. 1. &c. The glory of the Lord appeared to Isaiah in the temple. 1 Isai. vi. 1. and to Ezekiel, with many awful circumstances. Ezek. i. 28. iii. 23. x. 4. xi. 23. xliii. 2, 4, 5. xliv. 4. The glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds, and the angel of the Lord came upon them; Luke ii. 8, 9. and to the three Disciples at the transfiguration, Mat. xviiii. 5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, &c. The Shechinah appeared to Saul, Acts ix. 3. Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and to Peter in the prison. Acts xii. 7.

These are the most remarkable Divine Appearances mentioned in Scripture. Now the question is, Who, in such instances, was the person that appeared and spake? For example, Exod. iii. 14, it is written, And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. Who was it that spake to Moses? Or what notion are we to form of that being who pronounced those words, I AM THAT I AM? What makes the inquiry necessary is this, that in the second verse it is said, The Angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. And yet it is said, concerning the same person, ver. 4. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush. ver. 6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, &c. And, ver. 14. God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. ver. 15. God said unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers hath sent me unto you. Now, most certain it is, that it was the Angel of the Lord that appeared to Moses; and certain it is, that the Angel of the Lord, that appeared to Moses in the bush, did, out of the bush, pronounce the several sentences I have quoted. It was the Angel of the Lord who said, I am the God of thy father: I AM THAT I AM. But the Angel of the Lord God is not the Lord God, whose Angel he is. How then can it be said, that the Lord God appeared and spake to Moses? This is the difficulty; and the solution is ready, and very clear.

The solid and incontestable foundation of the solution is laid by our Lord himself, who perfectly understood the whole affair of Divine Appearances, in John v. 37. And the Father himself, who hath sent me, hath born witnesses of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. John i. 18. No man hath seen God at any time. He is the invisible God, whom no man hath seen, or can see. It is often said, that the Lord, the most high God, appeared to the Patriarchs, to Moses, and to the Prophets, the ancestors of the Jews; but, according to our Lord's rule, the Appearance, form, or shape, which they saw, was not the Appearance
Appearance of the Lord God himself, for never, at any time, did they see his shape. Again, it is often said, that the most High God spake to the Patriarchs, to Moses, and the Prophets; but our Lord affirms, that they never heard his voice at any time. How shall we reconcile this seeming inconsistency?

The true solution, according to the Scriptures, is this: That the Lord God never spake or appeared in person, but always by a proxy, nuncius, or messenger, who represented him, and therefore spake in his name and authority, saying, I am God all-sufficient; I am the God of Abraham; I am that I am. Which words were pronounced by an Angel; but are true, not of the Angel, but of God, whom he represented, and upon whose errand he came. So a herald reads a proclamation in the king's name and words, as if the king himself were speaking. Or, to use a more common instance, so a brief is published in the king's name and language, as if the king himself were addressing the congregation where it is read. Thus, George by the grace of God, &c. whereas it hath been represented to US, &c. therefore they have humbly besought US to grant unto them OUR Letters Patent, &c. unto which their request WE have graciously condescended, &c. But much, surely, would he be mistaken, who should imagine, that the person who reads the proclamation, or the brief, was his Majesty King George, because he uteth his words, and speaks as if the king himself were speaking.

That this is a true representation of the case, will appear,

I. From the signification of the word Angel, [αγγελος: ἀγγελον] which is a Greek word, and both in that language, and in the Hebrew, signifies a messenger, or nuncius, an ambassadoer; one who acts and speaks, not in his own name, or behalf, but in the name, person, and behalf of him that sends him. And thus the word is frequently rendered in our translation. And had it always been rendered the messenger of the Lord, instead of the Angel of the Lord, the case would have been very plain. But Angel, being a Greek word, which the English reader doth not understand, it throws some obscurity upon such passages.

II. It is in Scripture expressly said, that it was an Angel, a nuncius, or messenger of the Lord, who spake, even when the Lord himself is said, or supposed to speak. As Gen. xvi. 7. The Angel [גאיג] found Hagar; and, ver. 10, said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly. Gen. xviii. 1. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, ver. 2. And he lifted up his eyes, and lo, three men, three Angels in the shape of men, stood by him. Now one of those men, or Angels, was a nuncius sent particularly to Abraham; for, ver. 10, he said, as he was sitting at meat, I will certainly return unto thee; and lo, Sarah shall have a son. And Sarah heard it, ver. 12, and laughed. Ver. 13. And the Lord, i.e. the Angel who spake in the Lord, said, Wherefore did Sarah laugh? Ver. 14. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return unto thee, and Sarah shall have a son. Again, Gen. xxii. 15. And the Angel, or messenger, of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven, ver. 16, and said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, &c. Upon which place St. Austin, quoted by Bp. Patrick in his Commentary upon the place, argues in this manner.
"In the beginning of this chapter, ver. 1, 2, we read, that God
tempted [tried] Abraham, and bad him go, and offer up his son Isaac;
but, ver. 11, 12. The Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven,
and said, Lay not thy hands upon the lad. What is the meaning of this?
Will they say, that God commanded Isaac to be slain, and that his
Angel forbade it? and that Abraham obeyed the Angel who bid him
spare his son, against God, who ordered him to slay him? This is
ridiculous, and not to be endured. The plain meaning is, that God
spake both times, in the one place, and the other; but he spake by
an Angel, who was his minister. That is the reason Angels sometimes
spake as if they were the Lord, because they spake in the Lord's
name. Just as when a public crier in a court pronounces the sen-
tence of the judge, it is not entered in the public records, that the
crier pronounced that sentence, but the judge, in whose name and
authority the crier pronounced it." Thus St. Austin.—In Exod.
iii. 2. the Angel, nuncius, or messenger of the Lord, appeared unto
Moses; and said, I am the God of Abraham; I AM THAT I AM; speak-
ing not of himself, but of the Lord whose messenger he was.—Jesu
vi. 2. The Lord said unto Jesus. It appears from chap. v. 13, 14, that
it was not the Lord who spake, but an Angel, under the title of the
Captain of the Lord's Host.

Further, it is evident from every part of the law of Moses, that it was
given and ordained by God, the Lord, the most high God; and in his
name it is every where worded and enjoined, Exod. xx. 1, 2. And God
spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God. And the Lord said
unto Moses. And Moses said unto the Lord. And yet it appears from repeated
testimonies in the New Testament, that it was not the Lord, who immediately himself spake, either to Moses, or to all the people.
This Moses, whom they refused,— did God send to be a ruler, and a deliverer
by the bands of the Angel, or messenger, who appeared to him in the bush;
and who is called the Angel of his God, his presence. Isai. lxiii. 9. ver.
28. This [Moses] is he that was in the wilderness, with the Angel who spake to him in Mount Sinai. [Note—it was an Angel,
messenger, that spake to Moses in Mount Sinai.] ver. 53.—who have
received the law by the disposition, in the Constitutions published by the
ministry, of Angels. Gal. iii. 19. Wherefore then serveth the law of Moses?
It was added, because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom
the promise was made; and it, the law, was ordained by the ministry of
Angels, Heb. ii. 2. For if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast, meaning
the law given by Moses. That law was spoken to him, and to all the
people, by angels, who spake, not of themselves, but what was com-
municated to them from God.

III. The Jews very well understood the nature of these manifesta-
tions. They knew when a miraculous voice came to them, speaking as
God himself would speak, that it was a messenger from God, who spake
in his name and stead, Gen. xvi. 7, 9. The Angel of the Lord appeared
and spake to Hagar; yet she knew it was a Divine Appearance, and
that the Angel personated the most High God. Therefore, ver. 13.
She called the name of the Lord, that spake unto her, thou God sect me.—
Gen. xxxiii. 24,
Gen. xxxii. 24. There wrestled a man with Jacob. Now Jacob knew that man was a messenger from God; and therefore, ver. 30. he called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, i.e. I have seen an evident manifestation from God. — The common token, that such were Divine Manifestations, was the glory which attended the messenger, who pronounced the words of the message. And whenever that glory appeared, the Jesus knew the message came from God, whoever it was that brought it. Thus Luke ii. 9. The Angel of the Lord came upon the shepherds, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. They knew the glory they saw was not the glory of the Angel, but a token of the Divine Presence and authority, signifying that the message came from the Lord. Therefore they say, ver. 15. Let us now go — and see this thing, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And lo Saul knew the light shining from heaven, was the glory of the Lord, and an infallible proof of a Divine Manifestation. And, 2 Pet. i. 17. He, our Lord Jesus Christ, received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice unto him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Whoever the messenger was that uttered these words, the Disciples, that saw the transfiguration on the mount, knew that the thing came from God the Father; because the voice, or words, came from the excellent Glory, or the Shechinah.

It is very remarkable, that when our Lord was exalted to universal dominion, at the right-hand of God, as head of the church, he also had his Angel, Nunciis, or messenger, whom he dispatched upon the affairs of his government. Rev. i. 1. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he, Jesus, sent and signified it by his Angel unto his servant John. And therefore, though the glorious appearance, Rev. i. 13—17. is rightly understood of our Lord, yet it was not he in person, but his Angel, Nunciis, or messenger, who represented him, and appeared and spake in his name. And so in other places of the Revelation, where, nevertheless, our Lord may justly be supposed to appear and speak.

We may here observe, that it hath been commonly supposed, that our Lord, before his incarnation, was the Angel that appeared in the Shechinab, and spake to Adam and the Patriarchs, to Moses and the prophets, and is called the Angel of his presence, Isai. lxiii. 9. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. To this purpose they underland, John xii. 41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him, i.e. "faw, at that time, "the glory of Christ, who was then the medium of divine manifestations, "and spake of him, and of his times, or what would happen with respect "to the reception of the Gospel, when he should preach it to the Jews."

[Dr. Doddridge.] But, when he saw his glory, may be well interpreted, "when he [Esaias] foresaw his glory, or the glorious manifestations, "which God intended to make of himself to the Jews by his Son."  

[Dr. Clarke.] So John viii. 56. Abraham saw, foresaw, my day, and was glad. Thus also, as he tabernacled among the Jews in the cloud of glory, they judge he was in the form of God, Phil. ii. 9; which form, or likeness
OF THE SHEEBINAB, &C.

Of the Sheebinah, &c.

But may we not distinguish between the λόγος as a Proxy of Deity, or as perforating the glorious Majesty of God in the Sheebinah, and in that capacity, by the Holy Spirit, inspiring the Prophets, and prefiguring over the Angels at the giving of the law; and the same λόγος acting and speaking to us, in his incarnate state, in the capacity of a Prophet? In the former capacity he may be considered in relation to God, as perforating God, or as in the form of God, whose agent he was under every dispensation which God erected; and therefore as doing nothing in his own person. For thus, his person would coincide with that of the supreme God, and is not to be considered as different from him, but as acting in his name and authority. In the latter capacity he may be considered in relation to us, and to our salvation by the Gospel; for the accomplishment of which, he stooped so far as to take upon him our nature, and, not as perforating God, but in quality of a Prophet sent from God, to publish among us in his own person and name, the promise of eternal life.

And must not this bring us under greater obligations to attend to him; and be sufficient to distinguish him as acting in delivering the law, and preaching the Gospel? He that was in the form of God, and represented God, when the law was delivered, and who delivered it by the ministry of Angels and of Moses; that transcendently glorious person afterwards became a man, and in his own person, and by his own ministry, delivered to us the Gospel. Doth not this, in a very peculiar manner, recommend to us the Gospel, and oblige us to attend to its doctrines? Heb. i. 1, 2. God soho at sundry times, and in divers manners, speak in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, &C. God always spake by Proxy. And the Apostle might speak as he doth, although it be true that our Lord was the Proxy of Deity under the Old Testament dispensation; for the Apostle here considers, not who was the Proxy of Deity, but by whom he immediately spake to the fathers in the Jewish church, and to us in the Christian church. And the opposition lieth between, not the Proxies or Representatives of Deity, but between the Prophets in the former dispensation, and the Son of God in the latter. By his Son, as his Proxy, he spake to the Prophets, and by the Prophets he spake to the Old Testament fathers. But under the New Testament his well beloved Son, who before was indeed in the form of God, as his Proxy, himself became a Prophet, and in the form of a man spake to us immediately as a Prophet.
Ch. XVI.

Of the Glory of the Lord.

Heb. iii. 1—3. [Here Môses's house, and Christ's house, or dispensation, are clearly distinguished.]

But supposing our Lord was the Angel, who appeared and spake under the Old Testament, yet it must be remembered, that he appeared and spake only as an Angel, or Nuncio, from God. Which character he expressly sustains, Mal. iii. 1. — and יהוה the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even רבי the messenger, Angel, of the covenant, [not the Sinai, but the Gospel covenant,] whom ye delight in.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the Glory of the Lord, as it hath relation to the Shechinah, or Divine Appearances.

It is deserving of our further observation, that the Shechinah, or divine appearances, as a token of God's presence, and of his guidance, encouragement, and protection of his people, is often mentioned in the Old Testament under the character of the Glory of Jehovah. As in Exodus xvi. 7, 10, xxiv. 16. Lev. ix. 6, 23. Num. xiv. 10, 21, 22. xvi. 19, xx. 6. Hebrews ix. 5. — the Cherubim of the glory, i.e. the glory of Jehovah, dwelling between the Cherubim, over the Mercy-seat. St. Peter alludes to this, 2 Epist. i. 17. — there came a Voice from the excellent Glory. This token of God's presence is otherwise called his Presence, Exodus xxxiii. 14. and his Name, as that signified a mark of distinction or eminence. Deut. xii. 5. 2 Chron. vii. 16.

Certainly it was the peculiar honour and advantage of the Israelites, that they had such a public visible manifestation of the presence and favour of God; [Rom. ix. 4. Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the Glory, or the glorious manifestations of God.] And was well adapted to that dispensation of the church; especially in the early times of its institution under Môses, when they could not, by abstract reasoning, be so well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God; and therefore stood in need of some extraordinary visible token, to strike and affect their minds with a sense of his presence, power, authority, favour, and protection.

And as the glory of the Lord appeared publicly in favour of the Israelites, to guard and guide them, when they left the land of Egypt; so the glory of the Lord is used figuratively to denote, in general, his special blessing, favour, presence, and protection, upon any occasion. Isaiah lixii. 8. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, &c. Then shall thy light, prosperity, break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteous ones [salvation, Saviour] shall go before thee, THE GLORY OF
of Jehovah shall be thy recompence, shall advance in thy rear, or behind thee, to guard thee; alluding to the Shechinah, as it guarded and guided the children of Israel. Isa. lx. 1. Arise, shine; for thy light, happiness, is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. Thus it is figuratively to denote the divine favour and guardianship.

And in the same manner it is applied to the Christian church, as denoting all the light and blessings, grace, and glory of the Gospel. Num. xiv. 21. But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with my glory; speaking of the Gospel, in contradiction to the Jewish peculiarity. Isa. xxxv. 1, 2. The wilderness of the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, &c. They shall see the glory of Jehovah, and the excellency of our God. Isa. xl. 3, 4, 5. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, &c. And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, [177] completely, or in its perfection] for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Hab. ii. 14. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.

All these passages are to be understood of the Gospel manifestations of God's grace, which is his glory. Exodus xxxiii. 18, 19. And Moses said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my good thoughts pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; namely, as in Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7. The Lord—proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God merciful, and gracious, &c. The good news and mercy of the Lord is the glory of the Lord.

And observe, how the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 13—18, alludes to the glory of the Shechinah, with which Moses conversed in the mount; and which impressed such a splendour upon his countenance, as obliged him to cover it with a veil, when he returned to the people; who otherwise could not bear to look upon the excessive brightness of the glory of God, reflected from his, Moses's, face. In allusion to this veil, obscuring the brightness of Moses his countenance, the Apostle informs us, ver. 14, 15, that there was an obscurity, a veil over his writings; which veil, after Christ was come, and had taken it away from the Old Testament, the Jews, through unbelief, transferred to their own hearts, and so remained ignorant of the true meaning of Moses and the prophets. But, ver. 18, we all [all we Christians, in opposition to the blinded Jews, ver. 13, 14.] we all with open, unveiled, face, having the glory of the Lord reflected upon us [from the face of Jesus, Chap. iv. 6.] as from a mirror, are, in the dispositions of our minds, changed into the same image of moral excellency, from glory to glory, or in order to the most complete glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord. John i. 14. The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, tabernacled, among us; and we, as well as his first disciples, beheld the glory of Jesus Christ, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. The Son of God became a man subject to like frailties with us, and lived and conversed freely amongst men; teaching them fully and plainly the great truths relating to God's gracious purposes concerning the redemption and eternal salvation of mankind. And thus God, and his merciful regards to men, his presence in his church, and his power, engaged to keep his servants, and to bring them
them to the possession of eternal life, is more clearly and illustriously manifested in the Gospel, than his favourable presence and protection were by the Shechinah in the temple, or in any other place, among the Israelites.

We who, under the Gospel dispensation, are so well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God, do not stand in need of any extraordinary visible token of the divine presence. The glorious truths of the Gospel, revealed by Jesus Christ, are our Shechinah, shining from him upon our minds, and filling them with comfort and joy, in the assured hope of his present care and blessing, and of the possession of glory, honour, and immortality in the future world. And this is to us as a Shechinah, infinitely preferable to the visible appearances in the church of old.

CHAP. XVII.

The Scripture-Chronology from the Creation to the Deluge.

Gen. 5th Chapter.

We are now got as far as the Deluge. And here, according to Moses, who here begins his genealogies, is the proper place for considering how far we are advanced in the age, or chronology, of the world. For in this chapter he gives the names and ages of the Patriarchs from Adam to Noah together with the age of every father, at the time when every son was born. And if we add together the ages of the fathers, when their several sons were born, and the years of Noah's life at the time of the Deluge, we shall form chronological tables of the best authority, from the Creation to the Deluge, after this manner.

| Years before the Birth of Christ | 2343 | 4004 | Gen. v. 3, Adam lived | 130 | 150 | 130 | 930 | 800 | 695 | 84 | Yrs. |
|----------------------------------|------|------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                                  |      |      | - 6, Seth lived      | 155 | 235 | 325 | 910 | 605 | 234 | 84 |     |
|                                  |      |      | - 9, Enos lived      | 90  | 395 | 535 | 895 | 605 | 179 |     |     |
|                                  |      |      | - 12, Cainan lived   | 70  | 460 | 470 | 962 | 605 | 365 |     |     |
|                                  |      |      | - 15, Mahalaleel lived | 65 | 622 | 622 | 365 | 600 | 243 | 84 |     |
|                                  |      |      | - 18, Jared lived    | 162 | 687 | 969 | 777 |     |     |     |     |
|                                  |      |      | - 21, Enoch lived    | 65  | 874 | 874 | 595 |     |     |     |     |
|                                  |      |      | - 25, Methuselah lived | 187 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|                                  |      |      | - 28, Lamech lived   | 182 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|                                  |      |      | vii. 11, Noah, at the Deluge 600 Yrs. old 1065 | 1656 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

According to Table I. if you add together the years from the creation of Adam to the birth of Methuselah, you will find that Adam was 687 years old when Methuselah was born. And, as Adam lived in all 930 years, as in Table III. if you subtract 687 from 930, there will remain 243, which is the year of Methuselah's life when Adam died. Therefore Methuselah
Methuselah lived 243 years with Adam. In the same way of computation you may find how long any of the junior Patriarchs lived with Adam, as in Table IV.

If to the year of Enos's life, when Cainan was born, and to the year of Lamech's life, when Noah was born, you add all the intermediate years, you will find they are 821, which is the age of Enos when Noah was born; but Enos lived 905 years; from which subtract 821, and the remainder is 84, the number of years in which old Enos and young Noah were cotemporaries. And in the same way you may find how long any of the senior preceding Patriarchs lived with Noah, as in Table V.

So likewise, if you add together the years from the birth of Methuselah to the flood, you will find them to be 969; which is just the time that Methuselah lived, as in Table III. Hence we may conclude, that Methuselah died just before the flood came; and Noah being then 600 years old, he had lived just so long with Methuselah.

So again, if you add the years from the birth of Lamech to the flood, you will find them to be 782 years; and whereas Lamech lived but 777 years, it follows, that Lamech died five years before the flood came. Therefore, all the Patriarchs, except Noah, were dead, when Noah entered into the ark.

From the above account it appears, that Methuselah lived with Adam 243 years, and doubtless conversed with him the greatest part of that time; and so had opportunity abundantly sufficient to receive from Adam an account of what he knew concerning the creation, and all the transactions and events contained in the first four chapters of Genesis. And as Noah lived 600 years with Methuselah, he had time sufficient to learn the same account from him, and may well be supposed to have carried it with him entire into the ark. And this may be one reason of the longevity of the antediluvians; which must be resolved into the sole will of God, and can be accounted for no other way. They lived so long, in order to preferre, and hand down to posterity, religious knowledge, in that period of time when it could not be committed to writing; and when it would have been either totally lost, or miserably depraved, had men lived no longer than 70 or 80 years. Besides, their longevity contributed to the more speedy peopling of the world, and to the bringing of necessary arts, in tillage, building and clothing, to a greater perfection.

Ver. 1. This is the book of the generations of Adam; that is to say, this is the pedigree, or the genealogy of the descendants of Adam. So Mat. i. 1. The book of the generation, is the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 3. As we know that Adam had both Cain and Abel before Seth was born, so both he, and the other Patriarchs, might have several other children before those that are named in this list; it being, probably, the design of Moses to set down only those persons by whom the line of Noah was drawn from Seth, by their true ancestors, whether they were the eldest of the family, or not.

Ver. 21.— and begat Methuselah. It is the ingenious conjecture of Ainsworth,
Ainsworth, that ἀνέβας is a word compounded of θάνατος, his death, and ἀνέβασις for θάνατος and an emission; as much as to say, when he dieth, there shall be an emission, or inundation, of waters. Thus Enoch may be supposed to have predicted the deluge in the name which he gave his son Methuselah, with this particular circumstance, that the deluge should happen in the year in which his son should die; as it certainly did. However we have the authority of an Apostle, that Enoch was a Prophet, and did foresee, and foretell the deluge to that generation of men. Jude, ver. 14, 15. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, or of such men as these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints, or with myriads of his holy Angels, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard, unreasonable, contumacious, blasphemous speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. This, I apprehend, in its primary intention, is a prediction of the deluge, by which God would punish that impious race which then inhabited the earth. But as their destruction by the deluge is made an example of the vengeance which God will execute upon all impenitently wicked at the last day, (2 Pet. ii. 5.) so Enoch's Prophecy will suit the wicked of all ages, who shall certainly meet with a like reward of their deeds.

Ver. 22. And Enoch walked diligently with, or unto, God, and in a manner agreeable and pleasing to God. And so did Noah, chap. vi. 9. In this construction (with נַעַן) is used but once more, 1 Sam. xxv. 15; and there it implies friendship and benevolence on the part of those they conversed with. Therefore the Apostle rightly infers the idea of pleasing God in the account he gives of Enoch's translation, Heb. xi. 5, 6; and argues well, that Enoch's pleasing God, was the effect of his faith in God, and in a future reward. For without faith it is impossible to please God, or to walk with, or to come unto him, as Enoch did. For he that cometh unto God, must, in the very nature of the thing, believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. [Observe—pleasing God, coming unto God, and diligently seeking him, are synonymous, and all included in the sense of walking with God.] By faith Enoch led a very religious and heavenly life. His thoughts and affections were removed from things below, and fixed upon things above. He had a deep sense of God and his perfections, delighted in his ways, behaved as always in his fight, and constantly studied to please him, and promote his glory. Being of a character so excellent, and withal a person of eminent note, and great industry in opposing the growing wickedness of the world, God was pleased to reward his piety, and give the rest of mankind a demonstration of a future state of glory, the inheritance of the holy and virtuous, by translating him alive, without seeing death, into heaven. It is not improbable, that he was translated in some visible manner as Elijah was afterwards, by a glorious appearance of the Shechinah, from whence some heavenly ministers might be detached to convey him to a better world. This happened 57 years after Adam's death, in the year of the world 987, and 669 years before the deluge.
Ver. 29. And Lamech called his son's name Noah, [rest or refreshment, from 1713 to rest, to take repose,] saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground, which the Lord hath cursed. Lamech might give his son this name when he found he had an extraordinary genius for agriculture, and was likely, by his useful inventions, to diminish the very great toil which had hitherto attended the tillage of the earth. See chap. ix. 20, 21.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Deluge.

Gen. Chapters VI. and VII.

GEN. iv. 26.—then it was begun to call by the name of the Lord. Or then, in the days of Enos, the family of Seth, which adhered to God and his worship, began to give themselves a denomination expressive of their relation and regards to God; that is to say, to assume the title of the Sons, or Children of God, as in chap. vi. 2. in order to distinguish and separate themselves from the irreligious family of Cain. Which title was also used after the flood. Job i. 6. ii. 1.

But (chap. vi. 1. which is in connexion with chap. iv. 26, the intermediate chapter being a genealogical parenthesis) [But when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, &c.] The families of Seth and Cain, increasing and spreading upon the earth, at length met and unhappily mixed together. For the sons of God, by the infestation of sensual appetite, without regard to reason or religion, joined themselves in affinity to Cain's impious posterity, by marrying their beautiful women; the consequence of which was, that they were soon corrupted by the profane conversation of their new relations. The virtuous and godly, in marrying both themselves and children, should be careful to keep within the limits of religion. A wife is the foundation of many other relations, and commonly has a great influence upon a man and his family; but it is a relation we can choose for ourselves: and in a case of so great importance, we should neither follow the lust of covetousness, nor of carnal desires, but the rules of religion, and the fear of God.

Thus, notwithstanding the Divine Manifestations, and the preaching of Enoch and Noah, and, probably, of other good men, the contagion of wickedness by degrees infected the whole earth, and turned it into a scene
scene of impiety, lewdness, and injustice. The issue of the aforefaid disorderly marriages joined the worst part; and growing up without any sense of religion and virtue, became wholly engaged in sensual ambi-
titious pursuits, and joining, or imitating a lewd and impious race of giants, which were then in the earth, they affected to be men of re-
nown for great and valorous exploits, by all methods of oppression and 
vioice, subjecting all others to their wills and lusts; and every where 
putting a sense of God, both by their wicked, ungodly deeds, and 
their hard, contumacious, blasphemous speeches against him, and his holy 
laws, (Jude 15.) despising his goodness, and disdaining the restraints of 
his government; till all the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with 
vioice, ver. 13. every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts being only 
evil continually, ver. 5; which cut off all hopes of their amendment, 
their minds being wholly intent upon gratifying their ambition and 
lust.

In relation to the sad condition of the world, the first thing that 
God declared, probably, from the Shechinah in the thin assembly of his 
worshippers, was this, (ver. 3.) My Spirit shall not always strive 
with man, &c. This is the spirit (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.) by which our Lord went 
and preached [not in person, but by such preachers as Enoch and Noab, 
2 Pet. ii. 5.] unto the spirits [which are now, i. e. at the time of the 
Apostle's writing] in prison [confined in the state of the dead, and 
reserved in safe custody to the day of judgment], which sometimes were dif-
obedient in the days of Noab, while the ark was in preparing. My Spirit shall 
not always strive, or debate, with man, for his reformation, מיה יבש והי 
כ co quod profecto ille caro, seeing that really he is [nothing but] 
fläche, altogether fleshly, void of all virtuous principles, and therefore un-
capable of being reformed by any means proper to be applied to a ratio-
nal nature. Violence, or coaction, cannot make him good, and he will 
not attend to any methods of persuasion. But where the reformation of 
moral agents cannot be effected, it is fit and reasonable that they should 
be destroyed; for it is to no purpose to continue in being a race of crea-
tures, who live in direct opposition to the perfections of God, and all 
the wise and good ends of their creation; and who therefore might as 
well never have been made at all, because rendered utterly incapable of 
honouring God their Maker, of enjoying themselves, or being useful to 
others. It must be inconsistent with the Divine Perfections, and all the 
good and wise ends of his government, to make that life the object of 
his providential care and liberality, which is thus miserably perverted. 
On the contrary, such are the nuisance, corruption, disorder, and 
plague of the creation; and for that reason it is agreeable, not only to 
justice, but to goodness, and beneficence, that such should be removed 
out of the creation. Hence it is, that God, speaking יברב ובר 
after the manner of men, is said to repent, and to be grieved, that he had made man on the earth, and was resolved to destroy them. Ver. 
6, 7.

Corollary I. Religion and virtue are the soul and support of the 
universe; which being totally taken away, no reason can be given why 
any worlds or agents should exist.

Corollary II.
Corollary II. The holy Scriptures, which assure us the wages of sin is death, and constantly affirm, that the impenitent workers of iniquity shall be destroyed, do give us infallibly a just and true account of things, which demands the whole attention of our minds.

It was determined, because it was fit, that the world so vicious should be destroyed. And the great God might destroy them in what way he should judge most proper, without any injustice on his part, or on the part of any agents which he might employ. He might have destroyed them by fire from heaven, as Sodom, &c. or by pettiness, or by destroying angels, 1 Chron. xxii. 12, 27. 2 Chron. xxxii. 21. Or he might have given a commission to any one more righteous nation among them, had there been any such, to destroy all the rest by the sword, and a right to enter upon all their possessions, as in the case of the wicked Canaanites, Deut. vii. 2. ix. 5. Lev. xviii. 26, &c. For the property of life, and of all possessions, belongs originally and absolutely to God alone. But he chose to destroy them by a deluge, or general inundation.

Not that the Divine Wisdom intended to extirpate the human race; the design was not to extirpate, but to reform; and therefore the Lord was graciously pleased to repulse the judgment, the impious world had deserved, for 120 years, ver. 3. This was to shew that he had no pleasure in their destruction, and to give them space for repentance, that their ruin, if possible, might be prevented. Thus the long-suffering of God waited for the conversion of the disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, 1 Pet. iii. 20. Noah was an excellent person, a just man and perfect, who, like Enoch, walked with God, ver. 9. Him and his family God was pleased graciously to preserve; that from so good a flock the human race might be again propagated, and religion restored in the world. With him God purposed to establish his covenant, or grant of blessings, ver. 18. The grace of God to mankind, especially the grand scheme of redemption, was not to fail, or to be suspended; therefore the Lord directed Noah to build a vessel in shape like a large chest, every way convenient for floating upon the waters, and for containing all the creatures which it was to receive, ver. 30. * [See Pierce on Heb. xi. 7.] Noah without delay expressed his humble and entire faith in the Divine Warning; and in obedience to it, applied himself to the building of the ark, for the saving of himself and family, (Heb. xi. 7.) by which he condemned the unbelieving and impenitent world, and became heir of the righteousness, [or became intitled to the salvation] which is by faith.

Note—Noah is commonly, and, I think, justly supposed to have been 120 years in building the ark, for that was the time the long-suffering of God waited; which time of long-suffering was, while the ark was in preparing, as in 1 Pet. iii. 20. At the beginning of this time, Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, were not born; for Noah was now but 480 years old, and none of his forefald sons were born till he was 500.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cubits</th>
<th>Feet</th>
<th>Yards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The length of the ark</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>450 equal to 150 at least.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The breadth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
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<td>The height</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
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* The length of the ark 300 equal to 450 equal to 150 at least.
500. chap. v. 32. And therefore that paragraph, ver. 17, &c., wherein mention is made of *Noah's* sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their wives, must have been spoken after the ark was finished.

When the ark was finished, and *Noah* and his family, the animals and their food, safe lodged in it, about the 6th of November, in the year of the world 1856, by the mighty power of God, *the fountains of the great deeps were broken up*, chap. vii. 11. the sea overflowed, being prodigiously raised by the violent irruption of the subterraneous waters; and rain came down from the sky, not in drops, but in streams and spouts, *the windows of heaven were opened*; and both together easily prevailed over the earth, and put it out of the power of the wisest and strongest of men to relieve either themselves or their friends.

And now, how were the careless and impenitent unbelievers surprised! Conceive them securely going on in the usual way of life, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, *Mat. xxiv. 37*; feasting and revelling, thinking of nothing but sensual enjoyments, in contempt of every serious admonition: when all on a sudden the most terrible rains and inundations threatened their inevitable destruction. How would they be terrified! How would they condemn their own unbelief, and be forced to own there was a just and righteous God, who will execute vengeance on all the incurable workers of iniquity! This is a specimen of the final destruction of the ungodly at the last day, which God hath revealed. Let us not harden our hearts, but believe and prepare.

Chap. vi. 17. *And behold I, even I,* by my own immediate operation, *do bring a flood of waters upon the earth,* to destroy all flesh. The word בֹּשֶׁת in its primary sense, doth not include the idea of a flood; it comes from בָּשֶׁת which, with relation to plants and animals, originally signifies, to be so exhausted of natural moisture and spirits, in which their life consists, as to be withered, or dead. And it is applied peculiarly to the deluge, and to nothing but that, under the notion of extinction of life; and so the phrase בֹּשֶׁת דָמוֹנָה may be translated, an extinction of life by waters. It is only used in Gen. chapters the 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th; and in *Psal. xxix. 10. The Lord fitteth* [בֹּשֶׁת] *fat, or did sit* upon, or at, the flood, the extinction of life at the deluge. He then fat upon the seat of judgment, executing vengeance upon that wicked generation; *yea, the Lord fitteth King for ever.* *Ainsworth* upon *Psal. xxix. 10.*

This dispensation, as all the rest, had relation to the morals of mankind: and the evident design of it was to lessen the quantity of vice and profaneness, and to preserve and advance religion and virtue in the earth; the great end for which the earth, and man in it, were created. This end it was well adapted to obtain in the then present state of things, and in all future generations. In the present state of things, it prevented a total corruption: for if the whole tainted part had not been cut off, a single family would soon have been drawn in, or destroyed; and then the whole globe must have been ruined, and the schemes and purposes of God, from the beginning of the world, had been defeated. But by referring a select family for the continuation of the human
human species, the system of the Divine Counsels was preserved entire, and the most proper method was devised for the establishment of religion and virtue in the new world; as the family of Noah enjoyed much greater advantages for this end, than the family of Adam at the beginning of things.

Noah was not, like Adam, a new unexperienced being, ignorant of every thing, but what he received from revelation. Noah, besides the benefit of revelation, and intercourse with heaven, had the whole compass of ancient antediluvian knowledge from the creation, in his own possession. He was a man of the most eminent abilities, and the most steady integrity. Adam was easily seduced; but in the midst of an universal degeneracy, Noah firmly adhered to truth and religion; and when he was warned of God to prepare the ark, even 120 years before the deluge, or any appearances of it, so strong was his faith, or persuasion of the Divine Power, Justice, and Veracity, that he applied himself to the work, and completed it, surrounded as he was with the infidelity and contempt of all the world. A man of so much understanding, and of such a spirit, would not fail to communicate all he knew to his posterity, nor to inculcate it strongly upon their hearts.

But his family, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, with their wives, were eye-witnesses of the dreadful inundation, and had the most affecting proof of their own deliverance. They resided full twelve months in the ark, from the beginning of the deluge to the end of it. And it is easy to conceive how they would be affected in such a moving situation. They knew this shocking catastrophe was not an unfortunate accident, but occasioned by the wickedness of the world; therefore all the terrors of the deluge must give them the most sensible perception of the malignant nature of wickedness; that it is infinitely odious to God, and dreadfully pernicious to Sinners. They must be convinced of the uncontrollable power and dominion of the Most High, the impossibility of escaping his vengeance, what a fearful thing it is to fall into his hands, and how much they were obliged, both in interest and duty, to reverence and obey him.

On the other hand, their preservation from so terrible a calamity, in the midst of the ruins of all the world besides, must be a very striking demonstration of God's favour and compassion to themselves; which was naturally adapted to make the deepest impressions of gratitude, love, and duty; especially as they could not but be sensible, that such a great and miraculous deliverance was particularly owing to the eminent piety of their father, Gen. vii. 1. Thus they would be well prepared and disposed to acknowledge and admit the excellency of those principles and practices which had been, through Divine Goodness, their security in the general desolation.

And when they left the ark, all the dismal appearances of the desolate world, the ruins of palaces, towns, and cities, the sadly changed face of countries, which they had seen in a cultivated, flourishing state, the bones of men and other animals, strewed over all the face of the earth, would have a natural tendency to fix upon their minds the good impressions they had received in the ark, and render them solicitous to inculcate the principles of religion upon their children. Add to all this,
of which and it vian, this, Ch. admonitions it, pcrfonation when of which was pine, appears minification proped well bringing corded contained to by fixing the record, dictation indeed for all the world. Afterwards indeed for all the world.

From all this it will appear, that this was a very just and proper dispensation for reforming mankind, and restoring religion in the earth; well adapted to that thoughtless age, (when they seem not to have attained to any considerable degree of reasoning, and therefore not disposed to be wrought upon by argument) and to the state of things in it, when no regular civil governments and laws were formed for the administration of justice, and the restraint of injury and wrong; and it appears to have had the intended effect, by suppressing violence and rapine, which never any more universally prevailed in the world; and by fixing a sense of religion upon the minds of men, which afterwards was indeed perverted, but not quite extinguished. And as it stands recorded in sacred writ, it is a warning to the remotest generations. In which view it is referred to, 2 Pet. ii. 5. And [God] spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes — making them an example unto those that afterwards should live ungodly.

C H A P. XIX.

Of Noah's Sacrifice, and the Divine Intercourse on that Occasion.

Gen. viii. to the End of the 9th Chapter.

NOAH, being restored to the possession of the earth, entered upon it with a solemn act of Divine Worship, according to the original institution, Gen. viii. 20. He built an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, i.e. of such beasts and fowls as God hath ordained for Sacrifices, and offered Burnt-Offerings upon the Altar; which as they were intended to denote, so they were in Noah accompanied with, faith in the mercy of God, thankfulness for the late miraculous deliverance, and the dedication of himself, and of all his, to the honour and obedience of God, through the promised Redeemer; of whom Noah and the Patriarchs, we may well suppose, had a general knowledge and expectation. The Acceptableness of this act of devotion to God, is signified by his smelling a sweet savour, מְזַח קֻנָּה ver. 21. This one may call Hieroglyphic language. Hieroglyphics, which by bodily sensations, or external representations, denoted
abstrac notions, or the sentiments of the mind, were the literature of the first ages of the world. So here, the approbation of the judgment, or what is pleasing to the mind, is signified by an odour or fragrance grateful to the smell. Or the taste and relish of the body is transferred to the taste and relish of the mind. This language is frequently used in the Levitical law; as in Lev. i. 9, 13; ii. 2, 9. iii. 5, &c. meaning the acceptableness of the Sacrifice or Offering. So the fragrance of burnt incense represents the acceptableness of sincere prayer, Psal. cxli. 2. Luke i. 10. Rev. viii. 3, 4.

It is also applied, in the same sense, to the offering and sacrifice of our Lord, Ephes. v. 2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling favour. God, who is a spirit, can relish, or be pleased with, only that which is morally or spiritually good, the love and obedience of the heart: this is the only favour that is grateful to him. And therefore, the Sacrifice of our Lord must have been an actual exhibition of obedience and love; and the Sacrifices of Noah, and of the Israelites, must have been hieroglyphic representations of, or instructions in, the like moral dispositions, in order to express, or produce them in the hearts of the worshippers. Smelling a sweet favour is plainly hieroglyphic or figurative language; and therefore the Sacrifice, or Offering, the object of such smelling, must also be figurative, representing those good dispositions which were, or ought to have been, in the worshipper's heart, and which were in the highest and most perfect degree in our Lord. The Sacrifice of a clean beast or fowl figuratively represented what the worshipper was, or ought to be and do; and our Lord really was, and perfectly did what the Sacrifice represented. Hence Sacrifice is applied to beneficent actions, or actions morally good, and pleasing to God, Psal. iv. 5. 1. 14, 23. Phil. iv. 18. Heb. xiii. 15, 16. And in the Book of Wisdom is applied to the whole of a virtuous life, as gold in the furnace found it triedthem, [afflicted good men,] and received them as a Burnt-Offering.

The smell, or favour, of a person, or thing, is the quality of it, good or evil, which occasions the approbation or dislike of those that pass a judgment upon it. Exod. v. 21. You have made מִי הָעָר our favour, that in us which is the object of Pharaoh's judgment, to be abhorred, to flink, in the eyes, the opinion, of Pharaoh. So Gen. xxxiv. 30. Jer. xlviii. 11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and be hath settled on his lees, therefore his taste, מִי הָעָר his relish remaineth in him, and his scent, מִי הָעָר his favour, his bad qualities, is not changed. 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15, 16. Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest, displays, the favour, וְהַעַנּוּ the excellent qualities, of his knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, by us in every place. For we are to God, וְהַעַנּוּ, the sweet-smelling favour of Christ, [i.e. my ministry is to God a Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling favour, which I offer unto him on the behalf of Christ. See Rom. xv. 16.] both in regard of them that are saved, and also of them that perish. [For in both cases the counsels and schemes of Divine Wisdom are accomplished.] Though to the one we are, וְהַעַנּוּ, the favour of death unto death; and to the other we are the favour
of life unto life. [i. e. to the minds of the one my preaching is offensive; and rejecting it, they are advancing towards eternal death: to the minds of the other it is grateful and pleasing; and embracing it, they are advancing towards life eternal.] And who is sufficient for these things of so great consequence? Note—A fav'ur of death unto death, is a favour which occasions their advancing towards eternal death.

Upon the solemn occasion of Noah's Sacrifice, the Lord said in his heart, i. e. determined, or resolved, that he would not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; (chap. viii. 21.) for [2 through] the imagination of man's heart is [should be] evil from his youth. From his youth, denotes a corruption of manners of long continuance. See Isa. xlvi. 12, 15. Jer. iii. 25. Ezek. xxxiii. 8. See also Job xxxi. 18. The Lord was also pleased to repeat to Noah and his sons the same blessing upon the propagation of the human species, and the same marks of distinction upon our nature, as he had given Adam at his creation, with an additional grant of animal food, (chap. ix. 3, 4.) with this restriction, that they should not eat the flesh of an animal in the life thereof, the blood thereof; or that they should not eat any flesh cut off from any animal while it is alive. At the same time God made a covenant with Noah, and with every living creature, or he made a free and absolute grant or promise to them, that all flesh should not any more be cut off with the waters of a flood. Of which more hereafter.

What is here particularly to be observed is, the institution of magistracy, and the punishment of murder. Ver. 6. Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. Ver. 5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. The beast that killed, or the man that murdered a man, is here commanded to be put to death by man, i. e. by the magistrate or judge. Here courts of judicature are authorized, not only for the punishment of murder, but, by parity of reason, of any other great offences which may effect life nearly as much as murder.

This seems to be the original institution of magistracy, of which we have not hitherto the least intimation in the sacred history. On the contrary, it appears from the case of Cain, (Gen. iv. 15.) and of Lamech, (Gen. iv. 23, 24.) that murder, the greatest of crimes, was left to be punished as God in his providence should see fit. And if murder, much more every lesser instance of injury. It seems probable, there were no separate states, nor regular governments, among the antediluvians; but that, as they spread over the face of the earth, they removed further from the place of public worship, lost a sense of God, and lived in a disorderly manner, exercising violence and outrage, as they had power; and were instigated by lust, avarice and revenge, till the earth was filled with violence. Which, I apprehend, could not have been the case, under laws and governors armed with power to restrain outrage and injustice; for though governors themselves, and their creatures, may be tyrannical and oppressive, yet, for their own security, they will not suffer their subjects to break out into anarchy and licentious invasion of life and property, because this is open rebellion against governors. The state of
the old world, probably, was like that of the Israelites, when there was no king, no magistrate among them, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes, Jud. xxii. 25. Which proves the possibility of such a licentious state, and the shocking disorders that would attend it.

The leaving mankind, in the first ages of the world, in this loose and discretionary state, certainly, was not to lead them into wickedness; but I conceive, to teach them by experience the necessity of laws and governors, and the reasonableness of submitting to them. [See Chap. III. § IV. the Corollary.] For even upon the contrary supposition, that magistracy, in some form or other, was instituted from the beginning of the world, yet it is plain, that mankind in those ages would not bear the yoke, but universally shook it off. Nor could government, in fact, be permanently established, till the ruin of the world demonstrated the necessity of it. Therefore, if God did not see fit to establish magistracy from the beginning, it was because he knew mankind would not bear the restraints of government with a rational consent and approbation (without which consent and approbation, at least from the majority, government could not have been either erected or supported), till sad experience had taught them the utility and importance of it. Thus a particular species of injustice, and even of murder, is permitted under our present dispensation, and, instead of being restrained, is established by law; I mean persecution, or the taking away of life for difference of sentiments in religion, which subsists in most Christian countries. And this, I apprehend, the wisdom of God has permitted, that Christians at length may be rationally convinced of the monstrous iniquity of such practice, and so be generally induced by the sense of their own minds to approve and choose goodness, love and mutual forbearance; which we hope will be the genius and happy temper of the next ensuing dispensation. This is the only method of moral improvement, namely, when the mind, by proper methods, is led to apprehend, and freely embrace, what is right and fit; and, I doubt not, takes place in the gradual advancement of all, or of any part of mankind in wisdom, as well as of particular single persons. This, with what hath been said before, is the best account I can give of this antediluvian dispensation.

N. B. The curse upon Canaan, ver. 25. is to be understood as affecting only the temporal circumstances of his posterity, a servant of servants shall be be. As in Deut. xxviii. 16, 17, &c. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Nor is it to be considered in Noah as a malevolent wish, or imprecation, but simply as a prediction of the future state of Ham’s posterity; as appears from the whole of Noah’s discourse, which is plainly prophetic.
CHAP. XX.

Of the Dispersion at the Tower of Babel.

Gen. x.

Here Moses gives an account how the earth was peopled by the several families, or descendants of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, ver. 32. For the particulars of this curious account consult the Commentators, especially Bp. Patrick. What I would observe is this—That, after the account of the several nations descended from each of Noah's sons, it is added, as in ver. 5. By these descendants of Japhet, were the isles, or tranmarine countries, of the Gentiles divided in their several lands; every one after his tongue, or language, after their families, in their nations. The same is said ver. 20, 31, of the posterity of Ham and Shem. Which plainly signifies, that they did not all speak the same language; but that the descendants from Noah's sons, at least in general, if not several of the particular nations, had a language peculiar to themselves, distinct from the rest, and unintelligible to them. Noah and his posterity, while they lived together after the flood, which must be for some considerable time, could have but one and the same language amongst them. How they came to have different languages, and how they were separated into several distant countries, by a very memorable event, Moses relates in the next chapter.

When Noah's family was numerous enough, probably the Lord, by the mouth of Noah, commanded them to separate into different countries, particularly specified, that the earth might be better cultivated and governed. Certainly their division and removal into distant countries (Gen. x. 5.) must have been a general public act. And, as Moses saith, the earth was divided into nations in Peleg's days, (ver. 25, 32.) it seems to imply, that it was done by a divine command, and not accidentally, as any might choose a more convenient situation. Which is more clearly expressed, Deut. xxxii. 8, where it is said, when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, [referring to this division of the earth] he set the bounds of the people, the adjacent nations, according to the number of the future children of Israel, leaving for them a convenient situation, and room sufficient. In prosecution of this design, the whole earth, except perhaps the eldest Patriarchs, and their attendants, journeying from the mother-colony towards the west, and finding a spacious fruitful vale in the land of Shinar, there they determined to settle, and build a city and a tower, reaching up to heaven, or of a very great height. Deut. i. 28. ix. 1. Psal. cvii. 25, 26. [An hyperbole.]

Their intention was to make themselves a name, and to prevent their being scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth, (ver. 4.) as God had probably ordered they should. The scheme was to keep together, and

very
very likely under one one head. Schulzets, upon Job i. 1. derives כְָנִית a name, from the Arabic verb נִשָּׁה or נִשָּׁה to be high, elevated, eminent. And according to him, the primary and proper notion of כְָנִית is a mark or sign, standing out, rising up, or exposed to open view; a standing mark or title of distinction and eminence. 2 Sam. vii. 23.—and to make him a name, a monument of honour and eminence. chap. viii. 13. 1 Kin. v. 3, 5. —build an house unto, or for, the name, honour, eminent distinction of the Lord, to denote that he is the only true God, and King of the Israelites. 1 Kings viii. 16, 29. 1 Chron. xvii. 21.—to make thee a name, a monument, of greatness and terribleness. Isai. xviii. 7. lv. 13.—it shall be to the Lord for a name, i.e. for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off. chap. lxi. 12, 14. So in this place, Gen. xi. 4.—and let us, say the heads or leaders, make us a name, a monument or token of superiority and eminence, I conceive to signify to all succeeding generations, that they were the true original governors, to whom all mankind ought to be in subjection; left other leaders starting up should carry off parties, and so break the body, and set up separate governments. It seems to have been a piece of state-policy, to keep all mankind together, under the present chiefs and their successors. And the lofty Tower was probably intended to command every part of the town, and keep off any body of men, that should attempt to break in upon them.

But God, whose wisdom perfectly foreknew the mischiefous effects of such an attempt, determined to frustrate and defeat it. By this scheme a great part of the earth must for a long time have been uninhabited, uncultivated, and over-run with beggary and wild beast; which, as it was, for a long time, according to ancient authors, exercised the industry and value of the primitive heroes in hunting and subduing them. It was thus Nimrod, that mighty hunter, gained his renown. Gen. x. 9. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Which is an Hebrew phrase, to signify the greatest, and most eminent thing of any kind. Acts vii. 20. ἀπεριοτότε τοῦ θεοῦ, exceeding fair; 2 Cor. viii. 1. οἱ ἀπεριοτότε τοῦ θεοῦ, the very great liberality bestowed by the churches of Macedonia. chap. x. 4. δόθη χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, exceeding powerful. Psalm lxxx. 10, 11. ירה the cedars of God, the goodly cedars.

Most probably the bad effects which this project would have had upon the minds, the morals, and religion of mankind, was the chief reason why God interposed to crush it as soon as it was formed. It manifestly had a direct tendency to tyranny, oppression, and slavery. Whereas, in forming several independent governments by a small body of men, the ends of government, and the security of liberty and property, would be much better attended to, and more firmly established; which, in fact, was generally the case, if we may judge of the rest, by the constitution of one of the most eminent, the kingdom of Egypt. Gen. xlvi. 15—27. The Egyptians were masters of their persons and properties, till they sold them to Pharaoh for bread: and then their servitude amounted to no more than the fifth-part of the produce of the country, as an annual tax payable to the king; which is not near so much as we, with all our English liberties, pay yearly to the church and government.

Corruption may creep into religion under any constitution; but tyranny and despotic power is the readiest and surest way to deprive men of the use of understanding and conscience; and vice and idolatry would have
have spread much faster, had the whole world, in one body, been under the absolute dominion of vicious, infolent, idolatrous monarchs. This would have been a state of things just in the opposite extreme to the antediluvian licentiousness, and would have been nearly as pernicious to virtue; as it must have funk mankind into the basest fervility of mind, and have flocked the earth with a mean-spirited race of mortals, who durst not open their own eyes, make any generous use of their own faculties, or relish the bounty of heaven with pleasure and thankfulness. μην γας τι' αριτης απονταινοι δειπνης, faith Homer (Odys. p. ver. 32.)—Whatever day makes a man a slave, takes half his worth away. "Thus "I have heard, faith Longinus, Sect. XLIV. if what I have heard in "this case deserve credit, that the cases in which dwarfs are kept, not "only prevent the future growth of those who are enclosed in them, but "also diminish what bulk they already have, by too close constriction "of their parts. So slavery, be it never so easy, yet is slavery still; and "may deservedly be called, the prison of the soul, and the public "dungeon."

For these wise and beneficent reasons, I presume, the Divine Prov-
idence interposed, and baffled the project; which, in the then circum-
stances of the projectors, would otherwise have been unhappily success-
ful, by confounding and altering their language in such manner, as that they could not understand one another; and so were obliged to deflect from the work they had begun, to separate into many smaller bodies, and to seek for settlements at a distance from each other, as the several companies, by the famenefs of speech, were capable of converging together, and possibly in the very countries which God had marked out for them.

Thus the contagion of wickedness, for some time at leaft, had bounds set to it; evil example was confined, and could not stretch its influence beyond the limits of one country; nor could wicked projects be carried on with universal concurrence by many little colonies, separated by the natural boundaries of mountains, rivers, deserts, seas, and hindered from associating together by a variety of languages unintelligible to each other. And further, in this dispersed state, they would, whenever God pleased, be made checks reciprocally upon each other by invasions and wars; which would weaken the power, and humble the pride of corrupt and vicious communities. This dispensation, therefore, was properly calculated to prevent a second universal degeneracy. God therein dealing with men as rational agents, and suiting his scheme to their present state and circumstances. This Dispersion probably happened about 240 years of the flood.
Of the Council of God; or a Criticism upon those Words.

Let us go down, Gen. xi. 7.

All, allow, that the Lord's coming down to see the City and Tower, Gen. xi. 5, is to be understood as by way of accommodation to our conceptions; and means no more, but that by the effects, he made it appear, that he observed their motions, and knew their intentions. This is a very common, and in our present embodied state, a very proper way of representing the actions of Deity. But when Jehovah is represented as saying, Go to, let us go down, verse 7, as before, chap. i. 26, he had said, Let us make man, &c. learned men have supposed, that this is to be taken literally, and that God here spake to some beings included in his own nature and substance. Whereas this also is a figure of speech, which is to be understood as the foregoing. Kings tranfact their most important affairs in a solemn council. Hence, God is pleased to represent himself as having likewise his own or privy council. And the determinations of his Providence are described, after the manner of men, as having been made in that Council, in order to express the wisdom, importance, and certainty of them. Thus, and for this purpose, Jehovah is here, and in Gen. i. 26, represented as speaking in his Council, Let us make man, let us go down, and there confound their language.

Of this Council, I apprehend, Job speaks, chap. xxix. 4.—when the secret Council דבע of God was upon my tabernacle; when the august Assembly, where God's Counsels and Decrees were passed, was held, as it were over my habitation; and it seemed to be his peculiar care to prosper me and my family. To this Council the Prophets in vision are supposed to be admitted as flanders-by, and hearers of what is there decreed, and resolved upon. Job xv. 8. הבוא אלוהים עשתה have heard, or been a hearer, in the secret Council of God. Jer. xxiii. 17, 18. They, the falle prophets, fay fill unto them that despife me, the Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they fay unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come unto you. For who hath frow [as a waiter, or servant, ready to carry God's messages to his people. So else ימי יהוה מער לא one that stands before the King, is properly the King's Minifter. And when Elifba faith (2 Kings, iii. 14.), as the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, he means, whose Minifter I am.] in the secret Council, or Assembly, of Jehovah, and hath seen and heard his word? Q. d. Which of you hath been wrapt in vision, and admitted as a flander-by and hearer in that great Assembly, where God's Councils are held, and hath brought a message to his people from thence? No, you go
go presumptuously with messages of your own heads. Verse 21. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my Council, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. This connexion of the Prophets with the Council of God, may serve to explain Jonah’s fleeing from the presence of, or from before, the Lord, Jon. i. 2. He was sent upon a frightful and dangerous message; but as he judged, I suppose, that the Council of God was held in no other land but that of Israel, he hoped to break off his connexion with it, by removing to a remote country among the Gentiles.

The vision of Micaiah (1 Kings xxii. 19—24.) will set this affair in the strongest light. And he said, Hear thou the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this manner, and another on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so. Here the Lord is shewn in Council, after the manner of men, deliberating upon this affair. Now, whether there was any such real consultation is not necessary for us to inquire. Thus it was represented in all its circumstances to the prophet, and stamped upon his mind in vision; and it was God who directed him to use it in this form, as appears plainly from the solemn introduction, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord. And though it should only be a parabolical vision, yet the drift and substance of it was a divine infallible truth, namely, that Ahab’s prophet prophesied lies; and this by the Divine Permission, and the instigation of the wicked spirit, who was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies.

A passage similar to this, is that in the book of Job, chap. i. 6. Now there was a day when the Sons of God, Angels, came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, &c. And again, chap. ii. 1, &c. Here we see is the same grand assembly in the case of Job, as in the foregoing instance of Ahab. The same host of heaven, called here the Sons of God, presenting themselves before Jehovah, as in the vision of Micaiah they are said to stand on his right hand and on his left. A wicked spirit appears among them, here called Satan, an adversary, and there a lying spirit; both of them bent on mischief, and ready to do hurt, as far as God should give them leave. And the meaning in both cases is the same, that God in his wise providence permitted Satan to afflict Job, and the lying spirit to deceive Ahab. Only Micaiah delivers his representation as a Prophet, in the exercise of his office, and as he received it, that is to say, in a vision; I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, &c. The other [probably Job himself, who was not unacquainted with the Council of God, as we have seen], as an historian, interweaves it with the history in the plain, narrative style, There was a day, &c. The things delivered
delivered to us by both these sacred writers, are in substance the same, equally high, and above the reach of mere human sight and knowledge. Note—the representations of this kind are founded in the doctrine of Angels, good and bad, especially the former, as the instruments of Providence. A point revealed, no doubt, from the beginning, and well understood in the earliest ages; witness Jacob’s ladder, with the Angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Gen. xxviii. 12.

Isaiah also in a vision stood in the Council of God, chap. vi. 1, &c. Where I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim, the angelic host, &c. The matter in consultation was, verse 7. Whom shall I send, and who will go upon the prophetic errand for us, using deliberative language, and the plural number, as in the two texts under consideration, Let us make man—Let us go down.—Isaiah readily offered his service, verse 8. And the Lord delivered to him his commission and message, verse 9. And he said, Go and tell this people, &c.

Ezekiel in the same manner in vision stood in the Council of the Lord, chap. i. 1. The heavens were (i.e. the temple was) opened, and I saw visions of God; namely, the four living creatures, or Cherubims, representing the church of God attending upon the glory of the Lord, or the Shechinah, verse 28, and seated upon a throne, verse 26. And he said unto Ezekiel, chap. ii. 3. Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, &c.

Zechariah, too, chap. i. 7, 8, &c. to the end of the sixth chapter, is represented as conversing with the Lord in his Council, and with an Angel; though the scene is not described so distinctly as in the other places.

John also in the spirit, i.e. in a vision, Rev. i. 10, was present in the same Council of God, described in the 4th and 5th chapters of the Revelation, chap. iv. 1. A door was opened in heaven, in the temple; John was invited to attend, a throne was set in heaven, with a majestic Personage upon it, attended by the Cherubim, or the Church, and the Angelic Host. The matter, which was there very solemnly transacted, was the future state of the Church, to the end of the world.

This is the prophetic way of telling us how a thing was done, which really was done, but in a way to us invisible. Thus things of the greatest importance were represented in the strongest images to the mind of the Prophet; and in this way Infinite Wisdom would have them described and represented to us. Nor should we quarrel with our Maker for creating us with such faculties as are most affected and impressed with truths that are conveyed in this manner; for those truths make the deepest impression which first enter like a picture into the imagination, and from thence are stamped upon the memory.

Note—Homer, previously to Events, represents the consultations of his fictitious deities in the same narrative way, to denote, that all things are subject to an over-ruuling Providence. A method practised long before him, and very probably derived from the truly-inspired.

I shall only further observe, (1.) That τὸ πρὸς is sometimes applied to worshipping assemblies, I sa. lxxix. 7. cxii. 1. (2.) Sometimes it signifies the thing that is transacted, commanded, or established in the Council.
CH. XXII.

Of the Patriarchal Religion.

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Council of God. Psal. xxv. 14. Prov. iii. 32. So it may be under-
stood, Amos iii. 7. The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret Council unto his servants the Prophets.

C H A P. XXII.

Of the Patriarchal Religion.

We should now advance to the next Divine Dispensation, the cal-
ing of Abraham; but, before we proceed, it may be of use to gain the clearest notions we are able of the state of Religion among the nations after the deluge.

About 425 years after the deluge, and 185 after the dispersion, the Lord said unto Abraham, (Gen. xii. 1.) Get thee out of thy country, which was Ur of the Chaldees, (Gen. xi. 28.) and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. Compare this with Job. xxiv. 2. Job. said unto all the people, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood [in Mesopotamia, be-
yond his river Euphrates], in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other Gods; that is to say, they were idolaters. Some learned men suppose, that in the days of Reu, i.e. some time before the year 370, after the deluge, the Egyptians and Ba-
bylonians began to introduce idolatrous principles and practices; which, from the fore-quoted place in Job, it is certain, crept into the family of Shem; some, and some of the principal of his posterity, growing vain in their imaginations, and worshipping the heavenly bodies, with a divine, or however with an undue honour. For this species of idolatry seems to have been the most ancient, as this, and no other, is mentioned in the book of Job. Chap. xxxii. 26, 27, 28. If I have beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:—this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God that is above.

The worship of the heavenly bodies is supposed to have prevailed among the nations in the days of Moses, Deut. iv. 19. xvii. 2. and was continued long after, 2 Kings xxi. 3, 5. xxiii. 4. Jer. xliv. 17, 19. The splendour and great utility of the heavenly bodies would naturally strike the minds of mankind; and there would not then, any more than at any other time, be wanting artful men, who for their own advantage, and the honour of superior wisdom, would supply arguments for this idolatry, as the most effectual mean of securing all the enjoyments of life, and in-
culcate them strongly upon the minds of the weak and credulous, who have always been the most numerous part of mankind. Maimonides, the learned Jew, (as quoted by Ainsworth upon Gen. iv. 26.) sup-
poses the advocates of this corrupt worship argued after this manner. They
They said—For as much as God hath created these heavenly bodies, to govern the world, and set them on high, and imparted honour unto them, and they are Ministers that minister before him, it is meet that men should praise, and glorify, and give them honour. For this is the will of God, that we magnify and honour whomsoever he magnifieth and honoureth; even as a king would have them honoured, that stand before him; and this is honouring the king himself. When this thing was come up into their hearts, they began to build temples to heavenly bodies, and to praise and glorify them with words, and to worship before them, that they might, in their misguided opinion, obtain favour of the Creator.” Thus you see, the first corrupters of Religion had principles and reasons; and perhaps as good as those who have in like manner corrupted Christianity, by introducing idolatry into it.

This corruption was not at first universal, it spread gradually. And therefore, though in Abraham’s days it had made a considerable progress, yet even then, and for some time after, we meet with some eminent persons, who were not of Abraham’s family, that retained a just sense of God, and the purity of his worship. For instance, Melchisedek, king of Salem, Gen. xiv. 18. who was (Heb. vii. 3.) without father, without mother, without descent, without beginning of days, nor end of life, recorded in the history of the Patriarchs from Noah to Abraham. For (ver. 6.) his descent, or genealogy, was not counted from them, in the Abrahamic line; but for all that, he was a person of great eminence in religion. Gen. xiv. 18, &c. “For he was a worshipper of the true God, and a person of the most exemplary justice, and sincere piety, remaining absolutely unainted, amidst the general corruption of the country in which he lived; and who, for the better promoting of true Religion, was himself a priest, as well as a king, and performed the sacred offices of it among his own people. This great man came forth to meet, and to congratulate Abraham, and provided him a princely entertainment for himself and his men, for their refreshment, after they had engaged with, and defeated five kings. And then, as priest, in which capacity he was superior to Abraham, (Heb. vii. 7.) he solemnly gave Abraham his blessing, or wish of happiness; putting up his hearty prayers to the great Creator and Governor of the world, to confirm the blessing he had pronounced upon him; as also his humble praises and thanksgivings for the remarkable mercies of his late victory. And Abraham, on the other side, paid his acknowledgment to the Almighty, by presenting the tenth of what he had taken in the battle to Melchisedek his priest, by whom he had been so devoutly blessed.” Pyle.

Note—Melchisedek’s priesthood, as it was prior to that of the Jewish priests, so it was of a distinct and superior order, as the Apostle argues, Heb. vii. For long after the institution of the Jewish priesthood, the Lord with an oath declares, that the Messiah should be a priest for ever, after the order [in the Hebrew שָׁבָעַ יָיִן secedum rem, according to the affair, the case; which, as it relateth to a kind or sort of priesthood, is well translated שֶׁבַע יָיִן] of Melchisedek, Psal. cx. 4. Of what
what order was Melchizedek? The Apostle directs us to understand his names appellatively, or as denoting a character of moral excellence; King of Righteousness, or a righteous king; and King of Peace, or blessing or happiness, as he wished well to others, and endeavoured to make them happy, (Heb. vii. 2.) which is the highest character of worth and excellence any mortal agent can sustain. Thus he was the Priest, or officiated in the service of the most High God. And thus the object of his priesthood, and consequently his priesthood itself, was of an eternal, unchangeable, and universal nature, even righteousness and goodness, not limited to time or family; for the Scripture gives no account of his birth, death, or genealogy. We read of no predecessor or successor in his office, as in the Jewish priests. [Note—this argument is adapted (ad hominem) to the Jews, who in this way, or by defect from Aaron and Levi, judged of the validity of their priests.] But being of an universal, unchangeable nature, must subsist as long as there are any mortal agents, that live in obedience to God.

Thus our Lord was made priest after the order of Melchizedek, i.e., not after the law of a carnal positive commandment, which confined the office to a fleshly, mortal descent, and employed in certain external rites and ceremonies; but according to that real Power which is productive of endless, or eternal life, namely, true holiness. For, ver. 17, God declared, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of the King of Righteousness. And chap. i. 8. 9. Unto the Son be faith—Thy throne, O God, is everlasting! A sceptre of rectitude is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee king and priest, with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And still nearer to the case, chap. v. 8. Though he were a son, in the highest sense, before he came into the world, yet was he disciplined in obedience, as if he had been a learner, by the things which he suffered. Ver. 9. And being made perfect, having exhibited a perfect character of all moral excellence, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. And it was on this account, ver. 10, that he was called and constituted of God an high priest after the order of the King of Righteousness. For, as the Apostle concludes his dissertation upon this very subject, (Heb. vii. 26.) Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, or the Angels, in order to raise us to their happiness.

Melchizedek was eminently religious. And probably Abraham's neighbours and confederates, Mamre, Eshcol, and Amer, Gen. xiv. 13. were good and pious; for, though they were Amorites, it was about 400 years after this, before the sins of that nation were full.

The book of Job gives the clearest and most extensive view of the Patriarchal Religion. The reality of his person, the eminence of his character, his fortitude and patience in very great afflictions, his preceding and subsequent felicity, are allowed by all; and it is generally supposed that he lived a generation or two before Moses; and probably, the book was wrote by himself, in time of his restored prosperity.

Some learned men indeed, as Grotius, Codurcus, Le Clerc, and others, pretend that this noble performance was written about a thousand years after the time in which Job lived; namely, in or near the time of the Babylonish
Babylonish captivity; alleging, "that frequent Chaldaisms, as the plural "γας for γας are to be found in it; that some passages are taken from the "Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes; that there are more than a hun-
dred words, partly Syriac, partly Arabic, which are not to be found "in the other parts of Scripture; which are all signs that the author "lived in the later times, when many words, borrowed from the idiom "of the neighbouring nations, were admitted into the Hebrew.

It is one mark of the simplicity of very ancient times, that in the in-
ventory of Job's estate, no mention is made of money, but only of oxen, "sheep, camels, asses, servants. And Grotius himself owns, "That there "is no mention in the book of Job of any law, or religious rites, but "such as were traditional, [chap. viii. 8, 9, x. xv. 18, 19, xxii. 15, "16.] nor of any points of history, nor of any idolatrous practices, but "such as were of the more ancient times, before the Mosaic institu-
tion. [Chap. xxi. 4, 5, meaning Adam. xxii. 15, 16.] And that the length "of Job's life, extended to about 200 years, agrees also with the same "times; that the country where it happened was Arabia, as appears, "not only from the names of places, Uz, Teman, Shubab, but from the "many Arabic words here used." And might not Grotius from hence, "have fairly and strongly concluded, that the writer was an Arabian? No. "He faith, "it was written by some Hebrew." Why so? Because Arabia, "Job's country, is called the East. Chap. i. 3. And it was usual with the "Hebrews to call Arabia the East, as he has shewn upon Mat. ii. 1. But "the Arabian Magi themselves, in the next verse, call their own country "Arabia, the East; and so might Job, or any other Arabian in Job's time. "The East-country was the common name of Arabia, as the Weft-coun-
try is the general name of one part of England. Many words used in "this book, are not to be found in other parts of Scripture. The reason "is, because it is so ancient, that some words therein are grown obsolete, "and their true meaning is hard to be recovered. It is therefore the most "difficult, because it is the most ancient book in the sacred code. Had it "been wrote in later times, the language would have been more intelligi-
gible.

It is no argument, that the author of this book took similar or same "expressions from David's or Solomon's writings, [compare Psalms cviii. 40, "with Job xii. 21, 24.] because it is more probable that David and Solo-
mon borrowed such expressions from the book of Job. [Compare Job "xxxix. 33. Mat. xxiv. 28.] Schultens, a very good judge, affirms, that "the style of the book hath all the marks of a most venerable and remote "antiquity; and that the Chaldaisms, as some call them, particularly the "plurals in γας, are true Hebrew and Arabic, and that of the most ancient "flampl. Job is honourably mentioned with Noah and Daniel, Ezek. "xiv. 12—20. Hence it follows, (1.) That Job is no fictitious char-
acter, but a real person, as truly as Noah and Daniel. (2.) That he "was, as well as they, a person of distinguished piety. (3.) That he was "well known and celebrated as such amongst the Jews, to whom Ezekiel's "prophecy was directed. (4.) That he must either have been of the seed "of Israel, or, like Noah, of the Patriarchal times; otherwife the Jews, "separated from, and raised in spiritual privileges above all other nations, "would
would never have proposed to themselves one of their Gentile, uncircumcised neighbours, of whom they had a mean opinion, as an example of the greatest piety, nor have admitted his story into their Canon. If he was of the Patriarchal times (for an Israelite he could not be) he must have been at the distance of about a thousand years before Ezekiel. Mere oral tradition of such a person could not have subsisted through so long a space of time without appearing, at last, as uncertain or fabulous. There must, therefore, have been some history of Job in Ezekiel's time; no other history but that which we now have, and which has always had a place in the Hebrew code, was ever heard of, or pretended. Therefore this must be the history of Job in Ezekiel's time; and which must have been generally known, and read as true and authentic, and, consequently, must have been wrote near to the age in which the fact was transacted, and not in after-times, when its credibility would have been greatly diminished.

In short, should I aver, that this is the oldest and noblest book in the world, I should have the vote of all the best critics; and the very frame and cast of the book itself would justify the assertion.

C H A P. XXIII.

Of Job's Case and Character.

The Book of Job is the History of a real sufferer, Job; and the Substance of a real conversation with his friends, about his sufferings, in a poetic dress. Job was a prince of the greatest eminence, wealth, and authority, among the people of the east; whose piety and integrity equalled his temporal grandeur, chap. i. 1, 2, 3; of the strictest religion and virtue; the patron of the injured poor and fatherless; the scourge of injustice and oppression; highly honoured and esteemed by the good, revered and dreaded by the vicious and profane; chapters xxix. and xxxi. This man, so good, and so glorious, was, by the Divine Permission, and malice of the Devil, at once reduced to the most indigent and deplorable circumstances, stript of all his substance, bereaved of all his children, seven sons and three daughters, and, soon after, seized with a most noisome and painful diseahe, from head to foot; which rendered him the most shocking spectacle of sorrow and wretchedness. The country, so far as the fame of his grandeur and religion had spread, would be full of his story, and of astonishment. The religious would be inclined to conclude, that such signal and sudden calamities could be no other than the judgments of God upon a man who, under the mask of religion, had concealed a wicked and profligate life. The wicked and profane would triumph in his sufferings, as a justification of their own bad principles and practices, and as a demonstration of
of the insignificancy of the highest regards to God and his worship. 

Chap. xvi. 9, 10, 11. xvii. 6. His relations and acquaintance, struck with horror and aversion to such a despicable, vile, abandoned creature, would not own him. His wife and family treated him with unkindness and neglect, chap. xix. 13—19. The basest of men broke in upon him like a legion of fiends, made his afflictions their mockery, treated him with all manner of indignities, calumnies, and slander; and even spared not to spit in his face; chap. xxx. 1—15. Scarcely ever were the feelings of the human heart oppressed with such a complicated load of grief; scarce ever was a profession of religion so much exposed to censure, reproach, and insult.

And how did the good man bear all this? With heroic bravery; that is to say, with a patience as steady and uniform as human infirmity will admit. [Patience is sincere adherence to God and duty, under all difficulties and discouragements; and the ground of patience is faith, or a full persuasion of the power, goodness, and wisdom of God.] When his calamities, the lots of his numerous herds, flocks, and servants, and of his dearest children, partly by the hands of violence, partly by lightning and storm; when these calamities rushed upon him like an inundation, though he felt all the pangs of the most grievous affliction, and used such expressions of his doleful case, as were customary at that time; [Chap. i. 20. rent his mantle, shaved his head, fell down upon the ground. Chap. ii. 8, 12. Sprinkled dust upon their heads; See 1 Sam. iv. 12. 2 Sam. xiii. 19. Job. vii. 6. Ezek. xxvii. 30. Iliad xviii. 22.] yet he behaved like a wise and good man, prostrating himself upon the ground in a humble sense of his own unworthiness, and a patient submission to the Will of God, composing his mind into a calm and quiet adoration of his supreme Dominion and unblemished Justice, chap. i. 20, 21. "I came," faith he, "by the Divine Will into the world, a naked helpless creature; and by the fame will I must shortly return to the dust. I am bereaved of my most valuable and dearest temporal enjoyments, but by the permission of a wise and righteous God. His own he gave; his own, for wife ends, he hath taken away. I acquiesce in his Sovereign Disposals, and adore the incontestable purity and righteousness of his dealings with me." O brave Soul! O happy Man, who could keep up good thoughts of God, and communion with him, under the sharpest stokes of his rod!

When, covered over with painful boils, in the place and posture of an humble penitent, he was probably pouring out his submissions and supplications to Heaven, his wife spared not to reproach him with his profligate godliness. Chap. ii. 9, 10. Dost thou still retain thine integrity by blessing God, and dying? q. d. "Will you bless God when he is destroying you? Will you call upon him, and believe he is good, when he hath ruined your estate and family, and, in spite of all your humble submissions, is slaughtering your body, and within a stroke of your life?" But Job returned no other than a mild answer, as became a good man, and affectionate husband. "You speak not like yourself," said he, "but as a woman void of understanding. Is it fit God should always smile upon sinful creatures? Shall we say, he is not just when he brings us into afflictions? We receive what pleaseth us with joy, " and
"and it is but reasonable that we receive what is ungrateful with a calm
reignation; seeing both come from the same Wise and Sovereign
Distributor of all things." Still Job is patient, and, under every trial,
hares to God and duty.

The composure and steadiness of his mind was more severely tried by
his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, men of the same rank,
and of like good sense and piety, who dwelt in some of the adjacent
provinces, and in whose familiarity he had probably been long happy.
The report of his sufferings, of the ruin of his character, and the wound
thereby given to religion, having reached their ears, they agreed, with
a sincere intention, to join their endeavours in administering the only
advice and consolation they apprehended his case would admit. For, as
the suspicions were very strong, and his calamities carried evident marks
of Divine Injustices, they had the same opinion of them with the rest
of the world, and believed they were the just judgments of God upon a
hypocrite; and therefore were determined, by all means, to fix a sense
of guilt upon his conscience, in order to bring him to true repentance,
and so to a solid interest in the Divine Favour and blessing. But when
they were come, and had found their late flourishing, honourable, and
highly-esteemed friend, reduced to the most loathsome and miserable
wretch, that was sitting in the ashes, they were astonished beyond
expression; and being confirmed in their evil suspicions, though they sat
with him on the ground, yet, as their bad opinion of him would not
allow them to say any thing comfortable and encouraging, they chose to
say nothing at all for seven or several days together, chap. ii. 12. The
fight of his old acquaintance, and their unfavourable manner of con-
dolence, raised his passion of sorrow to such a pitch, that it burst out into
a torrent of the most bitter reflections upon his birth-day; wishing it
were struck out of the number of days, or rendered as odious and
detestable to all others, as it was to himself.

Upon this, Eliphaz, probably the oldest and most honourable of the
three, addressed himself to Job, and, in the softest manner, opened
their sense of his case; namely, that, in their apprehensions, he had
been very defective in the character to which he had pretended; that
great sufferings must be the punishment of great sins; and that they could
recommend to him no other method of regaining his former peace and
prosperity, but repentance, and seeking unto God for pardon. In short,
you soon declared plainly, that they judged he had been a very wicked
man, and that his calamities were an evident indication of the wrath of
God against him as such. This Job flatly denied; and this is the
matter in dispute between him and his friends: which dispute, as is
usual in such cases, was carried on with a growing eagerness and heat on
both sides; and on both sides might occasion some expressions too strong
and exaggerating.

His friends argue from experience, and what they had observed to be
the usual method of Divine Providence. They had seen many instances
of wicked men, or of those who had passed for such, remarkably
punished; and hence they formed to themselves a general maxim, that
where they saw great wretchedness and sufferings, there must be crimes
proportionably great. To this Job also opposes observation and expe-
rience;
rience; and shews, that the rule of judging they had formed to themselves, was by no means right, or without exception; that good men were sometimes afflicted, and the wicked flourishing and happy; and that, for the most part, things were dealt out here promiscuously; that this was more especially observable in times of war and pestilence, and such other sweeping calamities where the good and bad fall undistinguished.

Chap. ix. 22, 23. To all which he adds, that it was a very heavy aggravation of his misery, to hear his friends, so well acquainted with him, men of sense and distinction, charge him with crimes which his soul abhorred, and of which God, who had afflicted him, knew that he was innocent. To him he would appeal, and still adhere in life and death, though he did not know why he had dealt so severely with him. And so strongly did Job assert the integrity of his religion and virtue, (chapters xxix. and xxxi.) that his friends, though perhaps not convinced, were however put to silence (chap. xxxii. 1).

Upon this, Elihu, a young man of good understanding, who, probably, with others, was a bystander and witness to this debate (chap. xxxii. 15.) acts as moderator between Job and his friends, and censures both very freely and judiciously; only he charges Job with no crime as the cause of his afflictions, but thinks he had not managed the dispute about them with so much calmness and submission to God as became his piety.

Finally, the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind (the Septuagint add, and clouds), a token of the Divine Presence. So Ezekiel's visions were introduced, Ezek. i. 4. And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud and a fire. Perhaps Elihu saw this token of the Divine Presence approaching, Job. xxxvii. 22, &c. Fair weather [גָּו gold, splendor, the splendor of the Divine Presence. See Schultens in loc.] cometh [גָּו will come, or is coming, speedily] out of the North; with God is terrible Majesty. The speech of Deity, (chap. xxxviii. xxxix. xli. xlii.) most inimitably grand and sublime, representing the vast extent of the Divine Wisdom and power in the works of creation, which Job and his friends had well studied, and from which they knew how to deduce proper conclusions, shews, 1. That all things in the sky, the air, the earth, the sea, are produced and disposed in a manner far beyond the reach of human wisdom and power. Consequentially, 2. That man is not qualified to dispose of himself, or of any other being. That God may have wife and good reasons for his ways and works, and dealings with us, which we cannot comprehend; and therefore it is our duty, in all cases, to acquiesce and submit. 3. That he who has given various natures and instincts to animals, can give being and life, when and where, and in what degree he pleases. 4. That he is prefent to, cares for, sustains and directs every living thing; and therefore that we ought to trust in him for a happy issue out of any of his afflictions. 5. That the wisest of men should be very cautious and modest in cenfuring the ways of Providence.

Chap. xlii. Job humbleth himself before God, sacrificeth for his friends; his family is restored, his estate is doubled.
Rules to be observed in expounding the Book of Job.

I. He that would rightly explain this book must, as much as he can, imagine himself in the same afflicted condition.

II. Every daring thought, or ardent expression, which occurs in the speeches of this afflicted and exasperated man, is not to be vindicated; yet, as he was a great man, and a prince, he may be allowed to use bold and animated language.

III. We shall certainly judge amiss, if we think every thing wrong, which will not suit with the politeness of our manners. Allowance must be made for the simplicity of those times.

IV. In judging of Job's character, we must set the noble strains of his piety against the unguarded expressions of his sorrow.

V. It is not his innocence, strictly speaking, which Job insists on, but his sincerity. Chap. vii. 20, 21.

VI. Except their hard censures of Job, his friends speak well and religiously.

VII. His friends encouraged Job to hope for a temporal deliverance; (chap. v. 18, &c. vii. 20, &c. xi. 14, &c.) but Job despaired of it, and expected his bodily disorder would terminate in death, (chap. vi. 11, 12. vii. 6, 7, 8, 21. xvii. 1, 13, 14, 15. xix. 10.) Though, in the increasing heat of the dispute, they seem to drop this sentiment, in their following answers, as if they supposed Job to be too bad to hope for any favour from God.) He hoped, however, that his character would be cleared in the day of judgment: though he was greatly concerned that it could not be cleared before; that after a life led in the most conspicuous virtues, his reputation, in the opinion of his nearest friends, would set under a black cloud, and, with regard to the ignorant and profane, leave an odious reproach upon a profession of religion. This touched him to the heart; exasperated all his sufferings, and made him often wish, that God would bring him to his trial here, in this life; that his integrity might be vindicated, and all, friends and enemies, might understand the true end or design of God in his sufferings; and the honour of religion might be secured. Chap. x. ii. 2, 3. Is it good unto thee, that thou shouldest—shine upon the counsel of the wicked? who from my case take occasion to reproach and vilify true religion, and to confirm themselves in their wicked and idolatrous practices. Chap. viii. 20, 21, 22. xi. 17—20, xvi. 9—11.

VIII. He could only affirm his integrity, but could give no special satisfactory reason, why God should afflict him in a manner so very extraordinary, and beyond all preceding cases that were ever known in the world. This very much perplexed and embarrased his mind, and laid him under a great disadvantage in the dispute. And, for one thing, it is on this account that he is so earnest to come to a conference with God, to know his mind and meaning. Chap. x. 2. Shew me wherefore thou contentest with me. See Bp. Patrick's Paraphrase upon the place, from ver. 2d to the 8th. He knew very well he could not absolutely justify himself before God, chap. ix. 2, 3, &c. ver. 17. For he breaks
me with a tempest, he multiplieth my wounds without a cause, or without any apparent reason. Chap. vii. 12, 26. The whole xxiiiid chapter relates to this point; in which he wishes he could come to the dwelling-place of God, (ver. 3.) and spread his case before him, and argue about it at large, (ver. 4.) for he had turned his thoughts every way, and could make nothing of it, (ver. 8, 9.) only he was sure God knew he was an upright man, (ver. 10, 11, 12.) But, (ver. 13.) he is in one place or in unity, supreme above all others, absolutely entire, keeping his mind and designs to himself; and none can turn, or oblige him to alter his resolution. All that we can say is, that he doth whatever is agreeable to his own wisdom. For (ver. 14.) what he hath resolved to inflict upon me he hath accomplished; and many such things he doth, of which he will not give us the reason. To the same purpose understand chap. xxvii. 2, 3, 4, 14. and chap. xxviii. 2. He hath taken away my judgment, i.e. the rule by which I might judge of the reason of my afflictions. This point, in reference to God, Elishu tells him (chap. xxxiii. 13.) he had urged to no purpose, seeing he gives no account of his matters, or will not reveal to us the secrets of his Providence.

IX. In such a noble performance, if any thing seems to be said not in consistency, or not in character, we should rather suspect our own judgment, than the good sense of the Author. The fault is not in the book, but in our understanding.

X. That sense which best agrees with the subject, or the point in hand, or which stands in the best connexion with the context, should always be judged the best sense.

CRITICISMS.

Chap. i. 5. To bless a person is a form of valediction, 2 Sam. xix. 39. So here, My sons have have taken leave of God. And so 1 Kings, xxi. 13. Naboth hath bid farewell to God and the King, or hath treated them with contempt.

Chap. iii. 25, 26. The thing that I greatly feared is come upon me, &c. This alludes to the losses of his children, for whom he was very much concerned, chap. i. 5. But chap. xxix. 18. and xxx. 26. relate to his circumstances in general.

Chap. xiii. 12. Your remembrances נברוניכם your [quoting of] memorable sayings are like ashes, or dirt; your bodies בוביכם your heaps, eminencies, your strongest arguments, to heaps of clay, soon washed away.

CHAP.
CH. XXIV.  The Doctrines of the Patriarchal Age.

C H A P. XXIV.

The Doctrines of the Patriarchal Age.

The instructions particularly designed to be given in the Book of Job, might not be so well understood in that age of the world; namely, that great sufferings are not always an argument of great sins; but that very good men may be very much afflicted in this world; that therefore we should not censure any under calamities, be the hand of God ever so apparent, unless the crimes be likewise certain and apparent. That we ought not to complain of God in any condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us, but rather meekly submit to his Blessed Will; who never doth any thing without reason, though we cannot always comprehend it; adoring and revering the unsearchable depths of his Wise Counsel, and believing that all at last will turn out to our advantage, if like his servant Job we persevere in faith, hope, and patience. This was Job's real character, though not without errors. No error can be discerned in his behaviour, but what the uncharitable censures of his friends provoked him to. Thus he was put upon too frequent and too strong justifications of himself, being withheld extremely perplexed to give a plain and satisfactory account why God afflicted him so severely.

God, in the issue, satisfied him, that he had just and weighty reasons; and, in particular, by doubling his prosperity, that he designed to make him a pattern of patience and reward. James v. 11. Behold, we account them happy who endure patiently the greatest sufferings. Ye have heard of the wonderful patience of Job, and have seen, in his case, the happy end to which the Lord brought his calamities. Whence we may learn, that under the severest visitations, the Lord is very compassionate and merciful to the sincere and upright, and will amply compensate them in a future world.

Thus the great point in religion, before dark and doubtful, relating to the Providence of God, and the sufferings of good men, is cleared up with such evidence, as can no where else be found but in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Though this point might not be so well understood, before it was thus illustrated, yet there are several other important articles of religion, of which Job and his friends, and doubtless many others, had very just and clear conceptions: as the being and perfections of God; that we can receive neither good nor evil but from him, the Author of our being, and Disposer of all events; that he fees and orders all things in heaven and earth; that there can be no iniquity with him; that he is the Friend and Patron of virtue, and hates, and will punish vice and wickedness; nevertheless, that he is merciful and gracious, and will certainly pardon and blest those who sincerely repent of their sins, and return unto him: that he is to be supremely reverenced and worshipped, as the sole Sovereign of the universal, by prayers and sacrifices, by purity and integrity.
heart, by justice in all our dealings, by all acts of charity, goodnefs, and benevolence to others, particularly to the helples and indigent; by temperance and sobriety, curbing irregular desires and appetites: that men should not be elated and puffed up by large possessions, nor put their trust in riches, chap. xxxi. 24, 25; that they should abhor idola-

try, ver. 26, 27, 28; that they should not with evil to an enemy, nor rejoice in his misfortunes, ver. 29, 30, much less think of murdering him; that they should abstain from adultery and fornication, ver. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11; from theft, rapine, and deceit, ver. 5, 6, 7. For the pun-
mishment of which crimes he mentions judges in his days, (ver. 11, 28.) and was himself one of the chief, chap. xxix. 7, 9, &c.

These, and such like principles of natural religion, are allowed both by Job and his friends, and therefore were the religion of the Patriarchs, as indeed they are the principles of true and acceptable religion in all ages and parts of the world.

Further; the religious in that, and the preceding, as well as subse-
quent ages, I am persuaded, entertained the faith and hope of a future state. This hath been the popular belief of all nations from time im-
memorial; and it is scarce credible, in the nature of the thing, that the greatest happiness of this life, which might at any uncertain time, and at length would infallibly and totally be demolished by death, should ever become a solid principle of religion, considered as the sole reward of piety and virtue.

However it appears, that Job expected a future world, for he had hope with regard to his condition, but not in this world; therefore, his hope must be in a future state. Chap. xiii. 15. 16. חָנוּן רָם אֲנָפָיו אַל יִשָּׁנֵא נַחַל Lo, or certainly, he will say me: I will not hope, non est quod sperem, I have no ground to hope, that I shall survive my sufferings, yet will I maintain the integrity of my own ways before him. And even this shall be for salvation to me; [where but in a future world?] for a hypocrite shall not come before him; shall not have confidence to present himself before his tribunal. Chap. xxiii. 10. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. As Job absolutely despairs of any temporal deliverance, this must necessarily be understood of the hope he entertained of having his innocence cleared in the day of judg-

ment.

He had, moreover, a notion of the resurrection. Chap. xiv. 7. For there is hope of a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Ver. 8. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, ver. 9. yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a new plant. Ver. 10. And shall man die, and totally waste away? And shall man give up the ghost, and where is be? Or be no more for ever? Ver. 11. As the waters fail from the sea, as the sea ebbs and flows again, and the river, or brook in the dry sandy country of Arabia, decays, and drieth up, in summer, but is made a brook again by the rains and snows of winter; ver. 12. So man lieth down, and riseth not, till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep, to return to the affairs and possessions of this world. Ver. 13. And Oh that thou, O
God, wouldst hide me in the grave, in that state of sleep and insensibility, 
that thou wouldst keep me secret, in that silent retirement, until thy wrath 
be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me to restore 
me to a new and better life! Ver. 14. If a man die, shall he live again? 
Or shall a man live again, after he is dead? Then I will patiently wait 
all the days of the time thou shalt be pleased to appoint, till my happy 
renovation shall come. Ver. 15. Thou shalt call, and I will joyfully an-
swer thee; thou wilt have a longing desire to restore the work of thy hands. 
Ver. 16. Though now, at present, thou numberest my steps, &c. 

Chap. xix. 23. Observe the solemn introduction; Oh, that my words, 
which I am going to speak, were now written! Oh, that they were printed 
in a book! Ver. 24. That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in 
the rock [my grave-stone, Schultens], for ever! This is too grand for 
temporal deliverance. Why should that be recorded upon a rock, as 
a lasting monument to all mankind? But it very well suits the noble 
and sublime hope of a resurrection and future judgment, worthy of 
universal attention. Ver. 25. For I know, or am well assured, that my 
Vindicator, [the Vindicator of my innocence is] living, and that at 
the last over the dust, [the dead, that hath been reduced to dust,] he shall 
arise, [to execute judgment, Job xxxi. 13, 14. P[al. lxxiv. 22. lxxiii. 
8.] Verse 26. And though after my skin they shall destroy this, [or this 
body shall be destroyed,] yet from my restored flesh I shall with pleasure 
see God. [Vide R. nii] verse 27. Whom I shall see for myself; [to do me 
justice, as chap. v. 27.—for thy good [for thyself] and mine eyes shall be-
hold; but a stranger to goodness and justice shall not behold him in 
the same manner. My reins are confounded in my bosom [in ardent expecta-
tion of this glorious event. N. B. nihil sequente non vel nihil dei-
fiderium, ingens, flagrans et consumens significat; videfs Psalms lxxiv. 
2. cxix. 82, 123. cxlìì. 7. Sic quoque de rebus renes, statuendum.] 
Observe—if after his skin, his body also was destroyed, how could he 
outlive this destruction, so as to be a man prosperous and happy again 
in this world? Had this been his fixed belief, his frequent wishings for 
death would be utterly unaccountable, and his tragical complaints ridi-
culus, and his despair of health and happiness in this world a contra-
diction. 

If wicked men, though sometimes in great wretchedness, (chap. xxi. 
16, &c.) are also sometimes prosperous and powerful, verse 7, &c. the 
proper inference is, verse 30. That the wicked are reserved unto the day of 
destruction, and that they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath; not in 
this world, for that would have cut the neck of Job’s argument at once, 
and have fallen in directly with that of his friends. Chap. xxxi. 
29: 3. 

Chap. xxviii. 8. For what is the hope of an hypocrite, in the future state, 
though he hath gained much in this world; when God takes away his soul at 
death? This supposeth a hope after death.—Again, chap. xiii. 13, 14. 
What then shall I do when God riseth up to judgment? Not in this world, 
where his sufferings were as great as could be, and where he did not ex-
pect they would be abated.—Lastly, his friends had not spoken of God the 
thing that was right, as Job had done, chap. xlii. 7, 8. But setting 
avide
as ide future state, the friends would have spoke more worthily of
God, by vindicating his Providence in the exact distribution of good
and evil in this life; and Job, who asserted the contrary, would have
misrepresented his dealings with mankind.

The Patriarchs before and after Job, and the Israelites before Christ
came, had a notion of a future state.—By sacrifices was plainly shewn,
that a way was open to the Divine Favour and Acceptance; and the fa-
vour of God imports happiness, which to Abel, who was for that very
reason, because he was accepted of God, unjustly slain, could be only in
a future state. Heb. xi. 4. Kαρ δί' αυτος ανθρωπων and dying on account of
that his faith he yet speaketh an invisible future state of reward.—The
translation of Enoch and Elijah, in two distant ages, were well-known
demonstrations of a future state of reward and glory.—They were cer-
tainly acquainted with God and Angels, and heaven where both resided.
Gen. xxii. 11. And the connexion between this world and heaven, by
the ministr y of Angels, was clearly represented to Jacob. Genesis xxviii.
12. They must, therefore, have a notion of another and better world.

The promise to Abraham, Genesis xvii. 7. I will be a God unto thee,
we shall find, is the same with the gospel promise, and therefore must
include the gift of eternal life. And as that promise was sure to Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob, when they were dead, (Exodus iii. 6.) our Lord rightly
infers, that they would rise again. (Luke xx. 37, 38.) For God is
not a God of the dead, who cannot, as such, be benefited by him, but of
the living; for though they are dead, they all live unto him, or with respect
of him, as he will raise them all to life again.—And the Patriarchs
thus understood this promise; for when they considered and represented
their life in this world as a pilgrimage, Genesis xlvii. 9. or a state of
sojourning or travelling, they plainly intimated that they were seeking
πατρια, their Father's country; i.e. the heavenly country or city. Heb.
xi. 13—16. Had the prospects of Moses been confined to this world,
doubtless he would have preferred the pleasures and honours of Pharaoh's
court; but by refusing them, and choosing rather to suffer with the peo-
ple of God, he plainly indicated, that he had respect to the future recom-

It is certain the Jews, even during their peculiarity, were under the
Abrahamic, or Gospel covenant, promising the pardon of sin, and eternal
life, as well as under the law, or Sinai covenant. Deut. xxix. 12, 13.
And surely, if they were admitted to a covenant of life and immorta-
li ty, they could not be ignorant of a future state. Nor can it be judged
at all improbable, that Moses propounds eternal life to them in such
passages as this, Deut. xxx. 6. The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart,
and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,
and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live. This our Lord understood of etern-
al life. Luke x. 25, &c. When one asked him, What shall I do to inhe-
rit eternal life? he sent him to the law of Moses; and when the enquirer
readily quoted the rule of life given by Moses, our Lord replied, Thou haft
answered well; this do, and thou shalt live, meaning eternally. Which
leads us to understand Moses in the same sense, when he proposes life as
the reward of their sincere religion, virtue, and goodness. Deut. xxx. 15,
19, 20.
19, 20. Lev. xviii. 5. compared with Romans x. 5. Gal. iii. 10, 11, 12. Indeed life and prosperity in the land of Canaan, is intermixed with such promises. This is to be considered as addressed to them in a national capacity, and with respect to the covenant of peculiarity. [Note—Life is put for eternal life, John vi. 47, 48, 52, 53, 58.] "Thou art the beginning, or former part; thy after, what comes after, the after part, time, or state. Thus Job's time, after his afflictions were over, is called his abharith, chap. xlii. 12. So is a man's posterity, or those that come after him in being. Amos iv. 2.

Sometimes it signifies the happy consequence, or sequel of a course of action, Proverbs xxiv. 14, 20; frequently after-days, or times in this world; but is never used more properly than to denote a future state after death. Num. xxxiii. 10. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my abharith, my after or future state, be like his. Psalm lxxiii. 3—18. The wicked lived in prosperity, and died an easy death. There are no bands in their death, verse 4. I envied them, saith David, verse 17, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their abharith, future state, after death. Surely thou hast set them in slippery places; thou hast cast them down into eternal destruction, &c. Verse 20. As a dream after one is awake; so, O Lord, when thou awakest [יִנָּעֶשׁ in awaking them, or when they are awakened] thou wilt despise, [debase, pour contempt upon, Daniel xii. 2.] their image [םַעֲלֲמָה their vain, shadowy, unsubstantial condition.] Verse 23. Nevertheless I am continually with thee, [the object of thy special care.] Verse 24—27. Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory, &c. Proverbs xxiii. 17, 18. Surely there is an end, abharith, an after-state. Jer. xvii. 11. As the bird Kere hatcheth eggs, which she did not lay, so be that gettest riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end [תִּרְשֵׁם in his after—or future-state,] shall be חֲמַר a fool, vile, contemptible. Verse 13. They that depart from me shall be written in the earth, not registered in heaven, in the book of life. Deut. xxxii. 29.—their latter end, their after—or future-state. Psalm xxxvii. 37, 38.—the end, abharith, of that man is peace, happiness. But the transgressors shall be utterly destroyed, [where but in the future world?] the end, abharith, of the wicked shall be cut off. Deut. xiv. 1, 2. Ye are the children of the Lord your God; (of an immortal Father) ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any bairness between your eyes for the dead. They must not mourn as those that had no hope, 1 Thes. iv. 13. Adoption includes the redemption of the body. Romans viii. 23.—Isaiah xxvi. 10. Thy dead men shall live, with my dead body shall they arise: awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, which makes herbs to spring and grow up. But the earth shall cast out the wicked dead, the repheims, as abortives.


These instants may satisfy, that, although life and immortality are brought into the fullest light by the Gospel, a future state was not unknown from the beginning to the coming of Christ. We may therefore take it for a good rule, that the words 'life' and 'salvation' in the Old Testament,
Testament, may be understood of a future life and salvation, when the context will admit of such an interpretation.

We have found, that in the Patriarchal Age, among the nations, before the Jewish peculiarity, there were persons eminent for religion and virtue, who worshipped the living God, and enjoyed extraordinary communications from him; but that many were of a different character, wicked and ungodly men; and that idolatry, captivating the minds of the ignorant, weak, and vicious, spread so fast, that it threatened the total extinction of good morals, and of the knowledge and pure worship of God. How the Father of mankind counteracted this new instance of degeneracy we shall see, when we have settled the Scripture-Chronology, and considered the judgment of God upon Sodom and Gomorrab.

CHAP. XXV.

The Scripture-Chronology from the Deluge to the Exodus. The Wickedness and Ruin of Sodom, &c. 857 Years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year before Christ</th>
<th>Year of the Word</th>
<th>Year of Shem's Age</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Names of the Patriarchs, and their Ages, when they had Sons.</th>
<th>Names of the Patriarchs, and their Ages, when they had Sons.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2346</td>
<td>1658</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Gen. xi. 10.</td>
<td>Shem, after the Flood 2 and begat</td>
<td>Years.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 12. Arphaxad lived</td>
<td>35 and begat</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 14. Salah lived</td>
<td>30 and begat</td>
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<td>- 16. Heber lived</td>
<td>34 and begat</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- 18. Peleg lived</td>
<td>30 and begat</td>
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<td>- 20. Reu lived</td>
<td>32 and begat</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- 22. Serug lived</td>
<td>30 and begat</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 24. Nahor lived</td>
<td>29 and begat</td>
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<td>1921</td>
<td>2083</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>xii. 4.</td>
<td>Abraham 75 { Promise was made.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- xii. 5.</td>
<td>After that 25 and begat</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- xlvii. 9.</td>
<td>Jacob aged 130 [ when he removed to Egypt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1706</td>
<td>2298</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>1491</td>
<td>2513</td>
<td>Israelites continued there } 215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Gen. xi. 26. it is said, Terah lived 70 years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. But Terah was 205 years old when he died in Haran, Gen. xi. 32. After Terah's death, Abram left Haran; and then was he 75 years old, Gen. xii. 4. which being subtracted from 205, Terah's age, gives 130, the year of Terah when Abram was born.

† Add
† Add Isaac's age (60) when Jacob was born, to the years from the Deluge, and you will have 512, the year after the Deluge when Jacob was born. Shem was 98 years old at the Deluge, and lived 600 years, Gen. xi. 10, 11. Take 98 from 600, and there remains 502, the years Shem lived after the Deluge; which, deducted from 512, the year after the Deluge, in which Jacob was born, leaves ten years, the time between Shem's death and Jacob's birth. Hence it follows, that Isaac lived with Shem 50, and that Abram lived with Shem 150 years. Isaac also, who lived 180 years, (Gen. xxxv. 28.) lived 120 with Jacob, i.e. till within ten years of Jacob's going down into Egypt. And as Shem lived with Methuselah 98, and Methuselah with Adam 240, three persons, Methuselah, Shem, and Isaac, might bring down the account of things from Adam till within ten years of the going down of the Israelites into Egypt.

From the Deluge to the Promise was 427 years.

From the Promise to the time when Jacob and his family went down into Egypt was 215 years. And from the Promise to the time when the children of Israel came out of Egypt was 430 years. Compare Exod. xii. 41. with Gal. iii. 17. Therefore the time of their continuance in Egypt must be 215 years.

Joseph was 30 years of age when preferred by Pharaoh, Gen. xii. 46. After that there were seven years of plenty, and two of famine (Gen. xiv. 11.) before Jacob came down into Egypt. Joseph, therefore, was then 39 years of age: after that he lived 71 years, for he lived in all 110 years, Gen. l. 22, 26. Take 71 out of 215, and there remains 144, the time the Israelites remained slaves in Egypt after Joseph's death. Exod. l. 8.

Before we come to the promise made to Abraham, which was the foundation-stone of the grand scheme to preserve religion and morals in the world, we must turn our thoughts a while to a particular dispensation which God inflicted upon four cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zoarim, (Gen. xiv. 2. Deut. xxix. 23.) that stood in a very extensive, fruitful, and pleasant vale, along the sides of the river Jordan. Gen. xxxii. 10. So far had idolatry, and the immorality which usually attends it, infected the world, that these four populous cities, and Zoar, which lay not far from them, (Gen. xiv. 2. xix. 20.) were become excessively debauched and wicked, indulging to that vilest fort of lewdness which is commonly called Sodomy, going after strange flesh, (Jude 7.) the men burning in their lust one towards another, men with men working that which is unseemly. Rom. i. 27.

Therefore God purposed to punish them with an exemplary and total destruction. Abraham, in the benevolence of his soul, interceded for their preservation. Gen. xviii. 23. And such is the mercy of God, so great his regard to virtuous characters, and so ready for their sakes to bestow blessings, even upon the unworthy, that he would have spared them, if but ten truly sober and virtuous persons could have been found in all those five cities; but they were universally and irreclaimably corrupt. Therefore, sparing Zoar for Lot's sake, (Gen. xix. 20, 21.) he destroyed the other four cities, with all their inhabitants, by pouring upon them the most dreadful storm of fire and brimstone from heaven; and also, probably, by a terrible earthquake, that broke up the very soil of the earth,
earth, and by an irruption of bituminous waters, which turned the whole vale into one heavy, fetid, and unwholesome lake, called the dead, or salt sea, about 30 miles long, and 10 miles broad, Gen. xix. 24, 25, which remains unto this day.

This dreadful instance of Divine Vengeance, through the mercy of God, removed the bad examples of those daring sinners, had a natural fitness to awaken and reform the surviving impious, and was very properly intended to remain a perpetual monument of the wrath of God upon the wickedness of mankind. 2 Pet. ii. 6. Jude, ver. 7. Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Note—the fire was eternal, as it totally and for ever destroyed those cities never to be built again. God thus revealed his future wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And though there be no present appearances of it, we should not therefore be secure. For, as our Lord observes, Luke xvii. 28. The Sodomites did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, thoughtlessly and securely; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

Gen. xix. 24. The Lord rained fire and brimstone from the Lord in heaven. This is an Hebraism, where the noun itself is put instead of the personal pronoun.

Gen. xix. 26. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. Note—The sulphureous storm did not begin to fall upon Sodom till Lot was safely arrived at Zoar, Gen. xix. 22. But his wife looked back before he reached Zoar; for she looked back from behind him, as he was going to Zoar. Therefore, when she looked back, Sodom, and the fine country about it, appeared in the same pleasant and serene state as ever. Consequently, she looked with a look of affection to the place, and of regret to leave it, and their goods that were in it, according to the import of the verb יסב—This implied unbelief and distrust of what the angels had affirmed, that God would immediately destroy the place. She did not believe, or she did not regard it; she stopped by the way, and left her husband to go by himself; she would go no further, and might be at a considerable distance from Zoar, and so near to Sodom, as, probably, to be involved in the terrible shower, and thereby turned into a nitro-sulphureous pillar. This gives the proper senfe and force of our Lord’s admonition, Luke xvii. 32. Remember Lot’s wife. Let the judgment of God upon her warn you of the folly and danger of hankering after, and being loath to part with small and temporal things, when your life and happiness, the greatest and most lasting concerns, are at stake.
CHAP. XXVI.

The State of Religion in the World, when God made the Promise to Abraham.

THOUGH we may be sure, that our State of Trial hath been, from the beginning of the world, perfectly well adjusted, as to the proper balance of means and temptations, for all the purpoises of Divine Wisdom and Goodness, yet it is certain that the contagion of evil so far spread in the earliest ages, as, in process of time, to threaten the total extinction of true Religion and good morals. This is evident in the case of the old world, where wickedness and impiety had at length, and by degrees, infected the whole race of mankind, except Noaib's single family. And in about 450 years after the deluge, idolatry and wickedness had spread and corrupted the world so far, that Sodom and four other cities, being universally debauched, were destroyed (one excepted for the reason already given) by a most tremendous judgment. The Amorites, and several other neighbouring nations, were then filling up the measure of their iniquity; (Gen. xv. 16, 19, 20, 21.) which in about 400 years after was quite full; and God, who might have destroyed them, as he did Sodom, &c. gave the Israelites a commission to expel, or extirpate them.

This spreading corruption, after the deluge, is not to be assigned to simple irreligion, but to religion directed to wrong objects and purpoises. While men retained the knowledge of the true God, they cared not to glorify him by the practice of virtue and holiness, nor were thankful for his benefits. Rom. i. 21, 22. And artful men, through pride and wantonness, indulging to idle conceits and false reasonings, involved their own understanding, and that of others, in the thickest clouds of error and delusion. Probably, they represented the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, as illustrious intelligences, who, being so eminently exalted, must have the highest interest in the favour of God, the direction of human affairs, and the distribution of all temporal blessings; and therefore it would be sufficient to all the purpoises of religion, to secure their friendship, as mediators between God and them. Thus they might be driven, enticed, drawn in, to worship them, (Deut. iv. 19.) by such impious rites as were invented by the folly and ignorance of the same sophisters, and adapted to the depraved minds of such as listened to them. Thus they might be deceived into the practice of all manner of lewdness and vice. For the attributes of those supposed deities, and benefactors of mankind, being feigned purely by human imagination, they would naturally be represented by men, who had their own interests and lusts to serve, in such manner as best suited the corrupt taste and inclinations of those who were disposed to follow them. If this was not the case at first, it may easily be conceived to have been so in process of time, by after-improvements upon the original scheme of idolatry. And by this method men would be led to believe they might be religious, and
and gain health, long life, fruitful seasons, plenty, prosperity, not only without the practice of virtue and holiness, but positively by lewd and wicked practices; and thus religion would be turned into an encouragement to vice, and the principles of virtue and goodness would be extinguished.

Whether they were seduced precisely after this manner or not, the fact is certain, that their abominable idolatries were attended with abominable lusts and intemperance, 1 Pet. iv. 3. Add to this, that cunning men, who knew how to make their own advantage of the foibles of mankind, introduced into their minds notions of fate, divinity, fortune, chance, necessity, with many other delusions. Hence arose professors of the vilest arts, pretending to look into futurity, to gratify malicious desires, to secure good, and prevent bad luck to those who consulted them. Deut. xviii. 10. Diviners, observers of times, enchanters, witches, or such as pretend to work upon the mind, or body, for evil purposes, by herbs or potions; charmers, confulters with a pretended familiar spirit; wizards, necromancers. And so far were they infatuated, that they made their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, under the notion of sacrifices to their idols; probably, to gain their blessing upon their children, and to make them healthy and fortunate. Deut. xii. 31. xviii. 10. Lev. xviii. 21. xx. 2. Thus their hope and trust, and their regards, were diverted from God and his Providence to vain idols and the vilest impostors.

The neglect and abuse of understanding, and the indulged irregular inclinations of the heart, were doubtless the spring and principal cause of this defection from God and virtue. But we may believe it was forwarded and completed by the suggestions and insatiations of the Devil and his angels; the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit whom God permits to work in the children of disobedience, (Eph. ii. 2.) and to deceive the nations. Rev. xx. 2, 3. For when men receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved, God judicially sends them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie. That they may all be condemned, who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thess. ii. 9—12.

Thus we see how idolatry first began, and by what means it might, as it certainly did, spread in the world; and would have prevailed universally, as the remaining virtuous dropped off, and as men of understanding happened to be drawn in by various allurements. For the heart even of Solomon, the great and wise, was, by the love of strange women, so far turned away after idol gods, that he built high places and altars in honour of them, even in the neighbourhood of the city Jerusalem. 1 Kin. xi. 1—8.

To prevent the universal prevalence of idolatry, and to preserve among mankind the knowledge and worship of the living and true God, the wise and gracious Father of men was pleased to advance a new and noble scheme, which, under several variations and improvements, was to reach to the end of time. The scheme was this, to choose and adopt one family, afterwards to be formed into a nation, instructed in religious knowledge by God himself, and favoured with such extraordinary privileges, and honours, above all other nations of the earth, as were in their own nature adapted to engage them, by the most rational motives, to adhere to
to God and his worship. At the same time, to prevent their being infected with the idolatries and vices of the rest of the world, as they certainly would have been, had they mingled with them, they were to be distinguisht and separated from all other people by their diet, their dress, and divers civil and religious rites and ceremonies; but more particularly by a secret mark in the flesh, by which they might be certainly known from all other men. Thus they would be kept together in a body, and hindered from mixing with, and being corrupted by, their idolatrous neighbours, and in every respect fitted to be an example and instruction to them under the various dispensations wherewith they were visited. And further, their laws and religious institutions being originally recorded in books, would more certainly be preserved and known in all future ages and generations. Thus God provided a store-house of religious knowledge, a whole nation of priests, Exod. xix. 6. a school of instruction and wisdom for all the world. Or the nation of Israelites may be considered as a piece of leaven which in process of time was to leaven the whole lump or mass of mankind.

Abraham, a person of the most eminent piety and virtue, was chosen to be the head and father of this nation; that, as he would always be held in great veneration among them, he might always shine before their eyes as an illustrious pattern of godliness.

The ground of this scheme, and of God's singular regards to Abraham and his posterity, was the Covenant of Grace, the Promise or grant of favour and blessings to mankind in Jesus Christ our Lord. Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, though not manifested till the last times. 1 Pet. i. 20. This Covenant or grant was first published to Adam. Gen. iii. 15. Her, the woman's, seed shall bruise thy head, O serpent, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Nor could it be wholly unknown to the Patriarchs; but it was much more clearly revealed to Abraham. Gen. xii. 3. xvii. 7. xviii. 18. xxii. 16, 17, 18. And this is the subject which now requires our particular attention. [See the Treatise on the Covenant of Grace, &c.]

C H A P. XXVII.

The Methods of Divine Wisdom in raising up a new and religious Nation.

To return to the age in which Abraham lived. The delusions of idolatry were so strong, and the human understanding so weak, that all nations seem to have run into it at once and alike; and such was the infatuating and spreading nature of the infection, that there was no rational prospect of the reformation of any one of them. Violence could
could not be used, argument and reasoning would have no effect, the most dreadful judgments were forgotten, or disregarded*. The knowledge and worship of the one living and true God, the great principle of moral goodness, and of public and private happiness, would have been totally lost in the earth. But the Father and Governor of men provided a remedy. Instead of destroying all nations, as at the deluge, it was the merciful scheme of Divine Wisdom to create, out of one pious and faithful person, Abraham, a new and religious nation, separated from all the rest, in order to ascertain among them, and at length among all nations, right sentiments of his Being, Perfections, and Providence. And it is greatly worth our while to observe the steps and Methods by which God was pleased to train them up for this purpose.

First, Abraham is required to cast himself wholly upon God's Providence, by removing, at God's command, from his own kindred and country, to an unknown distant land, which God would shew him; affuring him of his presence and special blessing. *Genesis* xii. 1, 2, 3. Thus God took him under his immediate care and protection. In this strange land he wandered about as long as he lived, but God was with him every where. God appeared to him, and conversed with him frequently and familiarly. By extraordinary interpositions, and express declarations, from time to time, God encouraged, directed, prospered, guarded and provided for him. He became very rich, great, and honourable; but all was most visibly the gift and operation of God. God gave him repeated assurances, that he would make of him a great nation, give his posterity the whole land of Canaan, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. But he was not to have a son, till the birth of that son was manifestly the extraordinary miraculous effect of Divine Power, and infused the performance of the promises. What could be more engaging than all these circumstances? What more proper to excite in a man, duty, affection, and confidence towards God? The same encouragements, blessings, and promises are repeated to Isaac, and afterwards to Jacob, and the same heavenly correspondence is kept open with them during their lives. Egypt, then a plentiful country, of genius and learning, [Acts vii. 22.] the resort of the curious and inquisitive, was chosen to be the nursery of this family. Thither was Joseph first carried by a singular Providence, sold for a slave, and most unjustly cast into prison, but only that God might shew himself in his enlargement. By means which God only could provide and direct, he was at once released from a jail, and raised to almost regal honour and authority. And in high dignity and esteem, and with astonishing success, which none but God could give, in the most important affairs, he continued all the days of his life.

By him God predicted seven years of prodigious plenty in Egypt, and seven succeeding years of the most distressing famine in the land, and in all the adjacent countries. By this event, Jacob's whole family, in all seventy-two souls, were brought to reside, with the great good-will of the king, and of the whole nation, in Goshen, the richest province in the

* Reckoning by the age of man, the world was 20 years old; for God called Abraham in the year of the world 2083.
the land of Egypt, Gen. xlvi. 6. where their situation, manners, and
way of living, would keep them separate from their idolatrous neigh-
bours. Gen. xliii. 32. xlvi. 34. Thus God, by a surprising train of
events, introduced the family of Abraham into the nursery where they
were to grow up into a nation. At length a prince arose, who knew,
or regarded, not Joseph, Exodus i. 8. Then they fell into a state of sla-
very, and the severest oppression and suffering, for about 140 years. But
this was only to render the power of God more conspicuous in their
preservation and deliverance. The more they are oppressed, and the
more cruelly they were used, the more they increase and flourish,
till they were numerous enough to be formed into a nation. Then
Moses was miraculously preferred, educated by Pharaoh's daughter
in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and raised up to be their deliverer.
And now the vials of Divine Wrath are poured out one after another
upon Egypt. God made bare his arm, or gave the most signal and strik-
ing demonstrations of his Being and Power, infinitely superior not only
to all human strength, but also to all the pretended Deities in which
the Egyptians trusted. Exodus xii. 12.
To this end (1.) the Divine Wisdom permitted, on this special occa-
sion, Pharaoh's magicians, possibly by the ministrty of evil spirits, or by
extraordinary powers immediately communicated to the enchanters, to
imitate some of the miracles which Moses wrought, in order to display
more clearly his own Divine Power; and to convince both Egyptians
and Israelites of the vanity of such arts, by controlling and defeating
them, even when exercised in the highest degree. So a man was born
blind, and Lazarus died, on purpose to give our Lord an opportunity of
demonstrating his power, and the truth of his mission. John ix. 3. xi. 4.
And for that reason, an extraordinary power might be permitted to
evil spirits to possess the bodies of men, that our Saviour's dominion over
the devil and his angels might be more evidently shewn. The invisible
world of spirits may undergo many variations, and be subject to diffe-
rent restraints and regulations in different ages, so as to interfere more
or less, or not at all in human affairs. Jortin.
(2.) God hardened Pharaoh's heart, by granting him reprieve from one
plague after another, that he might multiply, and so render more con-
spicuous, the demonstrations of his Being and Supreme Dominion.
And this is all that God did towards hardening Pharaoh's heart. See
Exodus viii. 15. ix. 34, 35, and verse 15, 16. For now, faith the Lord, I
have stretched out my hand [in the preceding plague of boils and blains,]
and I have smitten thee, and thy people, with the pestilence, and [by this
plague] thou mightest have been cut off from the earth. But in very deed
for this cause I have raised thee up, [I have restored thee to health, by re-
moving the pestitial boils,] that by reprieving thy destruction, I may
show in thee more and greater proofs of my Almighty Power.
All the miracles which God wrought in Egypt, were such as must be
seen and acknowledged to come from him alone, and not from any possi-
bile power of man, or from any natural accidents. This is true of all
the ten plagues, but especially of the last. The pestilence, in ordinary
cases, sweeps away multitudes promiscuously; but when it singleth out
only the first-born in every family, it must plainly appear to be a judg-
ment
ment immediately from the hand or direction of God; [Exodus xii. 29.] as it was to theIsraelites a just retribution of the cruelty of the Egyptians in endeavouring to destroy all their male children. Exodus i. 16. [Note—In those ages and circumstances of the world, when men were not so capable of being convinced by abstract reasoning, and probably understood nothing of the perfections of God a priori, his supreme authority and omnipotence would be best demonstrated by facts, which experimentally proved his uncontrolled dominion over all other powers, and over universal Nature.] At last Pharaoh and his people gave up the cause. God's superior power is owned, because so dreadfully experienced. The Egyptians urge them to depart, and to remove all objections that might hinder their departure, willingly give them the most precious and valuable of their possessions, [which, by the way, might be but equal payment for the labour of so great a multitude, for 140 years.] See Exodus xii. 33, &c. Verse 35. And the children of Israel— בהם asked of the Egyptians jewels, &c. i.e. asked the Egyptians to give them jewels, &c. [בע signifies to ask to give, as well as to lend. Josh. xv. 18, 19. xix. 50. Jud. v. 25. viii. 25, 26. Psal. ii. 8. See Hebrew English Concordance.] Verse 36. So that they lent unto them, &c. That so they readily gave them, &c. דבושי in Hipkko to make to ask, i.e. to encourage, to gratify asking by freely giving. [Note—Upon the occasion of the death of all the first-born among the Egyptians, and the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, a commemorative festival, the passover, is instituted; an ordinance very proper for preserving the perpetual memory of the power and goodness of God among the Israelites.

The Israelites leave Egypt, in number no less than twenty-four hundred thousand, Num. i. 45, 46. and all Nature giveth way before them. A passage is open for them through the Red-sea, which closes upon, and overwhelms Pharaoh and his pursuing army. Pillars of cloud and fire, alternately appearing in the air, direct their march. Bitter fountains are made sweet. In a dry, thirsty, barren country, they are supplied with water from the hard and flinty rock, and with food from the sky for forty years together. With all the appearances of glory and dreadful majesty, God, as their King and Sovereign, established his Covenant, or entered into a solemn contract, with them in mount Horeb; choosing them for a peculiar treasure above all people, Exodus xix. 5. and engaging himself to be their God and King, and to bestow on them all national blessings upon condition they were obedient, adhered to his worship, and kept clear of idolatry, with which they had been tainted in Egypt, (Lev. xvii. 7. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8.) otherwise they might expect the severest judgments, Deut. xxxix. 10, &c. At the same time he gave them a system of laws and statues, most excellent in themselves, fitted to their present temper and circumstances, as well as to the future intents and purposes of the Gospel dispensation. Here God took up his residence among them in the tabernacle, afterwards in the temple, setting himself at the head of their affairs, and upon all important occasions directing them as an oracle. And all this, to attach and unite this one nation to himself.
At length, through a train of very striking miracles, (Jordan divided, the walls of Jericho thrown down) he brought them into the promised land, with a commission to destroy all the inhabitants, the measure of whose iniquity was then full; and who probably were more corrupt than any of their neighbours, and as deserving of destruction as Sodom and Gomorrha, for all the idolatrous, brutish, cruel, incestuous, and unnatural crimes, which universally prevailed amongst them. Had the Israelites been mixed with the idolatrous Canaanites, they would soon have lost the knowledge of God, and been involved in all their corruptions; but being made the instruments of their destruction, this would give them the greater horror of those crimes, which they knew (for Moses had told them, Deut. ix. 4, 5) were thus dreadfully avenged by their arms. Moreover, thus they would give themselves a clear demonstration, that idol-gods had no power to defend and preserve their votaries. Therefore it was not unjust in God to command the destruction of the Canaanites, nor cruel in his servants to execute that command, (any more than it is to extirpate outlaws, and the worst of criminals, by legal authority) but in the views of Divine Wisdom, the properest way of extirpating them, considering the effects it would have upon the minds of the Israelites.

Here we may observe, (1.) That the Israelites made no claim to the land of Canaan in their own right. The right was in God, who gave it them. (2.) We may observe a good reason why the Divine Wisdom erected this scheme for preserving true religion, only in the one nation of the Israelites. Because, had he selected a pious person and his family, as he selected Abraham and his posterity, out of every nation upon earth, then, to make room for them, every nation upon earth must have been devoted to destruction, as the Canaanites were. But seeing the whole earth was not filled with violence, injustice, rapine, and oppression, God in much lenity and forbearance was pleased to wink at, or overlook, the ignorance and error of other nations, without punishing them as they deserved, Acts xvii. 30. leaving them to the light of Nature, Acts xiv. 16. to feel, or grope after his existence and perfections, Acts xvii. 26, 27. and to the dictates of conscience, for their conduct in life; while he continued his providential care in giving the supplies of life, and visiting them with suitable dispensations; and will, at last, judge them in perfect equity, making allowance for all unavoidable defects. Rom. ii. 6, 10, 11, 12.

Even after the Israelites were settled in the land, the danger of idolatry was not over. They were ready on every occasion to catch the infection from their neighbours; and still there was need of further Divine Interpositions. And through a long course of years they were exercised with various dispensations, according as they did or did not adhere to the worship of God. When they clave unto the Lord, they were prosperous and triumphant; when they forsook him, and followed strange gods, they were in great distress, in servitude, and captivity; till by repeated calamities, and signal deliverances, accompanied with the clearer light, and more rational convictions, which, at length, they were prepared to receive from their prophets, they were at last weaned from idolatry,
latry, after the Babylonish captivity, about 955 years after their return out of Egypt; and never relapsed into it again.

All this was necessary, and, in consistence with human agency, and the gradual improvements of mankind, was the properest method to preserve the knowledge of the true God in the world, not only in that single nation, but in all the nations of the earth. For the dispensation among the Jews, like a piece of leaven, which leaveneth the whole mass, was intended for the benefit of all mankind; as by this means they became examples and instructors, while they remained in their own country, to all their neighbours; and when in captivity, or dispersion, as they carried with them the knowledge of God into the countries where they were dispersed; till the nations should, by this and other means of improvement, be prepared to receive the clearest revelation of the true God, and of eternal life by the Messiah. Which was the great end and design of the scheme which we have been considering.

And now, the more a thinking man revolves in his mind this train of affairs, and sees how one nation are led, step by step, as their capacities would admit, to a sense of the pre-eminence and sovereignty of the true God, in order to be set apart as the repository of his sacred laws and religion, till they and all mankind are fit for the reception of them in a more simple, clear, and extensive form, under the Gospel, the more he will confess and admire the signatures of wisdom and goodness that appear through the whole and every part of the economy.

There is one thing deserves particular attention, I mean, the spirit and behaviour of the Israelites in the wilderness. A very remarkable instance of the wretched effects of servitude upon the human soul. They had been slaves to the Egyptians for about 140 years; their spirits were debased, their judgments weak, their sense of God and religion very low: they were very defective in attention, gratitude, generosity; full of distrust and uneasy suppositions; complaining and murmuring under the most astonishing displays of Divine Power and Goodness, as if still under the frowns and scourges of their unjust task-masters; could scarce raise their thoughts to prospect the most pleasing and joyous; knew not how to value the blessings of liberty; of a taste so mean and illiberal, that the flesh and fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, onions and garlic, and such good doings in Egypt, weighed more with them than bread from heaven, and all the Divine assurances and demonstrations that they should be raised to the noblest privileges, the highest honour and felicity, as a peculiar treasure to God, above all people in the world. Num. xi. 4, 5, 6.

In short, nothing would do; the ill qualities of slavery were engrained in their hearts; a groveling, thoughtless, sturdy, daftlyardly spirit fatigued the Divine Patience, counteracted and defeated all his wise and beneficent measures; they could not be worked up to that sense of God, that

* Reckoning by the age of man, the world was then 34 years old; for the Jews returned from the Babylonish captivity about the year of the world 3468.
that esteem of his highest favours, that gratitude and generous dutifulness, that magnanimity of spirit, which were necessary to their conquering and enjoying the promised land. And therefore the wisdom of God determined they should not attempt the possession of it, till that generation of slaves, namely, all above 20 years of age, were dead and buried. However, this did not lie out of the Divine plan. It served a great purpose, namely, to warn that, and all future ages of the church, both Jewish and Christian, that if they despise and abuse the goodness of God, and the noble privileges and prospects they enjoy, they shall forfeit the benefit of them. And the Apostle applieth it to this very important use, with great force and propriety, in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ii. ver. 15, to the end, and chap. iv. ver. 1—12.

Thus, for a general view of this noble scheme. The nature and excellency of it will stand in a stronger light, if we examine the particular privileges and honours conferred upon this distinguished nation, their tendency to promote piety and virtue, and the relation they bear to the state of things under the Gospel. For this part of the subject we must turn to my Key to the Apostolic Writings.

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CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Jewish Ritual, or Ceremonial Law.

We must now turn back to the Mosaic Constitution; which consult, 1. Of political and judicial Laws. For which consult Mr. Lowman on The Civil Government of the Hebrews. 2. Of moral precepts, such as the ten commandments. 3. Of Rites and Ceremonies, such as circumcision, sacrifices, washings, purifications, the use of certain garments, &c. and divers Rites used by the priests in the tabernacle. For a particular account of which, consult Mr. Lowman on the Ritual of the Hebrew Worship. I shall only observe in general, that the design of those Ceremonies, justly explained, was to convey religious and moral instructions, as well as the express precepts. Hieroglyphics, which represent the sense of the mind, by outward figures, or actions, were the first and most ancient literature. So the government of the world by Divine Providence, and its extraordinary interposition in favour of good men, is represented by a ladder standing upon the earth, and reaching to heaven, with the angels ascending and descending on it, to receive and execute orders from God above, who ruleth over all. Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. In the style of this Hieroglyphic our Lord speaks, John i. 51. Hereafter shall you see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, as upon Jacob; meaning, you shall see an extraordinary Divine Interposition working in my...
my favour, by many miraculous operations. [Dr. Benson.] The exaltation of Joseph above the rest of the family, was represented by the Hieroglyphic of his sheaf standing upright, and the eleven sheaves of his brothers standing round about and bowing to it; as also of the sun, moon, and eleven stars, making obeisance to him. Gen. xxxvii. 7, 9. The tribe of Judah is represented by a young lion; Issachar, by a strong ass; Dan, by a serpent lurking in the road; Naphtali, by a hind; Joseph, by a fruitful-bough; Benjamin, by a ravening wolf. Gen. xlix. 9, 14, &c. A rod or staff, as it is an instrument of striking or beating down, is the Hieroglyphic of power exerted in conquering, punishing, ruling, I sa i a b x. 5, 24; and of dominion and authority, Pfalm cx. 2; and as such, is continued to this day, under the name of a sceptre. With such a rod Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh, as hieroglyphically representing the power and authority of God, in whose name they demanded the release of the Israelites. Exod. vii. 15. And thus they appeared as men of learning, and acted agreeably to the literature of the age. A horn represented temporal power and dominion. 1 Sam. ii. 10. 1 Kin. xxii. 11. Pfal. lxxxix. 24. A yoke, such as slaves carried upon their shoulders, servitude, or bondage. Gen. xxvii. 37, 40. Jer. xxvii. 2, 6, xxviii. 10.

This may serve to explain the nature of hieroglyphics; a sort of language the Jews were then accustomed to, by which they could understand much better than abstract reasonings about moral truths and duties. We may therefore, on this account, well admit, that the Rites and Ceremonies of their religious institution were hieroglyphic, and intended by external representations to give them useful instructions in true religion and real goodness. If we consult the Prophets and Apostles, who were well acquainted with their meaning, we shall find so much evidence of the moral and spiritual intention of so many, as may induce us to believe, this was the sense and spirit of all the rest.

They were enjoined various and frequent ablutions, or washings with water; the common use of which is to discharge the body from all dirt and filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very easy representation of purity of mind, or of an heart purged from the filth of sin. And so the Prophets understood it. Pfal. li. 2. Wash me from mine iniquity. Ver. 7. Wash me, and I shall be clean. Ifai. i. 16. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, put away the evil of your doing. —Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Jer. iv. 14. Aëts xxii. 16. Heb. x. 22. Rev. i. 5. Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilarated, had the signification of honour, joy, holiness, and inspiration, Pfal. xlv. 7. Aëts x. 38. The priests officiated in garments of fine linen, Exod. xxxix. 27; meaning, that the priests should be clothed, or have their souls adorned with righteousness. Pfal. cxxxi. 9. For the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints. Rev. xix. 8. Burning of incense, whose smoke riseth up with a pleasant smell, was an hieroglyphic representation of acceptable prayer. Pfal. cxli. 2. Luke i. 10. Rev. viii. 3, 4. Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retaining all inordinate affections and inclinations. Lev. xxvi. 41. Deut. x. 12—17. xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4. Rom. ii. 29. The sprinkling of blood, and
and of the water of separation, (Num. xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic, and had a moral signification. See Heb. ix. 13, 14. x. 22. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2. And so had the muzzled mouth of the ox, Deut. xxv. 4. compared with 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

Some may have indulged too much to imagination, and found more mysteries in the Hebrew Ritual than were really designed; but these instances, explained by authentic evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a rational and spiritual meaning. And as we are taught in the Gospel every thing relating to virtue and religion in the plainest manner, we need not give ourselves much trouble about discovering the meaning of the other Rites, which are not explained by Prophets and Apostles. Only the affair of sacrifices is so often alluded to in the New Testament, and seems to have such respect to the sacrifice of our Lord, that it demands a more particular examination. [Turn to the Scripture-Doctrine of Atonement.]

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**CHAP. XXIX.**

**The Scripture-Chronology from the Exodus to the Founding of Solomon's Temple.**

This space of time was 480 years; as appears from 1 Kings, vi. 1. which is made out, in the best manner I have yet seen, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years before Christ.</th>
<th>From the Exodus to the death of Mōsēs, and succession of Ḥophnē.</th>
<th>Years.</th>
<th>Proofs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1451</td>
<td>Note—Mōsēs was 40 years old, when he fled out of Egypt, Acts vii. 23. He was 40 years with Ḥēthōn, Exod. vii. 7. and 40 years in the wilderness with the Isrā'ēlītēs. Therefore, he was 120 when he died. Deut. xxxiv. 7.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Exod. vii. 7. Acts vii. 30.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1426</td>
<td>From the succession of Ḥophnē to his death. Note—after the death of Ḥophnē the Isrā'ēlītēs fell into idolatry, Judg. ii. 7, &amp;c. And in those licentious H 3 times,</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ḥophnē.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years before Christ</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Proofs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1391</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Judg. iii. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1383</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>... 9, 10, 11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1343</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>... 12, 13, 14</td>
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<td>1325</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>... 15—30</td>
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The times, about the year before Christ 1398, the events recorded in the xviith and xviiiith chapters of the book of Judges, by which idolatry was introduced into the tribe of Ephraim, and by that means propagated among the Danites, might happen. For it was in the times when there was no king in Israel. And in the same unhappy period fell out, most probably, the war of the eleven tribes against Benjamin, of which we read Judg. xix. xx. xxxi. chapters. For Phineas, the son of Eleazar, (Josh. xxiv. 33 1 Chron. vi. 4.) who after the death of Joshua succeeded his father, about the year before Christ 1402, was then high-priest, Judg. xx. 28. And in those days also there was no king in Israel, chap. xxi. 25. which shews it was in the same times with the preceding events.

From the death of Joshua to the bondage of East-Israel under Cushan.

To their deliverance by Othniel.

To the bondage of East-Israel under Eglon, king of Moab.

To their deliverance by Ehud. [After which, that part of Israel had rest for 80 years, Judg. iii. 30.] Note — It may probably be supposed, that scarce any of the judges ruled over the whole country of Israel, but some in one part, and some in another; so that, at the same time, there might be several judges in several parts of the land;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years before Christ</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and peace and liberty in one part, when there was war and slavery in another. The eastern part, that had shaken off the yoke of Moab, had rest 80 years; but, in the mean while, the Philistines invaded the western parts, and were repulsed by Shamgar, Judg. iii. 31. Afterward Jabin afflicted the northern tribes, chap. iv. 2, while the eastern parts still remained in peace. See Bp. Patrick on Judg. xi. 20.</td>
<td>1285</td>
<td>Authority of Chronologers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the deliverance of North-Israel from Jabin, by Deborah and Baruch. [After which that part of the land had rest 40 years. Judg. v. 31.]</td>
<td>1245</td>
<td><strong>40</strong> Judg. vi. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the bondage of North and East Israel under the Midianites, for 7 years. Note—In some of those 7 years, probably, Elimelech removed into the land of Moab, by reason of the famine, occasioned by the depredations of the Midianites, Ruth i. 2, Judg. vi. 4.</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td><strong>7</strong> Jud. vi. 1, &amp;c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To their deliverance by Gideon.</td>
<td>1199</td>
<td><strong>39</strong> ... viii. 28.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Abimelech's usurpation, 40 years, or 39 complete.</td>
<td>1196</td>
<td><strong>3</strong> ... ix. 22.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Tola, judge over North and East Israel.</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td><strong>23</strong> ... x. 1, 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Jair, judge over North and East Israel. Note—While Jair was judge, North and East Israel were in bondage to the Ammonites 18 years, Judg. x. 8. At the same time with Jair, Eli began to judge South and West Israel 40 years, 1 Sam. iv. 18; all which time that part of Israel was oppressed by the Philistines, Judg. H 4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years before Christ</td>
<td>Judg. xiii. 1. In the first of those forty years of Eli, which was also the first year of Jair, Samson might be born; who lived 40 years, and judged West-Israel, (while Eli also was judge there, and while that part of the country was under the Philistines,) 20 years, Judg. xv. 20. [Eli judging in civil affairs; Samson by harassing the Philistines. Usher.] About the 13th year of Eli, before Christ 1160, Samuel might be born.</td>
<td>Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1152</td>
<td>From Jair to Jephthah, who delivered North and East Israel from the Ammonites, 22, or 21 complete years.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1147</td>
<td>From Jephthah to Ibzan, over North and East Israel, six, or five complete years.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1140</td>
<td>From Ibzan to his successor Elon, in North and East Israel.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1135</td>
<td>About the fifth year of Elon, Samuel was publicly known to be a Prophet, 1 Sam. iii. 20. iv. 1. About the seventh of Elon, Samson pulled down the temple, Judg. xvi. 30. and destroyed great numbers of the Philistines. Usher thinks that this calamity might encourage the South and West Israelites to give them battle, 1 Sam. iv. 1, &amp;c.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1130</td>
<td>From Elon to Abdon, over North and East Israel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1122</td>
<td>From Abdon to his successor Samuel, who now was also judge over North and East Israel, as he had been before over South and West Israel, 1 Sam. vii. 15, 16, 17. pro-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ch. XXX.  Authors within the Period, &c.  121

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years before</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christ.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1094</td>
<td>17. probably, from the time that he was publicly known to be a Prophet.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1054</td>
<td>From Samuel to king Saul.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1014</td>
<td>From Saul to David.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From David to Solomon.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Solomon to the founding of the temple, four, or three complete years.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all . . . 480 1 Kings vi. 1.

CHAP. XXX.

Authors within the Period from the Exodus to the Founding of Solomon’s Temple.

About the beginning of this Period books began to be written; and it hath furnished the world with the noblest productions, both in history, poetry, and the instructive kind.

The Book of Job.

If Job wrote his own book; or if it was written by Elihu, one of the interlocutors, as some gather from chap. xxxii. 10, 15, &c. where he speaks in the language of the writer of the Book; and if Moses found it when he was with Jethro in Midian, and transcribed it, adding the historical parts at the beginning and the end; then this Book of Job is earlier than this Period, and the oldest Book in the world. And, as it is worthy of the highest antiquity, any of these suppositions is far more probable than theirs who imagine it was written in a later age, about the time of the Babylonish captivity.

The Pentateuch.

That Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or fivefold volume, (from πέντε, quinque, and τόμος, volumen, liber, (containing the five books in the Bible, we have the same reason to believe, as we have that Homer wrote the
the Iliad; namely, the consent of all the learned in all ages. The first
of these books is Genesis, וְנַחֲנָה containing the only history of the
world from the creation down to Jacob's removing into Egypt, for 2208
years. 2. Exodus, הַעַנִּיש is the history of the departure of the Israelites
out of Egypt, and of the erecting and furnishing of the tabernacle. 3. Le-
viticus, הַנַּעֲרָה in which are the laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the
Jewish religion, and what particularly related to the Levites. 4. Num-
bers, הַנַּוְצֹות begins with the numbering of the Israelites; after which
several laws and remarkable events are recorded. 5. Deuteronomy, יִנְבָּד
is a repetition and an abridgement of the law, with exhortations and
motives to the observance of it.

The Book of Joshua.

Joshua probably wrote the last chapter of Deuteronomy, and the Book
of Joshua, containing an account of his own acts, in conquering and
dividing the land of Canaan; and Phineas, the high priest, might add
the five last verses relating to the death of Joshua, and of his father Ele-
azar the high-priest.

The Book of Judges.

Was certainly written before the second book of Samuel; compare
2 Sam. xi. 21. with Judg. ix. 33; and before David had taken Jerusalem,
2 Sam. v. 6. Judg. i. 21. Samuel, the Prophet, or Seer, the last of the
Judges, was an historian, 1 Chron. xxix. 29. and probably wrote this
Book of Judges; in which we read the great efficacy of religion to
make a nation happy, and the dismal calamities which impiety brings
along with it. St. Paul (Heb. xi. 32.) points out some examples of
heroic, and surprizingly successful faith in Gideon, Barak, Samson, and
Jephthah, whole history is recorded in this Book. It consists of two
parts, the one containing the history of the Judges, from Othniel to Sa-
muul, which part ends with the xvth chapter; the other, containing se-
veral memorable actions, performed not long after the death of Joshua,
thrown to the end of the Book, that it might not interrupt the thread
is the history.

The Book of Ruth.

Ruth may be considered as an appendage to the book of Judges, and
brings down the history to the times of Samuel, who probably was the
author of it, and draws the lineage of Judah down to David, chap. iv.
18. Which makes it not unlikely, that it was written after David was
anointed by Samuel, 1 Sam. xvi. 13.
Here it may not be improper to observe, that Samuel was not only an
author, but otherwise seems to have been a great promoter of literature
and religion. We never read of the companies or colleges of Prophets
till
till this time; and therefore, probably, he erected them. They were
semaries for the instruction of youth in the knowledge of the law, and
for training them up in the exercises of piety; particularly in the singing
of sacred hymns, in concert with instrumental music. This, in the lan-
guage of those times, was prophesying, 1 Sam. x. 5. 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2,
3, 7. They were not, strictly speaking, all of them Prophets; but upon
some of them God bestowed the spirit of prophecy, or of predicting
future events, 2 Kings ii. 3. And we may suppose, that most of the Pro-
phets, properly so called, came out of these schools. Amos excepts him-
self, chap. vii. 14.—I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's son,
i.e. Disciple; for the scholars were called the sons of the Prophets. At
their head, as governor, they had some venerable truly-inspired Prophet,
who was called their father. 1 Sam. x. 12. 2 Kings ii. 12. Samuel was
one, and perhaps the first of those fathers, or governors. 1 Sam. xix. 20.
Elijah was another. 2 Kings ii. 12. And Elisha succeeded him in this
office. 2 Kings iv. 78. Elisha came to Gilgal—and the sons of the Pro-
phets were sitting before him. The master, or father, sat above; and the
scholars below, before him, at his feet. 2 Kings ii. 3. Knowest thou that
the Lord will take away thy master from thy head? or from the seat, where
he sits above thy head—See Acts xxii. 3. They lived together in soci-
fy, 2 Kings vi. 1; and when they had done their lectures, and reli-
gious exercises, were wont to eat together with their masters. 2 Kings
iv. 38, &c. This institution had a manifest tendency to advance religion
and learning.

I. II. SAMUEL.

1 Samuel was wrote before 1 Kings. 1 Kings ii. 17. 1 Sam. ii. 31,
35, compared; and it is not unreasonably supposed, that Samuel wrote
the first 24 chapters; and that, after his death, the history of David
was continued in the first and second Books of Samuel by the Prophets
Gad and Nathan. 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

I. II. KINGS.

These Books contain the history of the kings of Judah and Israel,
from Solomon to the captivity in Babylon, for the space of 423 years. In
this Period were several historiographers; for we read of the book of the
Acts of Solomon, 1 Kings xi. 41. which Acts of Solomon were recorded in
the Book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the Prophecy of Abijah the Shilonite,
and in the Visions of Iddo the Seer. 2 Chron. ix. 29. Which Iddo was
employed, together with Shemaiah the Prophet, in writing the Acts of
Rehoboam. 2 Chron. xii. 15. We also read of the book of Jehu, the
Prophet, relating the Acts of king Jehoshaphat. 2 Chron. xx. 34.
1 Kings xvi. 1. And Joash, the Prophet, wrote the Acts of king Uzziah,
2 Chron. xxvi. 22; and also of king Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. And
it is highly probable, that he wrote the history of the two intermediate
kings
kings Jotham and Abaz, in whose reigns he lived. Isai. i. 1. And, we may well suppose, all these histories, added one to another, make the two Books of Kings.

Note—No writer of the history of the kings of Judah or Israel is any where expressly named; but his title is either given him as a Prophet, or it appears from some other part of Scripture that he was a Prophet. This quality of the writer was given to draw from us a proportionable respect, and make us receive the history with the reverence which is its due. The Prophets were the Jewish historians; therefore to the historical books, Joshua, Judges, I. II. Samuel, I. II. Kings, they give the title of הָנֵא הָנֵא the former Prophets; as they give the title of הָנֵא הָנֵא the latter Prophets, to Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c.

The Book of Psalms, was composed by several authors, but chiefly by king David. Moses composed the xeth Psalm, when God had shortened the lives of the Israelites in the wilderness, as a punishment for their unbelief. The cxvith Psalm was indited soon after their transportation to the land of Babylon, and captivity there, and the cxvith upon their return out of it. Others were made upon other occasions; as may be seen in their titles, (although those are not supposed to be of the same authority with the text) or collected from the sense and scope of the Psalm. For which Bp. Patrick's Paraphrase may be consulted.

The Book of Psalms is divided into five parts. The first reaches to the end of the xlvth Psalm; the second, to the end of the lxxiiid Psalm; the third, to the end of the lxxxixth; the fourth, to the end of the cvith; and the fifth part, to the end of the whole.

It is a collection of divine odes, sublime and elegant, far beyond all human compositions; containing of the loftiest celebrations of the Divine Praise, the most lively and fervent devotions of meditation, thanksgiving, prayer and supplication, faith, hope, and trust in God in every condition, and the most excellent instructions in every branch of piety and virtue. And the frequent reading of it hath a strong tendency to establish in our minds the principles of true wisdom, even every right disposition towards God and man; and that purity of heart, and serenity of mind, which is a fund of comfort and joy in the ways of God, and will animate us to walk in them with steadiness and delight.

Moses was the first that composed sacred hymns, that we read of, Exod. xv. Deborah the next, Judg. v. and then Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. But David, an admirable artist in music, (1 Sam. xvi. 18. Amos vi. 5.) carried divine poetry and psalmody to its perfection; and therefore is called the sweet Psalmist of I. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. He, doubtless by Divine Authority, appointed the singing of psalms by a select company of skillful persons, in the solemn worship of the tabernacle, 1 Chron. vi. 31. xvi. 4—8. which Solomon continued in the temple, 2 Chron. v. 12, 13. And so did Ezra, as soon as the foundation of the second temple was laid, Ezra iii. 10, 11. Hence the people became well acquainted with the songs of Zion; and having committed them to memory, were famous
famous for melodious singing among the neighbouring countries. Psal. cxxxvii. 3. And the continuance of this branch of divine worship is confirmed by the practice of our Lord, and the instructions of the Apostle. Mat. xxvi. 30. Mark xiv. 26. Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. See also Rev. v. 9. xiv. 1, 2, 3: Psalm-singing is a part of Christian worship, which ought to be supported, encouraged, and performed in the most skilful and harmonious manner.

These are the books that were written before the founding of Solomon's Temple.

**CHAP. XXXI.**

*From the Founding of Solomon's Temple, till the Destruction of it by Nebuchadnezzar, 423 Years.*

**Rules for calculating and adjusting the Chronology of this Period.**

The Chronology is here carried on by the sacred Historians in a double series of succeeding kings; one in the kingdom of Judah, the other in the kingdom of Israel; the year of the reign of every king of Judah being mentioned, in which any king of Israel began his reign; and vice versa. Therefore,

I. To be able to form a true judgment of the Chronology, it is necessary that we draw up two columns, one of the kings of Judah, and the other of the kings of Israel, in such manner, that the years of their several reigns may be set exactly over-against each other; together with the texts which prove the order of succession, and the years of the several reigns. Thus the two columns will be a check upon each other; and the general rule will be,

II. So to adjust the corresponding numbers of years in both the columns, as that they may be reduced to a consistency. Otherwise, the calculation cannot be just and true. Here lies the difficulty; and in order to surmount it some allowance must be made. As,

III. That Successors may be supposed sometimes to reign with their fathers, when the consistency of the two lists of kings cannot otherwise be made out. Thus it is certain, that Solomon was anointed king by order of his father David. 1 Kings i. 34. And Jehoram did begin to reign while his father Jehoshaphat was alive. 2 Kings viii. 16.

IV. The years of reigns is delivered in full sums, without taking notice of the odd parts of a year, either at the beginning, or at the end of a reign. Therefore, to bring the two lists to an agreement, it may reasonably be supposed, that, for instance, 12 years (or the 12th year) are put down, when only eleven complete years are intended. So 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10, it is said, that Salmaneser laid siege to Samaria in the fourth year
year of Hezekiah's reign, and, after a siege of three years, took it in the sixth year of Hezekiah. Hence it appears, that the three years of the siege are not to be understood of three full years, but only of two such years; the siege beginning in the middle, suppose, of Hezekiah's fourth year, continuing the whole fifth year, and ending in some part of the sixth year. It is therefore plain that, according to the style of the sacred historians, one whole year and two parts of two years, one before, and another after that year, may be called three years.

V. In a turbulent state of things, an inter-regnum may be allowed, where consistency cannot be preferred without it.

VI. To find the year before Christ, (or before A. D.) in which any reign began, subtract the years of the preceding reign from that year before A. D. in which the preceding reign began. To find the year of the world, (or A. M.) subtract the year before A. D. from 4004, which is the A. M. in which our Lord was born, according to Archbishop Usher, who is generally followed by ourChronologers. Further, from 4714, the year of the Julian Period, corresponding to A. M. 4004, subtract the year before A. D. and it will give the year of the Julian Period. E. g. To know what year before A. D. Jehoshaphat began to reign, subtract 41, the years of his father Asa's reign, from the year before A. D. 955, when Asa began to reign, and the remainder will give 914, the year before A. D. when Jehoshaphat began to reign. Subtract the year 914 from 4004, and it will give 3090, the A. M. of the same event. Subtract 914 from 4714, and it will give 3800, the year of the Julian Period when Jehoshaphat began to reign.
From the Founding of Solomon's Temple till the Destruction of it by Nebuchadnezzar, 423 Years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs. bef.</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Kings of Judah</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Kings of Israel</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Yrs. bef. A.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>SOLOMON (a)</td>
<td>1 Kin. vi. 37, 38.</td>
<td>JEREBOAM I.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>975</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>REHOBOAM</td>
<td>xiv. 20, 21.</td>
<td>18. (b)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>958</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ABIJAM</td>
<td>xv. 2, 1.</td>
<td>20.</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>955</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>ASA</td>
<td>xv. 10, 9.</td>
<td>NADAB (c)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>953</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>955.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>952</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BAAasha (d)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>929</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ELAH (e)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>928</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ZIMRi</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>928</td>
<td>27(f)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OMRI (g)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Solomon laid the foundation of the Temple in the 4th year of his reign; and after that year he reigned 36 years.
(b) 17th complete.
(c) Nadab reigned two parts of 2 years, which together made 1 year.
(d) The latter part of Baasha's first year is laid to Nadab's second year.
(e) Part of 2 years, or 1 complete.
(f) To preserve a consistency with the Chronology of the kings of Israel, we must suppose, that Omri reigned with Tibni 4 years, 1 Kings xvi. 21, 22, beginning in the 27th year of Asa: that after Tibni's death he reigned alone 8 years, or 7 complete, beginning at the 31st year of Asa. For the text, 1 Kings xvi. 22, 23. may be read—so Tibni died, and Omri reigned alone in the 31st year of Asa king of Judah. Omri reigned in all twelve years: in Tirzah he reigned six years.
(g) Eleven years complete. When it is said that he reigned twelve years, part of a year is counted for a whole year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs. left.</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Kings of Judah</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Kings of Israel</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Yrs. bef. A. D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. D.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>917</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>JEHOSAPHAT</td>
<td>1 Kin. xvi. 29.</td>
<td>Ahab (b)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>914</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xxii. 42, 41.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>910</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xvii. 1.</td>
<td>[Elijah (k)]</td>
<td></td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>904</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xxii. 51.</td>
<td>AHAZIAH (m)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>897</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>JEHORAM (o)</td>
<td>2 Kin. iii. 1.</td>
<td>JEHORAM (n)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>896</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>AHAZIAH</td>
<td>i. 17. ii. 1.</td>
<td>Elijah translated; Elia succeeds him.]</td>
<td>896</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>889</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>JEHORAM (o)</td>
<td>viii. 16.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>885</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ATHALIAH</td>
<td>viii. 26, 25.</td>
<td>JEHU</td>
<td>12 (p)</td>
<td>884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>878</td>
<td>22 (s)</td>
<td>JOSIAH (q)</td>
<td>xi. 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>870</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Hesiod and Homer *]</td>
<td>x. 36.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>856</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 1.</td>
<td>JEHOAHAZ</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Ahab reigned but twenty years complete. See the corresponding part of the opposite column.

(i) This was the third year complete.

(l) According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.

(n) Or Joram, he reigned eleven years complete.

(p) Eleven years complete.

(r) The sixth year complete.

(s) Twenty-second complete.

(k) About this time Elijah, the Prophet, appeared.

(m) Ahab reigned one year with his father, and one year alone.

(p) Or Joram. It is supposed he reigned four years with his father.

(q) Or Jehoiab.

* According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
From the Founding of Solomon's Temple^&V.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs. bef. A. D.</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Kings of Judah</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Kings of Israel</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Yrs. bef. A. D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>839</td>
<td>37 (i)</td>
<td>2 Kin. xiii. 10.</td>
<td>JEHOASH (u)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>839</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>839</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>AMAZIAH</td>
<td>xiii. 14.</td>
<td>[Elisha died.]</td>
<td>839</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>825</td>
<td>15 (y)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>JEROBOAM II.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>812</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Jonah (z)]</td>
<td>812</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>810</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>AZARIAH</td>
<td>xiv. 23.</td>
<td></td>
<td>27 (b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>[Joel prophesied.]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(i) The thirty-seventh of Joash of Judah is the year in which Joash of Israel began to reign with his father; with whom he is supposed to reign two years. But those two years are not taken into the account, which must be reckoned from the fortieth, or thirty-ninth year complete, when Joash of Israel reigned alone.

(u) Or Joash. He reigned two years with his father, in all sixteen years.

(x) Those two years he reigned with his father; and therefore they are not taken in.

(y) Fourteen years complete.

(z) Jonah, in his younger days, perhaps about twenty-eight, might begin to prophesy about this time.

(a) Or Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. I. Hái. 1. vi. 1. Amos 1.

(b) Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years, namely, fourteen years before Jereboam II. began to reign, and fifteen years after he began to reign. How then could his son Azariah, or Uzziah, succeed him in the twenty-seventh year of Jereboam II, when Jereboam had reigned but fifteen years when Amaziah died? Ans. If Azariah was sixteen, in the twenty-seventh of Jereboam (2 Kings xv. 2), then he was born in the eleventh year of Jereboam; and so was but a minor of four years old in the fifteenth of Jereboam, when his father Amaziah died. It may therefore be supposed, that he was not inaugurated, or crowned king, till twelve years after, when he was sixteen years of age, in the twenty-seventh of Jereboam: the government, in the mean while, being in the hands of a regency. But to preserve the truth of the Chronology, the twelve years of his minority are included in the fifty-two years which he is said to have reigned; which twelve years are to be deducted out of the twenty-seven of Jereboam's reign; and so he will be considered as succeeding his father in the fifteenth year of Jereboam. Thus all will stand right. As the regency governed and tutored the young king exceeding well, the people were in no haste to have him crowned.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs. bef. A. D.</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Kings of Judah</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Kings of Israel</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Yrs. bef. A. D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>784</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>773</td>
<td>38 (c)</td>
<td>2 Kin. xv. 8.</td>
<td></td>
<td>ZECHARIAH</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>772</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>xiv. 13.</td>
<td></td>
<td>SHALLUM</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>772</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>xiv. 17.</td>
<td></td>
<td>MENAHEM</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>761</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>xiv. 23.</td>
<td></td>
<td>PEKAIAH</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>759</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>xiv. 27.</td>
<td></td>
<td>PEKAH</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>758 (f)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>JOTHAM</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Kin. xv. 33, 32.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>753</td>
<td>[Micah prophesied]</td>
<td>Micah i. i.]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>742</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>AHAZ</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Kin. xvi. 2, 1.</td>
<td>17 (g)</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Thirty-seven complete.

(d) About this time Jonah, advanced in years, might prophesy against Nineveh, in the reign of Pul, who soon after invaded the land of Israel, 2 Kings xv. 19; but it doth not appear, that he had any design to conquer it.

(e) About this time Isaiah began to prophesy, Isai. i. i. and, it is supposed, continued to the latter end of Hezekiah's reign.

(f) This number is found by subtracting 52, the years of Azariah or Uzziiah's reign, from 810, which is the year before Christ when he began to reign.

(g) Sixteen complete.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs. bef.</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Kings of Judah</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Kings of Israel</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Yrs. bef.</th>
<th>A.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>740</td>
<td></td>
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<td>738</td>
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<td>720</td>
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<td>677</td>
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<td>643</td>
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<tr>
<td>628</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Twenty-eight complete:  

(i) Five complete.  

(a) King Hoshea and his people, the ten tribes, were now carried into Assyria by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who dwelt at Nineveh.  

* See page 144 in the note.  

(l) In this year Jeremiah began, and continued till the eleventh year of Zedekiah, Jer. i. 2, 3. Habakkuk and Zephaniah were probably cotemporaries with Jeremiah. See Dr Prideaux's Connect. at the year before A.D. 609.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs. bef. A. D.</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Kings of Judea</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Kings of Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>JEHOAHAZ</td>
<td>2 Kin. xxiii. 31.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>JEHOIAKIM</td>
<td>xxiii. 36.</td>
<td>I. Captivity of Judea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>606</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Daniel carried to Babylon. (o)]</td>
<td>Dan. i. 1, 6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>603</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream.</td>
<td>ii. 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>JEHOIACHIN</td>
<td>2 Kin. xxiv. 8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Mordecai and Ezekiel captives.</td>
<td>Esh. ii. 5, 6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599</td>
<td></td>
<td>ZEDEKIAH</td>
<td>2 Kin. xxiv. 18.</td>
<td>II. Captivity of Judea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>595</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Ezekiel had his first vision.</td>
<td>Ezek. i. 1, 2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>588</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Temple was demolished</td>
<td>2 Kin. xxv. 2, 9.</td>
<td>III. Captivity of Judea, and of the remains of Israel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>587</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obadiah prophesied against the Edomites, who cruelly assisted in the destruction of Jerusalem.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>569</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar distracted for 7 years together.</td>
<td>Dan. iv.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>555</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel had his vision of the 4 empires.</td>
<td>Dan. vii.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(m) Or Shallum.
(n) Or Eliakim, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4.
(o) Hence began the seventy years captivity, foretold by Jeremiah, chap. xxv. 1, 12. xxix. 10. Dan. ix. 2.
Ch. XXXI. From the Founding of Solomon’s Temple, &c. 133

538. He interpreted the hand-writing on the wall, Dan. v. 25, and was cast into the lion’s den, Dan. vi.

539. Cyrus restores the Jews, and puts an end to their 70 years captivity. Ezra i. 1. See the year before A. D. 606.

Jews begin to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. The Samaritans obstruct them. Ezra iii. 5, &c. iv. 1.

540. Haggai and Zechariah prophesy. Dan. x. 11, 12.

541. The Temple rebuilt and dedicated. Ezr. vi. 15, 16.

542. Almodar, alias Antiochus, divorces Valeria, and afterwards marries Elisha. Esth. i. 1, &c. See Dr. Prideaux’s

543. Ezra lent to be governor of Judaea by Artaxerxes. Ezr. vii.


546. Simon the Just, high priest of the Jews.
C H A P. XXXII.

The moral Causes of the Babylonish Captivity; and the Propriety of that Dispensation.

The whole Jewish nation, both Judah and Israel, had all along a strong and strange propensity to idolatry, even after the erecting of the temple, and the establishing of the worship of God there, in the most grand and solemn manner. They erected altars to strange gods, frequented high-places and groves consecrated to idolatrous worship, and furnished them with idols and images for that purpose. 2 Chron. xiv. 3.

1 Kings xv. 11, 12, 13. And their morals were just as corrupt as their religion, even to the degree of sodomy itself. 1 Kings xv. 12.

What their peculiar temptations were, we know not. All the endeavours of good kings, and all the preaching of holy Prophets, sent by special commission from God, were ineffectual to produce a reformation. The pious king Hezekiah was zealous and active in rooting out idolatry: but Manasseh, his son and successor, restored it again in the highest and most flagitious degree of profaneness and iniquity, even beyond that of the dark and ignorant nations. 2 Kings xxii. 1—10. He built up again the high-places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed, &c. He was also a grievous persecutor of all that would not conform to his idolatrous establishments, and shed innocent blood very much. Amon, his son, followed his bad example. Josiah, his grandson, vigorously attempted a reformation. 2 Kings xxiii. 24, 25. But the people never came heartily into it. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, &c.

All the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that escaped from the sword, carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.

Observe—This dreadful calamity came upon them gradually. First, good king Josiah was, in judgment upon the land, slain in battle by Pharaoh-Necho, 2 Kings xxiii. 29. who put Jeboahaz that succeeded him into chains, sent him prisoner into Egypt, and put the land of Judah under a heavy
heavy tribute. 2 Kings xxiii. 33. Jehoiakim succeeded, a wicked prince like his predecessors. In his third year, Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, and carried away part of the vessels of the house of God, and many of the people into captivity. Particularly, he gave order to Adonias the master of his eunuchs, that he should make choice out of the children of the royal family, and of the nobility of the land, such as he found to be of the fairest countenance, and the quickest parts, to be carried to Babylon, and there made eunuchs in his palace, Daniel i. 1—4. whereby was fulfilled Isaiah's prediction above an hundred years before. Isaiah xxxix. 7. Among these youths were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Dan. i. 6, 7. Moreover the king was made a tributary, and the whole land reduced into vassalage under the Babylonians. A severe visitation, but had not the proper effect upon Jehoiakim, the next king, who was as corrupt as his father. 2 Kings xxiv. 8, 9. He had been but three months on the throne, when Nebuchadnezzar again besieged and took Jerusalem, with the king and all the royal family; all the most valuable things in the temple, and in the king's treasures, with all the mighty men of valour, all the craftsmen and smiths, he took away, leaving none in the land but the poorest. 2 Kings xxiv. 12, 13, 14. Among the rest, Ezekiel (chap. i. 1, 2.) and Mordecai (Esth. ii. 5, 6.) were now carried captives. Yet still there was no amendment of the religion or morals of the nation. Zedekiah, the next and last king, was as bad as his predecessors. 2 Kin. xxiv. 18, 19. And in about eleven years, Nebuchadnezzar, after a long and close siege, took Jerusalem, brake down its walls, burnt the city and temple, carried away all the sacred utensils, and all the people, except a few of the very poorest to till the ground, and reduced the whole land of Judea, in a manner, to utter desolation for the sins thereof.

The propriety of this dispensation will appear, if we reflect,

I. That the lenity of God appeared in bringing this terrible overthrow upon them so gradually, after a succession of judgments from less to greater, for the space of twenty-two years; which should have been a warning to them, and by experience have convinced them, that the threatenings denounced by the Prophets would certainly be executed.

II. That it was a just punishment of their sins; particularly of their idolatry, whereby they forsook God, and therefore God justly forsook them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, as Moses had foretold. Lev. xxvi. 30—36.

III. This dreadful calamity was the most effectual means to work their reformation, which was the end proposed by the Divine Wisdom. Now, in their captive, disconsolate state, they had time, and their calamities had a natural tendency to give them a disposition, to reflect upon the long series of iniquity and perverseness which had brought them under the heaviest of God's judgments. Now their own wickedness corrected them, and their backslidings reproved them; now they must know and fear, that it was an evil thing and bitter, that they had forsaken the Lord their God, and that his fear had not been in them. Isaiah ii. 19. In the land of their Captivity the sermons of the Prophets, declaiming with the highest authority against their profane and vicious practices, would be still sounding in their ears, and their abject, wretched condition, the consequence of such
such practices, would sink them deep into their hearts, and surely give them an utter detestation of what they very well knew was the cause of all their grievous sufferings.

They had suffered themselves to be shamefully infatuated by their false prophets, who had prophesied to them in Baal, as the most infallible oracle. Jer. ii. 8. They were prophets of the deceit of their hearts, xxiii. 26. They had encouraged a rabble of diviners, dreamers, enchanters, and forseers, who had most impudently imposed upon their credulity, affuring them, in the name of the Lord too, that they should not serve the king of Babylon, Jer. xxvii. 9; xxviii. 4, xxix. 8, 9; that he should not come against them, nor against the land, xxxvii. 19. They believed the Lord, and said, it is not He, neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine, Jer. v. 12. but I will give you assured peace in this place. xiv. 13. Thus they caused the people to err; and their kings, princes, and priests, concurred to strengthen the delusion. Jer. ii. 26. v. 31. xxxii. 32. By the way, these prophets and priests were men of very wicked lives. Zeph. iii. 4. Jer. xxxiii. 11. They committed adultery, walked in lies, strengthened the bands of evil doers, and prevented their returning from wickedness, Jer. xxxiii. 14; they persecuted and murdered the just, in the midst of Jerusalem. Lam. iv. 13. From them profaneness went forth into all the land, Jer. xxxiii. 15. which by their means was become full of adulterers, and mourned because of swearing, verse 10. See a more particular description of the wickedness of the land, Ezek. xxii. 6–13.

But now, where were all their false prophets, with all their bold pretensions, and flattering promises? The delusion is now quite at an end, and they find themselves most miserably deceived. Their eyes are opened, and they are thoroughly convinced they were a set of the vilest impostors, who had deluded them into the most wretched circumstances. The prophets were now become void, Jer. v. 13. an everlasting reproach, a perpetual shame, which could not be forgotten, xxiii. 40. And in proportion as these deceivers were detested, the true Prophets, who would have drawn them to just regards of God and his holy law, would be esteemed and honoured.

Doubtless the lying prophets and priests had filled their heads with specious pretences for their idolatrous practices; and assured them, they were still the beloved people of God, invested in all the distinguishing privileges of his church and peculiar people, and secure under his protection; with great ostentation and confidence crying out, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these [men or buildings] Jer. vii. 4. But now they found all their sophistry to be lying words, and could no longer take assurance from their peculiar privileges, or their magnificent temple, when their temple and city were both destroyed, and themselves cast out into an heathen land, where they were so long, and so shamefully stripped of all their peculiar honours. In short, no method could have been devised more proper to give this people a fixed detestation of idolatry, and the vile arts by which they were reduced into it. And it had this effect. They never more fell into idolatry, but retain the greatest abhorrence of it unto this day.

IV. The law of God, written by Moses, as the rule of their conduct in all affairs civil and religious, and the ground of their happiness, they had
of the Babylonish Captivity.

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so far neglected, that once it was almost unknown and lost among them. 2 Kings xxii. 8—12. This contempt of the divine law, the Prophets had frequently and strongly protested against, (Isai. v. 24. xxx. 9. Jer. vi. 19. viii. 8. ix. 13. Hos. viii. 12. Amos ii. 4. and in other places) and publicly declared that it would be their ruin. And in their ruined state, this must be remembered, as the primary reason of all their sufferings; and they must be thoroughly sensible, that a due regard to the law of God, was the only way to recover his favour, and their own prosperity; and accordingly must be disposed to be attentive to it. For Ezra, after the captivity, found so little difficulty in introducing the public reading of the law, that the people themselves called for it. Neh. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 18. xiii. 1. Ezra was a ready writer of the law of God, Ezra vii. 6, 10, 11, 12, and active in propagating the knowledge of it. Doubtless he wrote, or directed to be written, several copies of the law, to be dispersed into proper hands. And whereas before the Captivity they had no synagogues for public worship or instruction, nor any places to resort to for either, unleas the temple at Jerusalem, or the cities of the Levites, or to the Prophets, when God was pleased to send them; thus ignorance grew among the people; but after the Captivity synagogues were erected among them in every city, where the law was read every sabbath, and other acts of devotion performed. This was the most effectual method of preserving the knowledge of God and his law, and a fence of their duty. This was another good effect of this dispersion, and may justly be given as one good reason of their being so strongly fixed against idolatry, ever after the Babylonish Captivity.

V. This dispersion was also calculated to produce good effects among the nations whither they were carried into captivity. For wherever they were dispersed in the eastern countries, they would bring with them the knowledge of the true God, now seriously impressed upon their hearts. But Divine Providence, by such signal circumstances of his interposition, as were published and known over all the vast extent of the eastern empires, raised some of the captive Jews to the highest posts of dignity and power in the courts of Assyria and Persia. Dan. i. 19, 20. Insomuch that the most haughty monarchs openly confessed the living and true God, as the only and supreme God, Dan. ii. 47, 48, 49. iv. 34, &c. and made decrees, that were published throughout their spacious dominions, in favour of the profession and worship of him, Dan. iii. 29. vi. 25, &c. And the affairs of queen Esther and Moracles, and the decree of the emperor Artaxerxes, in favour of all the Jews in his empire, consisting of 127 provinces, must, not only give the Jews every where great distinction and honour, but also render the great God more known, and his religion more respectable; insomuch that many of the people of the land, many of the Persians, became Jews, or proselytes to the Jewish religion. Esther viii. 11, &c. And the great Cyrus was so well acquainted with the true God, that, as one of his first acts, after he was advanced to the empire of Persia, he made a decree for the return of the Jews into their own country, and for the rebuilding the temple. Ezra i. 1—5. From all this it is clear, that the Jews, notwithstanding their depravity in their own country, during the Captivity of 70 years, must have been a burning and a shining light all over the eastern countries. And thus, in
this dispensation also, God, the Father and Governor of mankind, was working for the reformation and improvement of the world, in that which is the true excellency of their nature, and the only foundation of their happiness.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Authors within the Period from the Building to the Destruction of the Temple.

Literature in this Period received a considerable advance; probably, by means of the schools of the Prophets.

Solomon was a great author, as he was endowed with an uncommon share of wisdom. For he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. But of all his works only three are taken into the Sacred Harion, namely, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and his Song.

PROVERBS.

This Book consisteth of the most useful rules for the right direction of life in religion and morals, and is the most authentic and excellent of the kind that can be produced in antiquity. It may be divided into five parts. I. In the first part the tutor gives his pupil admonitions, directions, cautions, and excitements to the study of wisdom. Chap. first to the tenth. II. The second contains the Proverbs of Solomon, properly so called, delivered in distinct, independent, general sentences. Chap. 10th to the 22d, ver. 17. III. The third part begins at chap. xxii. 17, where the tutor again addreth himself to his pupil, and gives him fresh admonitions to the diligent study of wisdom; which is followed by a set of instructions delivered in the imperative mood to the pupil, who is supposed all the while to be standing before him. Chap. xxii. 17. to chap. xxv. IV. The fourth part is distinguished by its being a collection of Solomon’s Proverbs, selected, we may suppose, out of a much greater number, by the men of Hezekiah; perhaps, by the Prophets Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, who all flourished in the days of Hezekiah, and not improbably assisted him in his pious endeavours to restore true religion. 2 Chron. xxxi. 20, 21. This part, as the second, consists chiefly of distinct, unconnected sentences, and reacheth from chap. xxv. to chap. xxx. V. The fifth part contains a set of wise observations and instructions, which Agur,
Agur, the son of Jakeb, delivered to his pupils, Ithiel and Ucal, chap. xxx. And the xxxi. chapter contains the precepts which his mother, possibly a Jewish woman married to some neighbouring prince, delivered to Lemuel, her son; being passionately solicitous to guard him against vice, to establish him in the principles of justice, and to have him married to a wife of the best qualities. These two chapters are a kind of appendix to the Book of Proverbs. Note—It is uncertain who Agur and the mother of Lemuel were.

ECCLESIASTES.

This Book was written by the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem, chap. i. 1; that is to say, by Solomon, (probably in the latter part of his life) as appears from chap. i. 16. ii. 4, &c. The subject of it is, an inquiry into the chief good or happiness of man, in this world. And,

I. He confutes the false opinion of those that place happiness in human wifdom, or philosophy; in the pleasures, amusements, or splendor of life; in honour, magnificacy, and dominion; in riches or wealth. This, in the six first chapters. II. He teaches, that true felicity is to be found only in a serious regard to God and religion, in the six last chapters. In both parts he intermixes several incidental reflections, which are of use to make us wise and pious. The whole is adapted to draw us from the inordinate pursuit of earthly things, and from a wrong to a lawful use of them, without any offence to God, or damage to ourselves, till we arrive at a never-dying felicity.

The SONG of SOLOMON.

The Song of Songs, or the most excellent Song, was composed by Solomon; and is a noble epithalaeion, or marriage song, of the pastoral kind, embellished with the most grand and beautiful images. In the letter it is allowed to be a celebration of the marriage of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter; but the Jewish rabbies, and many of the Christian fathers, have understood it as a spiritual allegory, representing the love of God, or, as Christians say, of Christ, to his church; which, in other parts of Scripture, is represented as his spouse, Psalm xlv. 10, &c. Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, &c. Ver. 13. The king's daughter is all glorious within, &c. Which Psalm David is supposed to have made upon the same occasion, namely, at Solomon's marriage; wherein, as the bridegroom is justly supposed to be Christ, ver. 3—8, so his bride may well be supposed to be the church. John Baptist compares Christ to a bridegroom, John iii. 28, 29; and so doth our Lord himself, Matt. ix. 15. xxv. 1. and the kingdom of heaven he compares to a sumptuous marriage feast, Matt. xxii. 2. So also Rev. xix. 7. xxi. 2. the marriage of the Lamb to his bride, or wife, clothed in fine linen, (which doubtless represents the Christian church in a state of purity) is spoken of. And St. Paul, in strong terms, such as Adam used when he was married
ried to Eve, represents Christ as a husband to the church. Ephes. v. 25, &c. And so also, 2 Cor. xi. 2. I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. And frequently in the Prophets God is set forth as the husband or bridegroom to the church. Isai. liv. 5. lxii. 10. lxvii. 4, 5. Jer. iii. 19. xxxi. 32. Hos. ii. 2, 7, 16, 19. Hence, apostacy from God is very commonly represented as whoredom and adultery, both in the Old and New Testament.

All this is very just, and supplieth very instructive and comfortable meditation. And it is certainly the best use we can make of this elegant Song to apply it thus to spiritual purposes. But the ideas, which the Scripture gives us of God’s or Christ’s relation to the church, as a husband, are too general, to serve as a key to the great variety of particulars in this poem; which therefore, as it is never quoted in any other part of the Scripture, can be reduced to no certain rule of interpretation, but must be left to every person’s fancy or imagination. Bp. Patrick has done, perhaps, as much as can be done upon the spiritualizing scheme.

Within this Period were also written the Prophecies of Joel, Amos, Hosea, Jonah, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Obadiah. These before the Captivity. During the 70 years Captivity, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther. After the Captivity, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, I. and II. Chronicles. These complete the Canon of the Old Testament. And whereas it is of great use to the right understanding of the Prophets, to know the reigns and times in which they prophesied, and the particular occasions upon which any of them delivered their prophecies, I shall now attempt to digest and range them in chronological order, as follows.

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CHAP. XXXIV.

PROPHETS before the CAPTIVITY.

ABOUT twenty-six years after the death of Elisha, the Prophet, (2 Kings xiii. 20.) Jonah the son of Amittai, the Prophet, which was of Gath-hepher, was sent by God with a message of encouragement and success to Jeroboam II. king of Israel. 2 Kings xiv. 25. This might happen when Jonah was about 28 years of age.

JOEL i. ii. iii.

Joel at Jerusalem (Joel ii. 1, 15, 17.) might prophesy before Amos at Samaria, Amos i. i. iv. 1. For Amos, chap. iv. 7, 9, may refer to the devastation
devastation by palmer-worms, &c. and drought, which Joel predicted, chap. i. 6, 7, 19, 20. However, as the sense of this prophecy, in no part, that I know of, depends upon the time when it was delivered, there can be no harm in supposing that Joel prophesied about this time.

**AMOS i.—ix.**

Some time after Joel, Amos might begin to prophesy in the kingdom of Israel. Certainly he did prophesy in those days of Uzziah or Azariah king of Judah, and of Jeroboam II. king of Israel, in which they were contemporaries, chap. i. 1. How long he continued, is not intimated. He had no regular education in the schools of the Prophets, (which supposeth that other Prophets had) but was originally a herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit, or wild figs, chap. vii. 14. He had an express commission from God to prophesy unto his people Israel, ver. 15. This book may consist of several distinct discourses; but, as they are without date, we cannot assign the particular times when they were delivered.

**HOSEA i. ii. iii.**

Hosea is justly supposed to be contemporary with Amos. He prophesied against the ten tribes, or the kingdom of Israel, beginning in the reign of Jeroboam II. and prophesying in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. He predicted the Captivity of the ten tribes; and as that Captivity happened in the sixth year of Hezekiah, probably he lived to see it accomplished by Shalmaneser king of Assyria; which was done about 64 years after the commencement of his prophetic office.

This Prophet is commanded to take unto him a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms, chap. i. 2. This might all be tranacted in a vision, in the council of God. See the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Ezekiel. Or it might be a parable, to be spoken as such to the children of Israel. See Ezek. xxiv. 3, &c. Here that is ordered to be done as a fact, which was only to be spoken as a parable. But if the Prophet did really marry a lewd woman, who had children, not by him, but by some other man, this was no sin in him, who did it by Divine Command, in order to explain to the Israelites their wickedness, and the punishment of it. The adulterous wife represented the Israelites, who by their idolatries had gone a whoring from God, their own Husband. The children which this woman bare, are the ruinous effects of the idolatry of the children of Israel. The first bastard was called Jezreel; and denoted the vengeance which God would take upon the house of Jehu, for the blood which he shed in Jezreel, chap. i. 4. The second was called Lo-ruhamah, ver. 6. to denote that God would no longer spare the house of Israel, but take them quite away out of their land. The name of the third was Lo-ammi, ver. 9. which signified that the relation between God and the Israelites was dissolved.

**HOSEA iv.**
HOSEA iv.

The interregnum in Israel, preceding the reign of Zechariah, was doubtless a time of very great disorder and violence, and of much bloody strife for the crown. Probably, Zechariah gained it by cutting off competitors. Shallum slew him, Menahem slew Shallum, and all within the space of seven months. To this sad state of things Hosea may well be supposed to refer, chap. iv. 2. By swearing and lying, and killing and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth [reacheth unto] blood. Here, therefore, we may place the fourth chapter of Hosea.

JONAH i, ii, iii, iv.

Jonah, I suppose, about the second year of Menahem, king of Israel, and about the 70th year of his age, was sent to cry against Nineveh, about 700 miles from Gath-hepher, then a great, wealthy, populous and haughty city, the chief seat of the Assyrian empire, and the mistress of the world; which had long been remarkable for luxury and jollity to a proverb, καλοὶ ἡσσυριαν, better than merry Nineveh. By Zephaniah it is called, the rejoicing, or joyous, city, chap. ii. 15. To be sent with a message of divine wrath to such a place as this, could not but seem a frightful and dangerous errand to Jonah. He saw how much the Israelites, God's own people, hated and persecuted the Prophets, who reproved and threatened them. What then could he expect from that great and wicked city, Nineveh, the head-quarters of pride and sin? Further, he knew the Prophets very much hazarded their reputation in the world, when employed in denouncing judgments; because God, being gracious, was flow in executing them. On this account, the Prophets at Bethel and Jerusalem were vilely abused and decried by iniolent and rude infidels, who durst even profess to deport, or long for, the day of the Lord, (Amos v. 18.) in a confident persuasion that it would never come; and dared to challenge God to hasten his work. Isai. v. 19. See also Jer. xvii. 15. Ezekiel xii. 22. And if this should be Jonah's case at Nineveh, what could he expect but to be torn in pieces for an impostor? How must he, and the religion he professed, be exposed to public contempt and scorn! This was what he particularly dreaded, chap. iv. 2. He was therefore resolved to flee from the presence of [from before] Jehovah; that is, I suppose, to run away from the Council of God in the land of Israel, to some remote country beyond sea*, where, he thought, it was never held. But he was stopped by a miracle, and at length obliged to deliver the doleful message, Yet forty days and impenitent Nineveh shall be overthrown. Convinced of his miraculous mission, § the king proclaimed a fast,

* Note—Tarshish may signify any remote country beyond sea, as the Indies now with us. See Root 1827. in the Eng. Heb. Concordance.

Isaiah, the brightest luminary of the Jewish church, justly called the evangelical Prophet, he speaks so much and so clearly of Christ, began to prophesy in the year king Uzziah died, chap. vi. i. and prophesied in Judah in the successive reigns of Jotham, Abaz, and Hezekiah. He was certainly alive and prophesied when Merodachbaladen sent his embassy to Hezekiah, who had been sick, in the 14th year of Hezekiah, and before Christ 714. Thus we certainly know that he prophesied 46 years. There is an ancient and probable tradition among the Jews, that he suffered martyrdom under Manasseh, in the first year of his reign, before Christ 698, by being cruelly fawn asunder; to which the Apostle, Heb. xi. 37, is generally thought to have respect. And then he must have continued 61 years. See Pierce upon Heb. xi. 37.

The first chapter, by reason of the grand exordium, might be judged proper to stand at the front of the book; but it gives such an account of the distressful, defolate condition of the land of Judah, as agrees much better with the wicked and afflicted reign of the apostate Abaz, than with the flourishing circumstances of the country in the reigns of Uzziah, and of his son and successor Jotham, who were both, in the main, good princes. Compare 2 Chron. xxvi. i—16, and the whole 27th chapter. But the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters of this prophecy, do describe, and exactly correspond to, a state
of national wealth and prosperity, which are usually attended with pride, arrogance, and luxury. See chap. ii. 6—18. iii. 16—25. v. 8, 11, 12.

Therefore, I take this to be the order of those chapters. In the sixth chapter, and in the year before Christ 759, the Prophet, in the council of God, received his commission; and soon after delivered the contents of the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters. And these chapters contain all that remains of his prophecies in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, for about the space of 16 years, till the first year of king Ahaz.

MICAH i, ii.

These two chapters were delivered before the destruction of Samaria, which is here predicted, chap. i. 6. in the reign of Jotham, chap. i. 1. and therefore may be rightly placed about this time.

ISAIAH vii.

In the first year of Ahaz king of Judah, Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, formed a design of dethroning Ahaz, and of extirpating the family of David, by setting up the son of Tabeal, some potent, factious Jew, to be king of Judah; and therefore, having no design upon the nation, but only upon the royal family, marched directly to Jerusalem, and laid close siege to it. But as it was the will of God, not to extirpate the family of David, but only to punish wicked Ahaz, he sent Isaiah to encourage him to make a vigorous defence, and to allure him they should not prevail against him, and that the house of David should subsist till the Messiah was born. Then was the prophecy delivered to Ahaz contained in the seventh chapter of Isaiah*.

ISAIAH viii, ix, x. to the fifth Verse.

Ahaz, a wicked idolator, paid little regard to what Isaiah had spoken to him in the name of the Lord. Therefore God ordered Isaiah to take a large

* Isai. vii. 8. Within 65 years Ephraim shall be broken, that it be not a people. This was predicted in the first year of Ahaz. Ahaz reigned 16 years; and in the sixth year of his successor, Hezekiah, Shalmaneser took Samaria, and carried away Israel [Ephraim] unto Assyria. This makes but 16 and 5, or 21 years. How then shall we make out 65 years? This has very much puzzled the critics. But observe, probably Israel, or Ephraim, was carried into captivity by the Assyrians three times. I. By Tiglath-Pileser, 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 Kings xv. 29. II. By his son Shalmaneser, 2 Kings xvii. 6, xviii. 10. 11. Thus Ephraim was no more a kingdom. III. Probably by Esarhaddon, who finally carried away all the remains of the people; which is implied in his bringing new inhabitants from Babylon, Cuthah, &c. 2 Kings xvii. 24. Ezra iv. 2. Thus Ephraim was no more a people. This happened in the 22d year of Manasseb, 65 years from the first of Ahaz. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad an. 677.
a large roll of parchment, and therein, with the pen of a man, i. e. in the common and most legible way of writing, to put down and publish, what God should further discover about the present deliverance and future calamities of Judah. The roll was to be a comment upon the name of a lion which was then born to the Prophet, and by Divine Protection was called Maher-sha-lal-hash-baz, i. e. make speed to the spoil, and hasten to the prey; denoting the speedy destruction of the two confederate kings of Samaria and Damascus. This roll, I suppose, takes in the eighth and ninth chapters of Isaiah, and the five first verses of the 10th chapter.

ISAIAH xvii.

This chapter relates to the same subject, the destruction of Israel and Damascus; and therefore, I judge, it was delivered in the same year, after the roll was finished. For in about two years after, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, took Damascus, and carried the people therein captive to Kir. 2 Kings xvi. 9.

ISAIAH i.

Pekah and Rezin failing in their attempt upon Jerusalem, (2 Kings xvi. 5. Isai. vii. 1.) the next year, 741, they returned with forces better appointed, and councils better concerted; and dividing themselves into three armies, one under Pekah, another under Rezin, and a third under Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, they fell upon the country in three different parts, making every where terrible havoc and slaughter, and carrying away a prodigious number of captives. See 2 Chron. xxviii. 5-9. And no sooner was the land freed from those enemies, but it was invaded by the Edomites, on the south, and the Philistines, on the west, who treated it with the same cruelty, slaying, plundering, and carrying away captives. 1 Chron. xxviii. 17, 18, 19. Thus was Judah grievously distressed all over the country, and brought exceeding low, which lately had been high in wealth and power, because they and their king had forsaken the Lord their God. And upon this occasion, most probably, Isaiah delivered the prophetic sermon contained in the first chapter, as it is very suitable to the state of the nation at that time.

ISAIAH xxviii.

This chapter, relating to the destruction of Ephraim, or the ten tribes, without any mention of Syria or Damascus, lieth between the destruction of Damascus, 740, and the captivity of the ten tribes, 721.

HOSEA v. vi.

Ahaz, greatly distressed by Pekah, Rezin, &c. called in Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, to his help, 2 Kings xvi. 7. 2 Chron. xxviii. 16. Vol. I.
And Menahem, king of Israel, about 30 years before that, had hired Pul, king of Assyria, to confirm the kingdom in his hand, 2 Kings xv. 19. though they reaped no benefit from them. These are the only times in which the kings of Judah and Israel applied to the Assyrian for assistance. And whereas Hosea, chap. v. 13. mentions both those applications, the fifth and sixth chapters must be taken in after Abaz had applied to Tiglath-pileser.

ISAIAH xiv. 28, &c.

The Philistines triumphed over Israel all the days of Abaz. But in the year Abaz died, Jotham delivered the burden, or message, relating to them, chap. xiv. 28, &c. which was fulfilled by Hezekiah, son and successor to Abaz. 2 Kings xviii. 8.

ISAIAH xv. xvi.

The Meabites had not used the Israelites well, who fled for shelter from the ravages of Pekah and Rezin. With this inhumanity they are ironically upbraided, Isai. xvi. 3, 4. But now they are told, the oppressor and spoiler were ceased, and the throne of Hezekiah should be established in mercy, and he should sit upon it in truth, &c. Therefore, this prophecy against Moab must have been delivered about the beginning (perhaps in the second year) of Hezekiah's reign. And Dr. Prideaux supposeth it was accomplished by Shalmaneser, three or four years after, when, as he thinks, Shalmaneser, previously to the siege of Samaria, subdued the Meabites, to prevent any incursions, or attacks, from that quarter.

HOShea vii—xiv.

The prophecies in these chapters were delivered (1.) after Ephraim, or the king of Israel, had called to Egypt for succour, chap. vii. 11, xii. 1. as Menahem had done before to Assyria. 2 Kings xv. 19. But the only time they applied to Egypt was, when king Hoshea, revolting from Shalmaneser, sent messengers to So king of Egypt. 2 Kings xviii. 4. Which occasioned Shalmaneser's besieging of Samaria, and carrying the ten tribes into captivity. And therefore these chapters might be delivered about three years before that event. (2.) These prophecies were delivered after the first year of Shalman, or Shalmaneser, who, according to Dr. Prideaux, began to reign in the year before Christ 728, or 729. For the Prophet Hoshea refers to the destruction of Beth-arbel by Shalman, chap. x. 14. And they were delivered before the taking of Samaria, which was in the 8th year of Shalmaneser, before Christ 721; for the Prophet evidently, in those chapters, supposeth, that Ephraim, or the ten tribes, were not yet carried into captivity. Therefore, they were delivered after the destruction of Beth-arbel, and before the captivity of the ten tribes, about the time above noted.
The last verse of the third chapter of Micah was uttered in the time of Hezekiah, Jer. xxvi. 18; and here may both that chapter, and all that follow it, be placed, as prophesied in some time of Hezekiah’s first 13 years, before Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem. For the Prophet seems to speak of that siege and Sennacherib’s blasphemy, chap. v. 1, 5. He speaketh glorious things of Christ and his kingdom, and nameth the very town where he should be born, chap. v. 2. In chapter iv. 1, 2, 3, he useth the very words of Isaiah, chap. ii. 5, 4, to express the conflux to the kingdom of Christ, his power in it, and the peace which, at length, it should give to the world.

NAHUM i, ii, iii.

After Shalmaneser, king of Nineveh, had taken Samaria, and carried the ten tribes captive, Nahum might predict the ruin of Nineveh, then the capital of the Assyrian empire.

ISAIAH xxiii.

Shalmaneser, having taken Samaria, turned his arms against the city of Tyre, which held out against him five years, and then was delivered from the siege by the death of Shalmaneser. By this success they were too much elated, and growing very insolent, this occasioned the prophecy against them in this chapter; which foretels the miserable overthrow of Tyre, which was effected by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. See Dr. Prideaux’s Con. An. 715, 720.

ISAIAH xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii.

These chapters may refer to the final desolation of Judæa and Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; but I can discover no marks of the time when they were delivered. However, with the threatenings he mixes many gracious promises and comforts. See Dr. Lightfoot.

ISAIAH xxxviii, xxxix.

In this year king Hezekiah fell sick, and the other affairs happened, which are recorded in this chapter: for 15 years are added to Hezekiah’s life, chap. xxxviii. 5, and as he reigned in all 29 years, this must have been the 14th year of his reign. And that it happened when the intentions of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, to attack Jerusalem were known, appears from Isaiah xxxviii. 6.
Prophets before the Captivity.

CH. XXXIV.

ISAIAH xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv.

Hezekiah, having refused to pay the annual tribute to the king of Assyria, towards the end of the 14th year, Sennacherib coming upon him with a numerous army, he made all manner of preparation for a vigorous defence. 2 Kings xviii. 13. 2 Chron. xxxii. Isaiah xxxvi. Particularly, he entered into an alliance with the king of Egypt and Ethiopia. 2 Kings xviii. 21. Isaiah xxxvi. 6. This was a measure displeasing to God, and therefore is protested against by his Prophet Isaiah in the xxxith and xxxiiith chapters. And at the same time all the other chapters, from the xxixth to the xxxvith chapter, especially those that have immediate reference to this invasion, might have been dictated to the Prophet by the spirit of God.

ISAIAH xxii. Verse 1 to 15.

As in this paragraph are manifest allusions to Sennacherib's invasion and Hezekiah's preparations for the defence of Jerusalem, (compare verse 9, 10, 11. 2 Chron. xxxii. 5, 30.) this prophetical admonition to the people, who depended too much upon these preparations, probably was delivered about this time. See Lowth's Comment on the place.

ISAIAH xxii.

The inhabitants of Kedar were the descendants of Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 13, and were one species of Arabians dwelling in Arabia Petraea. These were to be ruined within a year after this prophecy was given out. Most probably they were overthrown either by Sennacherib, as he went into, or returned out of Egypt; or by Tirbakhah king of Ethiopia, as he advanced out of Egypt against Sennacherib. 2 Kings xix. 9. And therefore, this prophecy may be placed at this time, or within a year or two of it.

ISAIAH xx.

Hezekiah, having treated with Sennacherib, and agreed to pay him a sum of money, 2 Kings xviii. 14, 15, 16, Sennacherib turned his arms against Egypt; which he greatly distressed for three years together, Isaiah xx. 3, 4. But first he sent Tartan, one of his generals, before him, to take Ashdod, the key to Egypt. At this time the prophecy against Egypt, in the xxth chapter of Isaiah, was delivered. Note—Sennacherib is, in ver. 1, called Sargon. Ver. 5. They, the Jews, shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.
These two chapters are also levelled against Egypt and Ethiopia, upon which the Jews relied too much; and therefore might be delivered about the same time.

It appears from chap. x. 8—12, which is a prophopoeia, or supposed speech of the king of Assyria, that this chapter was delivered after the taking of Samaria by Salmaneser, 721; and some time before Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem, 710, who was the only king of Assyria that besieged Jerusalem after the taking of Samaria. And the speech in this place bearing a near affinity to that of Sennacherib, 2 Kings xix. 10—14, Isaiah xxxvii. 10—14, it is probable that this, and the other chapters, to the 28th verse of the xivth chapter, were delivered about the time Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem. Note—In chapter x. 11. Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria, &c. Sennacherib speaks as king of Assyria, and so takes in what his father Shalmaneser had done, as if done by himself.

Sennacherib returning out of Egypt, where he had been 3 years, notwithstanding the agreement of peace which he made with Hezekiah, marched his army again into Judea, laid siege to Lachish, and from thence sent three of his generals with a proud and blasphemous message to Jerusalem, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 18. 2 Chron. xxxii. 9, &c. This event, with the circumstances which attended and followed it, are recorded in the xxxvith and xxxviiith chapters of Isaiah.

Note—Before Sennacherib laid siege to Jerusalem, Tirbukah, king of Ethiopia, advanced against him out of Egypt, 2 Kings xix. 9; but, as the Prophet Isaiah had predicted, did the Jews no service; for he was overthrown by Sennacherib, who after that returned to Jerusalem, where his army, being 185,000 men, were all miraculously destroyed in one night. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. at the year 710.

As there is no direction to lay these chapters, or any of them, in any particular time, they may all be allotted to the eleven last years of Hezekiah's prolonged life.
ISAI AH xxii. Ver. 15, to the end.

Shebna had been secretary to king Hezekiah, and the good and pious Eliakim, the master of his household, Isai. xxxvi. 3. 22. Shebna, by the question, chap. xxii. 16, seems to have been a foreigner, and not well affected to the Jewish religion. What hast thou to do here? and whom, what relations, hast thou here? It is possible this Shebna, a man of great abilities, might have got the young king Manasseb, but 12 years old, and the whole management of affairs, into his own hands; having routed Eliakim by such arts as courtiers are wont to practise. For he was now both treasurer, and master of the household. To this, perhaps, the wicked conduct of Manasseb may be assigned. Shebna, secure of the flability and continuance of his power and grandeur, was hewing out a magnificent sepulchre for himself and heirs, to perpetuate his memory to all succeeding times. On this occasion, Ifaiab might publish this prophecy, predicting Shebna's captivity and death, in a remote foreign country, and the future exaltation of good Eliakim. This, which would greatly exasperate Shebna, and might occasion Ifaiab's being put to a cruel death, [fawn afunder, Heb. xi. 37.] was fulfilled about twenty-two years after, when Shebna was taken captive with Manasseb by Esarhaddon. and carried to Babylon, where Shebna continued all his life. But Manasseb, upon his repentance, was restored to the throne of Judah. And then, probably, good Eliakim was restored and intrusted with the management of all his affairs, and assisted him in the great reformation he made in religion. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—17. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. Anno 677. Manasseb 22.

JEREMIAH i, ii.

In this year Jeremiab, in the council of God, received his prophetic commission, as in the first chapter. See also chap. xxv. 3. And in this year probably he published the admonitions, warnings, and threatenings, in the second chapter.

JEREMIAH xi. Verse 1——18.

The Prophet, ver. 2——9, most probably refers to the covenant which Josiah publicly made to keep God's commandments, upon finding the book of the law. 2 Kings xxii. 11. xxiii. 3. This was in the 18th year of king Josiah. 2 Kings xxii. 3.

JEREMIAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xii, &c. to the xxi.

These chapters, for any thing that appears to the contrary, do lie in regular order; nor have we any ground or intimation for transposing any of
of them. There is a date, chap. iii. 6. In the days of Josiah, without mentioning the year of his reign; which, however, shews, that that chapter was delivered in some part of his reign. And whereas a severe drought is frequently mentioned in several of these chapters, (viz. chap. iii. 3. v. 24, 25. viii. 13, 20. ix. 10, 12. xii. 4. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.) this shews, that they are to be laid together in the same year, or years, in which the drought continued; and all the rest, to the xxivth, may follow in order of time; and all might be delivered in the last years of king Josiah. Dr. Lightfoot.

JEREMIAH xi. Ver. 18, to the end.

In some part of the same years the men of Anathoth might conspire against Jeremiah.

HABAKKUK i, ii, iii. ZEPHANIAH i, ii, iii.

As these two Prophets prophesied the same things that Jeremiah did, and upon the same occasion, that is, destruction and delolation upon Judah and Jerusalem, because of the many heinous sins they were guilty of, they might prophesy about this time.

JEREMIAH xxii. Ver. 1—24.

Jeremiah being sent of God to the king's house, there proclaimed God's judgments against him and his family, contained in these verses of this chapter. This was soon after Jehoahaz, or Shallum, was carried captive into Egypt, by Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, who slew Josiah, ver. 10, 11. Weep not for the dead, Josiah, but weep sore for him that goeth away, Jehoahaz; for he shall return no more. Note—Jehoahaz reigned but three months.

JEREMIAH xxvi.

After that, the Prophet was ordered to go to the temple, and to denounce to all the people the judgments of God, if they did not repent. By this he was brought in danger of his life, through the resentment of the Priests and Prophets, ver. 7, 8; but was preserved by the princes, ver. 16.

JEREMIAH xxv.

In this chapter, and in the beginning of this year, Jeremiah prophesied of the coming of Nebuchadnezzar against Judah and Jerusalem.
JEREMIAH xxxv.

The Rechabites, upon Nebuchadnezzar's beginning to invade the land of Judea, retired out of the country to Jerusalem, where Jeremiah found them, in this chapter.

JEREMIAH xlvi.

In the same year, after Nebuchadnezzar had defeated the army of Pharaoh-necho, this prophecy relating to the Gentiles was delivered.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. Ver. 1—9.

In the same year God commanded Jeremiah to collect, and write in a roll, all the words of prophecy which had been spoken by him against Israel and Judah, and against the nations. Which he executed by the assistance of Baruch, his amanuensis; who, as Jeremiah was then under confinement, ver. 5. read the roll in the temple upon the fasting-day, i.e. the great day of atonement, being the 10th of the seventh month.

JEREMIAH xliv.

Baruch being very much affrighted at the threats contained in the roll, and probably uneasy under apprehensions of the danger he might incur by reading it publicly, Jeremiah, by the command of God, delivered to him the message of encouragement and comfort contained in this chapter.

DANIEL i.

Immediately after this, Nebuchadnezzar, who set out upon his expedition the year before, laid siege to Jerusalem, and took it; and bound Jehoiakim in fetters, with a design to carry him to Babylon. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. But upon Jehoiakim's submission, 2 Kings xxiv. 1, he did not carry him to Babylon, but restored him to the kingdom. Nevertheless, he carried great numbers of the people, and sons of the royal family, and of the nobility, captives, among the rest Daniel.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. Verse 9, to the end of the Chapter.

This year, after the Chaldeans were gone from Jerusalem, Jehoiakim and his people growing worse and worse, in the ninth month, at the fast, which was then proclaimed, on account of Nebuchadnezzar's having taken
taken the city the year before, Baruch again read the roll in the house of
the Lord, ver. 9, 80. Which coming to the king's ear, and part of the
roll being read to him, he, thinking perhaps that Nebuchadnezzar had
already executed the Divine threatenings, and nothing more was now to
be feared, and that the Prophet was a malicious, troublesome fellow,
burnt the roll, and commanded Jeremiah and Baruch to be apprehended.
But they could not be found, for the Lord hid them. Note—Jerem-
iyah was now at liberty.

D A N I E L ii.

In this year, which was the second of Nebuchadnezzar, according to
the Babylonish account, the 4th according to the Jewish, Daniel revealed
to Nebuchadnezzar his dream.


In this year this prophecy was declared against Jehoiachin, or Coniah,
who reigned but 3 months, and then, with many others, was carried
into captivity. 2 Kings xxiv. 11, &c. His uncle Zedekiah succeeded
him. 2 Kings xxiv. 17.


This chapter might be delivered at the same time with the foregoing
prophecy.


By the king and queen mentioned ver. 18, are probably meant Je-
hoiachin and his mother. See chap. xxii. 26. 2 Kings xxiv. 12. Thus,
this prophecy must have been delivered about the same time with the
foregoing.


After Jehoiachin or Jeconiah was carried into captivity by Nebuchad-
nezzar, this prophecy was delivered.

J E R E M I A H xlix. Verse 34, to the end.

In this year also is to be placed the prophecy against Elam, a kingdom
upon the river Ulai, eastward beyond the Tigris, in which stood Shusban,
afterward the metropolis of the kingdom of Persia.
About the second year of Zedekiah's reign, Jeremiah's letter, contained in this chapter, was sent to the captive Jews at Babylon; and an impious answer returned by Shemaiah.

These two chapters, which assure the captive Jews that they should not only return again to Judea, but also be the particular care of the Divine Providence to the end of the world, to shew the certainty of the encouraging contents, are ordered to be written in a book, chap. xxx. 2, about the same time with the foregoing letter, and probably were sent to the captive Jews in Babylon, whom they principally respected.

This chapter is to be placed in this year, (see chap. xxviii. i.) namely, after the departure of Nebuchadnezzar out of Judea and Syria, when the kings of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Zidonians, Tyrians, &c. sent an embassy to Zedekiah, proposing to him a league against the king of Babylon. Note—In the first verse, Jeboiakim is put for Zedekiah, [see ver. 3.] probably by a mistake of the transcriber, who might then have his eye upon the first verse of the foregoing chapter.

In this year the affair concerning Hananiah the false Prophet, related in this chapter, was transacted. Note—The first verse, according to the best commentators, should be read thus, When it had been so, [i.e. when I had continued prophesying with a yoke upon my shoulders from that year, which was] in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, until the fourth year, &c. See Gaf. Phil. sacra Lib. IV. Traet. I. Observ. V. Pag. 860, Nold. Concord. Nota 677, and Lowth upon the place.

These two chapters contain a book of prophecies which Jeremiah wrote, and sent to Babylon, by Seraiah, who was sent thither by Zedekiah, in the 4th year of his reign, chap. li. 59, &c. [when he went with, rather, from Zedekiah &c.] See Nold. Concord. under וְסָרֹא and סֵפֶר No. 1.
In the 5th year of Jeboiachin's captivity, which was also the 5th of Zedekiah's reign, Ezekiel, a captive priest in Chaldea, received his prophetic commission in the council of God, and had the revelations and prophecies contained in the seven first chapters of his book. Note—Ezekiel dates his prophecies from the year in which himself and king Jeboiachin were carried into captivity.

This year Ezekiel in a vision was carried to Jerusalem, shewn the several sorts of idolatry practised there by the Jews in the very temple; and had revealed unto him the punishments which God would inflict upon them for those abominations, and the divine protection of those in captivity, who continued steady and faithful to his service.

About this time, Zedekiah having entered into a confederacy with the king of Egypt, and broken the solemn oath of fidelity which he had sworn to king Nebuchadnezzar, God, both by types and words of revelation, foreshewed to Ezekiel the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, Zedekiah's flight by night, the putting out of his eyes, his imprisonment and death at Babylon, the carrying away of the Jews, and the remains of the Israelites, contained in the above-mentioned chapters. Note—Daniel, though then but a young man, was grown to such a pitch of piety and holiness, as to be matched, by God himself, with Noah and Job.

The elders of Israel came to Ezekiel to enquire of the Lord; but God refuseth to be enquired of by such wicked hypocrites; and in these four chapters denounces the judgments their abominable impieties deserved.

Nebuchadnezzar having advanced a great army against Jerusalem, to punish Zedekiah for his perjury and rebellion, Zedekiah first sent Pashur and Zephaniah to Jeremiah, to desire him to enquire of the Lord; by whom Jeremiah returned the answer related in the 21st chapter.
Prophets before the Captivity. Ch. XXXIV.

Afterward, Jeremiah was ordered in person to deliver to Zedekiah the prediction contained in chap. xxiv. 1—8.

Jeremiah xlvii.

Pharaoh Hophra marching out of Egypt to the relief of his ally Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar, who was advancing to besiege Jerusalem, in his way took Gaza, a town of the Philistines. A little before this event, Jeremiah uttered this prophecy against the Philistines.

Jeremiah xlviii., xlix. Ver. 1—34.

These prophecies, relating to the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, &c. who would be obnoxious to the ravages of the Assyrian armies, might be delivered at the same time with the former.

Ezekiel xxiv., xxv.

On the tenth day of the tenth month in the same year, when Nebuchadnezzar's army had laid siege to Jerusalem, the same was revealed, on the very same day, to Ezekiel in Chaldea; and the destruction of the city was typified by a boiling cauldron; the same day also his wife died, as recorded in chap. xxiv. But vengeance is denounced against the neighbouring countries, that rejoiced in the preceding calamities, or should rejoice in those that were to come upon Judea. Chap. xxv.

Jeremiah xxxvii. Ver. 1—11.

Not long after Nebuchadnezzar's army came with a great force to the relief of Zedekiah. Upon which Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege of Jerusalem, in order to march against him. Upon which Zedekiah sent a message to Jeremiah, before he was put into prison, chap. xxxvii. 4. the answer to which is contained in chap. xxxvii. 1—11.

Jeremiah xxxiv. Ver. 8. to the end.

Upon the approach of Nebuchadnezzar's army, the terrified Jews entered into a solemn covenant, to observe God's law, and to release the Hebrew servants, which they kept in bondage contrary to his law. But when the Chaldeans were gone to meet Pharaoh, the general opinion being, that they would return no more, the Jews openly violated the covenant of reformation, by obliging all their servants to return to their former servitude: for which impious act, the Prophet proclaimed liberty to the sword, &c.
JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 11—16.

When the Chaldeans were gone to meet Pharaoh, Jeremiah was released out of prison; and intending to retire to Anathoth, from the calamities of the siege, which he knew would be renewed, was taken up for a deforfer as he was passing through the gate, and clapt in prison; but principally for perpetrating that the city should again be besieged and taken by Nebuchadnezzar.

JEREMIAH xxxii, xxxiii.

While Jeremiah was in prison, the contents of these chapters were transacted.

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 1—17. xxx.

Upon the approach of the Chaldeans, the Egyptians treacherously deferted Zedekiah, and returned into their own country. Upon this occasion, Ezekiel denounces the displeasure of God against their perfidy, predicts their desolation, and at length (within 40 years, chap. xxix. 13.) their being reduced to one of the basest of nations, insomuch that they should no more have a prince of their own to reign over them. Chap. xxx. 13. Which hath been remarkably fulfilled, even unto this day. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad Ann. 593. Zedekiah 10.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 17, to the end.

On the retreat of the Egyptians, Nebuchadnezzar returned to the siege of Jerusalem; and it was then king Zedekiah, fearing the issue, sent for Jeremiah out of prison to consult him.

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Ver. 1—14.

The princes, offended at Jeremiah, cast him into a low, loathsome, miry dungeon, where he must have perished, had not Ebed-melech gained leave to draw him out, and to place him in a better situation in the court of the prison.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 15, to the end.

While Jeremiah was in the court of the prison, God by him sent a message of mercy and deliverance to Ebed-melech.
JEREMIAH xxxviii. Verse 14, to the end.

Zedekiah again sent for Jeremiah out of the court of the prison into the temple, there secretly to enquire of him about the issue of the siege.

EZEKIEL xxvi, xxvii, xxviii.

Here God declares his judgments against Tyre, for insulting the calamitous state of Jerusalem, closely besieged by Nebuchadnezzar. Note—Daniel's wisdom, though but about 30, was become famous over all the East. Chap. xxviii. 3.

EZEKIEL xxxi.

God declares his judgments against Pharaoh and the Egyptians.


The account of Jerusalem's being taken, with the subsequent circumstances. Upon this occasion the 137th Psalm was composed.


Nebuchadnezzar giveth charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan; who treateth him in a kind and friendly manner.

JEREMIAH xli. Ver. 7, to the end. xlii, xliii, xliv. Ver. 1—8.

C H A P. XXXV.

Prophets after the Destruction of the Temple, during the Captivity.

JEREMIAH xliii. Ver. 8, to the end. xlv.

The Prophecies contained in these Chapters were revealed, and published to the Jews, in the land of Egypt.

The Book of LAMENTATIONS.

This Book, which mournfully bewails the desolation of Jerusalem and the Temple, was composed by Jeremiah after that sad event, possibly in the land of Egypt; where Jeremiah might end his days; for we never hear of his return from thence.

EZEKIEL xxxiii.

The beginning of this chapter is upon a general subject, and of uncertain date. From the 21st verse it is dated from the time when Ezekiel first received the news of the city's being taken and destroyed, which was 18 months, or a year and a half, after the sad event happened.

EZEKIEL xxxii.

This prophecy against Egypt was delivered in this year and month.

EZEKIEL xxxiv, xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxviii, xxxix.

These chapters fall under no date, till we come to the 40th chapter, which is dated the 25th of Jeboiachin's captivity. Therefore, these chapters were probably delivered some time between the 12th and 25th of that captivity.

OBADIAH.

Obadiah prophesied against the Edomites for their unnatural and spiteful behaviour towards the Jews, in their distress at the taking of Jerusalem.
EZEKIEL xxxv.

This prophecy against the Edomites seems to have been delivered upon the same occasion.

DANIEL iii.

In this year also Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. Anno 587. Nebuchad. 18.

EZEKIEL xl, xli, &c. to the end of the Book.

All these visions and prophecies, relating to the future state of the church of God, were revealed to Ezekiel this year, being the 14th from the destruction of Jerusalem.

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 17. to the end.

Nebuchadnezzar's army having endured great hardships in the siege of Tyre, which held 13 years, and having got little on the taking of it, (the inhabitants having conveyed themselves and their effects into the adjacent island) God, by the Prophet Ezekiel, promiseth them the spoils of Egypt, as a reward for their labour. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad An. 573. Nebuchad. 32.

DANIEL iv.

This year Nebuchadnezzar had his dream of the wonderful great tree, and the cutting down thereof; and the next year fell distracted. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad An. 570.

JEREMIAH lii. Ver. 31, to the end.

This year Nebuchadnezzar dies, and is succeeded by his son, Evilmerodach, who released Jehoiachin, king of Judah, out of prison, where he had been confined 37 years, and advanced him to honour and friendship. Note—This last chapter was not wrote by Jeremiah (see chap. li. 64.) but by Baruch or Ezra, or whoever collected Jeremiah's prophecies into one volume.

DANIEL
DANIEL vii.

Daniel had the vision of the four monarchies, and of the kingdom of the Messiah.

DANIEL viii.

Daniel had the vision of the ram and he-goat.

DANIEL v.

Daniel reads the hand-writing on the wall. Belshazzar is slain. Darius the Mede took the Assyrian kingdom.

DANIEL vi.

Daniel's being advanced by Darius above all the princes, and made prime minister, next to the king, raised so great an envy against him among the courtiers, that they laid the snare for him which brought him to the lion's den.

DANIEL ix.

Daniel, apprehending from the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the 70 years captivity of Judah were drawing to an end, maketh his prayer to God for the restoration of Jerusalem. In answer to which, the Angel Gabriel was sent to assure him of a much greater redemption to the Jewish nation by the Messiah, at the end of 70 weeks, or 490 years.

EZRA i, ii.

Darius dieth; Cyrus succeeds him, and by his decree puts an end to the 70 years captivity of the Jews. This in the first chapter of Ezra. In the second chapter an account is given of the Jews that returned. Note—On the return of Judah and Benjamin from the Babylonish captivity, several of the other tribes of Israel returned with them out of Assyria, Babylon, and Media, whither they had been before carried. Ezra vi. 17. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad Ann. 536. p. 190. Upon this joyous occasion the 126th Psalm was composed.

EZRA iii.

The Jews begin to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.
CHAP. XXXVI.

Prophets after the Captivity under the second Temple.

Ezra iv.

The Samaritans obstruct the Jews in the building of the City and Temple; and so the work ceased till the second year of Darius Hystaspes; namely, for 14 years.

Daniel x, xi, xii.

The visions and prophecies in these chapters were revealed to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus, and the third year after the Captivity.

Haggai i. Ver. 1—12.

Haggai excites Zerubbabel, the governor, and Jeshua, the high-priest, to build the Lord's house, in the second year of Darius Hystaspes.

Haggai i. Ver. 12. to the end. Ezra v. 1, 2.

Zerubbabel and Jeshua immediately apply to the work.

Haggai ii. Ver. 1—10.

Haggai encourages them from the Lord to proceed.

Zechariah i. Ver. 1—7.

Zechariah makes his first address to the Jews, who were building the Temple, assuring them that God would turn to them with a blessing, if they turned to him by repentance and reformation.

Haggai ii. Ver. 10. to the end.

Haggai rebukes the indifference of the Jews in building the Temple; encourages vigorous endeavours with the blessing of plenty; and assures Zerubbabel of the extraordinary favour of God.
Z E C H A R I A H i. Ver 7. to the end. ii, iii, iv, v, vi.

At this time these visions, greatly encouraging the Jews in building the City and Temple, and affuring them of the Divine protection against all their enemies, were revealed to Zechariah.

E Z R A v. Ver. 3. to the end.

E Z R A vi. Ver. 1—15.

Darius sends a decree to Jerusalem, positively ordering the Temple to be rebuilt, and the expences of it furnished out of the taxes of the provinces. Which accordingly was done, till it was finished. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad An. 518.

Z E C H A R I A H vii, viii.

The Jews who were in Babylon, (for great numbers still remained there, and in other parts of the Persian empire,) judging that the state of Judea and Jerusalem was now to thoroughly restored and establihed by Darius's decree, that it might be no longer proper to keep the fast in the fifth month (when the City and Temple were burnt by Nebuzaradan), which they had hitherto observed for 70 years together, sent two messengers to Jerusalem, to ask the opinion of the priests and prophets that were there, about this matter. And God gave them, by the Prophet Zechariah, the answer relating to that and other faits, which we have in the seventh and eighth chapters of his prophecy.

Z E C H A R I A H ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv.

As these chapters have no date, we may suppose they were delivered in some of the times subsequent to the fourth year of Darius Hystaspes.

E Z R A vi. Ver. 15. to the end.

This year the Temple was finished, and dedicated with great joy and solemnity. The Jews had been about it, from first to last, 20 years.

L 2

E S T H E R
ESTHER i.

Artaxerxes, or Ahafuerus, being thoroughly settled in his throne, made a great feast for all his nobles, and divorced Vashti his queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 1—16.

A collection of virgins made for the king, of which Esther was one.

Ezra vii, viii, ix, x.

In the beginning of this year Ezra received from Artaxerxes, or Ahafuerus, a very ample commission for his return to Jerusalem, with any of his countrymen that were disposed to go along with him; giving them full authority in things both civil and religious, to regulate both according to the law. This decree was probably granted at the solicitation of Esther. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad An. 458. The decree, the families and numbers of the Jews that went with Ezra to Jerusalem, fall within the compass of this and the next year, and are contained in the four last chapters of this Book.

Note.—From Ezra's entering upon this work, the beginning of Daniel's 70 weeks is to be computed. Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad An. 458, p. 377. Note also—That Ezra continued in the government about 13 years; till Nehemiah succeeded him in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, or Ahafuerus.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 16—21.

Esther, after having been only concubine about two years, is now made queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 21. to the end.

Bigthan and Tarshish, two eunuchs in the palace, entered into a conspiracy against the life of Artaxerxes, or Ahafuerus, which was discovered to the king by Mordecai, queen Esther's uncle.

ESTHER iii, iv, v, &c. to the end of the Book.

Haman, an Amalekite, descended from king Agag, in Saul's time, made prime minister to Artaxerxes, laid a plot to extirpate the whole race of the Jews. But it turned upon himself, as related in the book of Esther.
NEHEMIAH  i, ii, iii, &c. to the end of the Book.

NEHEMIAH, with a commissiion from Artaxerxes, or Abasuerus, probably by favour of queen Esther, (Neh. ii. 6.) succeedeth Ezra in the government of Judea, rebuilds the walls, repeoples Jerusalem, reforms disorders, &c. Thus he was employed for 12 years; namely, from the 20th to the 32d year of Artaxerxes. Neh. v. 14. xiii. 6. Within which time Ezra is supposed to have published his edition of the Hebrew Scriptures. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. p. 475, &c.

Nehemiah returns from Jerusalem to the Persian court. Neh. xiii. 6.

MALACHI  i, ii, iii, iv.

About this time flourished Malachi, the Prophet. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad An. 428. p. 570.

NEHEMIAH  xiii. Ver. 6, 7, &c.

After certain days, i. e. after about five years, Nehemiah comes again to Jerusalem with a new commissiion, and makes further reformation; with which act of reformation, the holy Scriptures of the Old Testament are closed up.

Simon the just, high priest of the Jews, completes the Canon of the Old Testament, by adding the two Books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi. "That these could not be put into the Canon by "Ezra, is plain: for four of those books are, upon just grounds, sup-"posed to have been written by Ezra himself, (that is, the two books of "Chronicles, and the Books of Ezra and Esther,) and the Book of Ne-"hemiah was written after his [Ezra's] time; and so most likely was "the Book of Malachi also. And therefore a later time must be assigned "for their insertion into the sacred Canon; and none is more likely "than that of Simon the just, who is said to have been the last of the "men of the great synagogue. What the Jews call the great synagogue,"were a number of elders, amounting to 120, succeeding each other in "a continued series from the return of the Jews from the Babylonish "captivity, to the time of Simon the just, and laboured in restoring the "Jewish church and state in that country. In order to which, the "holy Scriptures being the rule they were to go by, their chief care and "study was to make a true collection of those Scriptures, and publish "them accurately to the people. Ezra, and the men of the great syna-"gogue in his time, settled the Canon of all but the foresaid books; "and those were probably settled, and added to the Canon, in the times "of Simon the just, who died about 31 years after Alexander the Great. "For in 1 Chron. iii. 19, &c. the genealogy of the sons of Zerubbabel is "carried down for so many descents after him as may well be thought "to reach the times of Alexander. And in Neh. xii. 22. we have the
days of Jaddua spoken of, as then past; but Jaddua outlived Alexander two years. These passages, therefore, were probably inserted by Simon the Just, who perfected, and finally settled the Canon of the holy Scriptures. After this followed the Mishnaical times, that is, the times of traditions. Hitherto the Scriptures were the only rule of faith and manners which God's people studied; but thenceforth traditions began to be regarded, till at length they overbore the word of God itself, as we find in our Saviour's time. The collection of these traditions they call the Mishnah, that is, the second law; and those who delivered and taught them were titled the Mishnaical Doctors." See Dr. Prideaux's Con. Anno 292. Ptolemy Soter, 13.*

CHAP. XXXVII,

The State of the Jews, and of other Nations, at the Time when our Lord came into the World.

After the Babylonish captivity the Jews no more lapsed into idolatry, but remained steady in the acknowledgment and worship of the one living and true God. Even then they fell into new ways of perverting religion, and the wise and holy intentions of the Divine law. I. By laying all the stress on the external and less momentous parts of it, while they neglected the weighty and substantial, true holiness of heart and life. Mankind are too easily drawn into this error: while they retain a sense of religion, they are too apt to listen to any methods by which it may be reduced to a consistence with the gratifications of their passions, pride, and avarice. Thus, by placing religion in mere profession, or in the zealous observance of rites and ceremonies, instead of real piety, truth, purity, and goodness; they learn to be religious without virtue. II. By speculating and commenting upon the Divine commands and institutions, till their force is quite enervated, and they are refined into a sense that will commodiously allow a slight regard instead of sincere obedience. III. By confirming and establishing the two former methods of corrupting religion, by tradition and the authority of learned Rabbies; pretending that there was a system of religious rules delivered by word of mouth from Moses, explanatory of the written law, known only to those Rabbies; to whose judgment, therefore, and decision, all the people were to submit.

This, in time, the space of 219 years, became the general state of religion among the Jews, after they had discarded idolatry; and this spirit prevailed among them for some ages (290 years) before the coming of the Messiah. But, however, it did not interfere with the main system of Providence, or the introducing the knowledge of God among the Nations,

* Turn to the Appendix, for the Chronological Dates belonging to this and chapters xxxiv, xxxv.
tions, as they still continued steadfast in the worship of the true God, without danger of deviating from it. Besides, they were now, much more than formerly, exercised in reading, thinking, and reasoning, and were more capable of themselves of judging what was right. Luke xii. 57. And several of them did so judge. Some of them were truly religious and virtuous; and all of them had strong expectation of the Messias about the time of his appearance; and were sufficiently qualified to judge of religious matters, and of the evidences of his mission. Thus the Jews were prepared by the preceding dispensation for the reception of the Messias, and the just notions of religion which he was sent to inculcate; insomuch that their guilt must be highly aggravated, if they rejected him and his instructions. It could not be for want of capacity, but of integrity, and must be assigned to wilful blindness and obduracy. Out of regard to temporal power, grandeur, and enjoyments, they loved darkness rather than light.

In the mean time, the Pagan Nations had made great openings in wisdom and virtue. Those arts that began in Greece, had travelled into other lands; learning had got footing among the illiterate, and humanity and social affections among the barbarous; and many good and useful books, useful even to this day among Christians, were written in ethics for the right conduct of life. The light of nature was carried high; or rather, the darkness of it was much enlightened. Such was, at length, the state of the Gentiles, God having still been pleased, from time to time, to raise up among them persons uncommonly endowed, for their instruction, and to fit them for the day when he should more explicitly reveal himself and his sacred will to them. In a word, what with time, and the transmigrating of knowledge from region to region, and the labours of poets and philosophers, men, at about the classic era, when our Lord came into the world, in general, had gained tolerable just ideas of virtue and moral truth; and so, were in a condition to apprehend and embrace the higher and more important truths of God, and his providence, and a future state.

For many ages the Jews had been well known in the eastern empires, among the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians; but till the time of Alexander the Great, they had no communication with the Grecians. About the year before Christ 332, Alexander built Alexandria in Egypt; and, to people his new city, removed thither many of the Jews, allowing them the use of their own laws and religion, and the same liberties with the Macedonians themselves. The Macedonians, who spoke the Greek language, and other Greeks, were the principal inhabitants of Alexandria. From them the Jews learned to speak Greek, which was the common language of the city, and which soon became the native language of the Jews that lived there; who, on that account, were called Hellenists, or Greek-Jews, mentioned Acts vi. 1—9. xi. 20. These Greek-Jews had synagogues in Alexandria; and for their benefit, the five books of Moses, which alone at first were publicly read, were translated into Greek, (by whom is uncertain) and read in their synagogues every sabbath-day. And in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, about 168 years before Christ, when the Prophets also began to be read in the synagogues of Judea, the Prophets also were translated into Greek for the use of the Alexandrian Jews.
This translation contributed much to the spread of the knowledge of true religion among the Nations in the western parts of the world.

For the Jews, their synagogues and worship, were, after Alexander's death, dispersed almost everywhere among the Nations. Ptolemy, one of Alexander's successors, having reduced Jerusalem and all Judea, about 320 years before Christ, carried a hundred thousand Jews into Egypt, and there raised considerable numbers of them to places of trust and power; and several of them he placed in Cyrene and Libya. Seleucus, another of Alexander's successors, about 300 years before Christ, built Antioch in Cilicia, and many other cities, in all 35, and some of them capital cities in the Greater and Lesser Asia; in all which he planted the Jews, giving them equal privileges and immunities with the Greeks and Macedonians; especially at Antioch in Syria, where they settled in great numbers, and became almost as considerable a part of that city, as they were at Alexandria. Dr. Prideaux's Con. Anno 293, Ptolemy Soter, 12. On that memorable day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 5, 9, 11, 12, were assembled in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven; namely, Parthians, Medes, and Persians of the province of Elam with, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene in Libya, Rome, Cretes, and Arabs, who were all either natural Jews, or devout men, i.e. proselytes to the Jewish religion. And in every city of the Roman empire where Paul preached, he found a body of his countrymen, the Jews; except in Athens, which was at that time, I suppose, a town of no considerable trade. Which shews that the Jews, and their synagogues, at the time of our Lord's appearance, were providentially scattered over all the Roman empire; and had in every place introduced, more or less, among the nations, the knowledge and worship of God; and so had prepared great numbers for the reception of the Gospel.

About the time that Alexander built Alexandria in Egypt, the use of the Papyrus for writing was first found out in that country. Dr. Prideaux's Con. Anno 332, Darius 4, p. 706. Vol. II. This invention was so favourable to literature, that Ptolemy Soter, one of Alexander's successors, was thereby enabled to erect a museum, or library; which by his son and successor, Philadelphus, who died 247 years before Christ, was augmented to an hundred thousand volumes; and by succeeding Ptolemies, to seven hundred thousand. Part of this library, which was placed in a separate building from the other part, happened to be burnt when Julius Caesar laid siege to Alexandria; but, after that loss, it was again much augmented, and soon grew up to be larger, and of more eminent note, than the former; and so it continued for many ages to be of great fame and use in those parts, till at length it was burnt and finally destroyed by the Saracens, in the year of our Lord 642. Dr. Prideaux's Con. Vol. III. p. 21, &c. Anno 284. This plainly proves how much the invention of turning the Papyrus into paper contributed to the increase of books, and the advancement of learning, for some ages before the coming of our Lord; for doubtless, by this means, private hands would also more easily be supplied with books than before.

Add to all this, that the world, after many changes and revolutions, was, by God's all-ruling wisdom, thrown into that form of civil affairs which
which best suited with the great intended alteration. The many petty states and tyrannies whose passions and bigotry might have run counter to the schemes of Providence, were all swallowed up in one great power, the Romans, to which all appeals lay; the seat of which, Rome, lay at a great distance from Jerusalem, the spring from whence the Gospel was to arise, and flow to all nations. And therefore, as no material obstruction to the Gospel could arise but from that one quarter, none could suddenly arise from thence, but only in process of time, when the Gospel was sufficiently spread and established, as it did not in the least interfere with the Roman polity or government. The Gospel was first published in a time of general peace and tranquillity throughout the whole world, which gave the preachers of it an opportunity of passing freely from one country to another, and the minds of men the advantage of attending calmly to it. Many savage Nations were civilized by the Romans, and acquainted with the arts and virtues of their conquerors. Thus the darkest countries had their thoughts awakened, and were growing to a capacity of receiving at the stated time, the knowledge of true religion. So that all things and circumstances conspired now with the views of Heaven, and made this apparently the fulness of time, (Gal. iv. 4.) or the fittest juncture for God to reveal himself to the Gentiles, and to put an end to idolatry throughout the earth. Now the minds of men were generally ripe for a purer and brighter dispensation, and the circumstances of the world were such as favoured the successes and progress of it.

In this very time the Messiah came: nor, for ought I can see, could he have come more opportunely at any other; because the world was at no other preceding time so well prepared to receive his doctrines. As to remission of sin, and eternal salvation, it is all one whenever he came: because the sacrifice which he offered for sin, had its effects with regard to the time past, as well as to the time to come; to the penitent, that were dead, as well as to the living, or those that were yet to be born. (See Scripture Doctrine of Atonement, p. 80.) Immortality must belong as much to those who lived virtuously, according to their degree of light, before the Messiah came, as to those who lived after his coming; and the blessedness of the future state, though not alike revealed, yet was alike accessible to the one as to the other.

Upon a review of the whole, it will appear, that the condition of mankind was bettered step by step, as the reason and nature of things directed and would permit. The scope and intent of the whole scheme of Divine Providence, in all its various dispensations, was to bring human nature, by proper degrees, and in a way consistent with moral agency, to all the beauty, holiness, and perfection it can, in this present state, attain to. And though we are not indeed able absolutely to trace all the reasons of the Divine conduct, and to demonstrate the wisdom of it in every particular; yet we may in general discover, that all the parts of this scheme were wisely formed, and pursued, depending regularly on each other, leading to the same great and good end, and adapted to the respective circumstances and condition of mankind.

Note—After the publication of the Gospel, the Jewish peculiarity was no longer of use for preserving the knowledge of God in the world.
That end would be much better answered by its dissolution, and the dis-

erpersion of the Jesu all over the earth, as they are even unto this day.

For the most excellent character of Jesus Christ, and the Divine prin-
ciples, doctrine, and spirit of the Gospel, see my Treatise upon the
Lord's Supper.]

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Mankind, having abused their Natural Powers, stand in need of an
Extraordinary Revelation.

The Scriptures are the word of God; they are the language
and address of the universal Father to his children in this world,
whom he hath endowed with rational faculties to hear and understand
his voice. The Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and are profita-
ble for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.
2 Tim. iii. 16. The glory of God indeed is to be seen in all the works
of his hands; and the speech of his Almighty power, wisdom, and
goodness, is to be heard in the appearances of creation which are daily
before our eyes. Psal. xix. 1, &c. Mankind, in a faithful use of their
natural Powers, might, without any other guide, know God. Rom. i.
19. For that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God
hath shewed it unto them (for the invisible things of him from the creation
of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, so)
that even the Heathen, who have no other rule but the light of nature,
they might be without excuse, if they are totally ignorant of God. But
how much Mankind in all ages have abused and misapplied their under-
standings, is notoriously evident; and therefore it must be evident how
much they stand in need of an extraordinary Revelation to correct their
errors, to reduce them to the obedience of God, and to secure them
from relapsing into idolatry and apostacy from him.

I think, no book can contain more evident marks of such a Revela-
tion than the Scriptures, eminently so called, which we are happily
possessed of. There we have the fullest and clearest account of the na-
ture and perfections of God, beyond what the world at best could have
attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary course of things,
have been preferred through succeeding generations. The knowledge of

* With this chapter ends Dr. Taylor's Scheme of Scripture-Divi-
nity, from the copy he printed at Warrington, for the use of the Students
in the Academy there; and since corrected, with the Hebrew and Greek
words inserted, by himself.

The following chapters the Editor hath annexed, and are printed from
Dr. Taylor's Manuscript; and would have appeared to greater advantage,
bad they had his correcting hand.
of God not being a mere speculative truth, but having near connexion with our morals, would consequently, as the morals of men are very liable to be corrupted, have also proportionably been obscured, till it had in a manner quite vanished away; which we know hath in fact been true. In the Scriptures, as in a durable storehouse, not to be demolished by time, or uncertain tradition, we have the most noble discoveries of the nature and perfections of God, as he is our Maker, our Father, Owner, Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his attributes; as he is infinite, and independent, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, knowledge, wisdom and power; as perfectly holy, good, righteous, and true. And these glories of the Divine nature are described, not in the way of philosophical dissertations, not by a series of abstract reasoning, which, how amusing or instructing soever to minds of a more refined turn and taste, are but of little service to the bulk of mankind, who have but little leisure, and perhaps less inclination, to attend to the curious and abstruser deductions of reason; not thus are the glories of the Divine nature delineated in Scripture, but exhibited in a long and easily-intelligible series of facts and events, wherein God hath manifested his goodness, wisdom, power, and justice, from the beginning of the world. In which way the mind, with very little labour of thought, is at once convinced of the being and perfections of God, and struck with admiration, reverence, love, and every right affection which the knowledge of God should produce in us.

In the Scriptures any one, in common life, may not only very readily see that God is, and that he is all that the most learned, the most exact, the most subtle, the most sublime philosophy, all that the utmost application and study of the wisest men can discover; but he seeth this at the same time in a practical light; he seeth that God is all this to us; that, as great as he is in himself, he is our God and Father; that he hath, from his own immensity of being, given us being, a noble and distinguished kind of being; that he constantly regards us, loveth us, interesteth himself in our affairs, is concerned for our welfare, is daily near us, the object of our trust and dependence; that all our safety is in his favour; and that in his favour, and under his protection, we are infinitely safe and happy: that we are accountable to him for our actions, that we are continually under his eye, and can flee no whither from his spirit and presence; that we ought always to set him before us, to act as in his sight, and to approve ourselves to his all-searching eye; that he hath taken us into the nearest relations to himself; that his design is to make us good, in order to make us for ever happy; that, for this purpose, he hath been carrying on various dispensions, from the beginning of the world, to invite and draw men unto himself.

At length, in the fulness of time, in that time which to his infinite wisdom seemed most expedient, he sent a divine messenger, the word, his only begotten Son, from his own bosom, to redeem men from iniquity, to reconcile them to God; and in the way, Divine wisdom judged most proper to establish, upon the most firm and beautiful foundation, the eternal salvation of all pious and virtuous men that have ever been, or shall hereafter be in the world. The eternal God in Christ will be their everlasting strength, and joy, and glory. Thus, I would observe, we
we not only, in the easiest and clearest way, learn God and his perfections from Scripture, but we learn them in a manner the most proper and powerful to engage and unite our hearts to God, to warm and quicken our spirits, to excite us to the love and obedience of God, and to consider ourselves infinitely interested in his attributes and perfections; which is to learn divine things, i.e. the most excellent things, in a method vastly superior to all the reasonings and instructions of the best and wisest philosophers.

In the Scriptures, any man of common sense may not only with ease learn his duty in the fullest extent; but at the same time, by the numerous examples of pious men in all ages, he may see that it is practicable, and may see how to engage in it; how exact, how constant, how ready and cheerful he should be in the discharge of it; how he ought to resist temptations, to struggle with difficulties. Even a mean capacity, by reading the Scriptures, shall at the same time discern the reasonableness and the beauty of holiness, and also be furnished with the strongest arguments and motives to embrace it, and to persevere therein; shall be assured of the Divine assistance and protection in a religious course, shall find the most proper confolations and encouragements in every the most distressful state of affairs; to every precept he shall find an adjourned promise; and his duty will shine brightly before his eyes, in the light and hope of everlasting glory.

There we have the truest and most effectual rules for forming our minds into all habits of virtue; not simple propositions, declaring what we ought to do and be, but rules of life intermixed with the power and splendour of Divine grace, working mightily to renew us into the Divine nature. There religion appears in all its truth, luftre, sweetness, and majesty. There it is drenched in all its charms; not as a four, severe, morose, gloomy principle, forbidding enjoyment, and the parent only of sorrow, horror, and despair; but as our life, our glory, our peace, our joy; as giving us the truest relish and enjoyment of life, as the source of the most solid pleasure and comfort, as uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the Almighty arms of his love and goodness; as leading to, and preparing for, endless joys and pleasures in his presence.

As to sin and wickedness, the philosophers have said much concerning the odious nature of vice; that it is evil, and the worst of evils; that it is the diseaee and deformity of the mind, hurtful to the health of the body, and ruinous to the reputation and estate. Their reflections were so just, but the benefit of them was confined to men of letters and study; the vulgar received little or no advantage from them: but in the Scriptures, the meanest minds are favoured with far better instructions than they could give. There sin is not only set forth in all its odious colours, and in all its pernicious effects, as to this present life; but its deadly nature is demonstrated as it stands in contrariety to God, as it is the transgression of his holy law, as it exposteth us to his displeasure, and disqualifieth us for his blessing; as it is opposite to all the ends of our creation, and consequently as deserving of death. That God will punish all the impenitent workers of iniquity with everlasting destruction, and purge out of his kingdom every thing that offendeth, that is either mischeievous or polluting. And all this is to plainly and powerfully
fully inculcated upon the mind, by many dreadful examples of the Divine vengeance upon ungodly men, throughout the whole series of Scripture history, by so many express declarations of God's wrath, and so many exhortations of his goodness and mercy, to turn from every evil way, that no one, who carefully and seriously reads the Scriptures can miss, not only of seeing the evil, the irregularity and deformity of sin, but of having his mind affected with it, and wrought into the most rational and the most settled detestation of it.

With regard to the pardon of sin, the wisest of philosophers seem to have very imperfect notions of it. They rarely and very superficially considered it in its relation of diffonancy to the Divine perfections; and therefore say little or nothing concerning the placableness of the Deity, whether God would pardon sin, or in what way his wisdom thought proper to do it. Sacrifices were frequent among them; but they seem to have understooed nothing of their true nature and end, nor were at all solicitous to inquire into them. In truth, they did not understand the true demerit of sin, and therefore of course must be in the dark as to the remission of it. But all these things are open and obvious to the weakest capacity, in Scripture.

How much the world was in the dark about a future state without a Revelation, is well known; and how clearly now the world to come is opened to us in the awful prospects of eternal happiness, or endless perdition, can be concealed from none who are ever so little acquainted with the Gospel of Christ.——These things, duly attended to, will shew us the admirable excellency of the holy Scriptures; that God's word is truth, and able to make us wise unto salvation; and further to demonstrate, that it is our duty to be much in reading them.

Reading the Scriptures is one of the first principles of our religion, as we are Christians, because our profession is built wholly upon the Scriptures. We justly own no other rule of our faith but the word of God. Eph. ii. 20. We are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. And we are built upon no other foundation. If we are true Christians, however we may use or value the writings of men, we make not them, not the best of them, the rule of our faith, but the word of God alone. But that rule ought to be thoroughly perused, and digested; otherwise, how good soever in itself, or how much soever we profess to take it for our rule, it is in fact no rule to us. The word of God is the guide of our actions; it is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. Psal. cxix. 105. Should we not then diligently study the word of God, that we may not wander from his commandments? The word of God is the spring of all our comfort and hopes.

There, and there alone, we have the rich and immense treasure of the Divine promises; and from thence alone we can draw solid support and consolation, in any dark hour of trial and affliction. In short, to all the valuable purposes of knowledge and life, the Scriptures do infinitely excel all human compositions whatsoever. They are but as the twinkling stars to that ocean of light which is poured out daily from the body of the sun. Of all the means of knowledge and wisdom in the world, I know nothing to be compared with the word of God. The reason of the
the thing therefore requires we should have our eyes intent upon this light and illumination. For this end God hath given us this invaluable treasure, the holy Scriptures, that we should make them our study.

It must be observed carefully, that it is not enough to be much in reading the Scriptures; but while we read, we should employ all our attention to understand them. The Scriptures may be understood, but evidently not in every degree by every man; for as there are various sorts and degrees of knowledge in Scripture, some perhaps, at present, beyond the reach of any man that ever yet was in the world; and as there are in men various capacities, and degrees of learning; so it is manifest, all men cannot attain to the same degree of understanding in divine things: but there must necessarily be a great difference between the knowledge of one man and another in matters of faith and revelation. This shews the absurdity of the Popish scheme, which pretends to reduce the Christian faith in all its parts to a certain invariable standard, to which every man either explicitly or implicitly, either with or without understanding, must conform.

This shews, how much soever it is our duty to communicate knowledge one to another, that it is quite contrary to true religion to quarrel with one another, or to be displeased because we have not all the same degree of understanding in matters of faith and religion; because this, according to the present constitution of our minds, and of the Revelation God hath given us, which he never intended should be equally understood by all, is quite impracticable. But although the Scriptures are not to be understood in every degree by every man, yet they may be understood by every man so far as God requireth, i.e. so far as he is capable of understanding them; for what a man can understand, he may understand, if he is not wanting to himself.

And as God can require of no man beyond his abilities, so no more than what a man can understand of Scripture is to him a rule of faith and practice; for what he cannot understand, he cannot be bound to believe or do. Further, those things in Scripture which are of the highest importance, and most conducive to a holy life, are generally very easy to be understood; and therefore, how perplexed soever those other things may be about which men have differed, though not so perplexed in Revelation as they are in men's heads and writings,—yet, I say, how perplexed and difficult soever they may be, the grand principles of faith and practice are so evident, that any ordinary capacity may, with due care and attention, easily gain the most comfortable knowledge of them. Thus the Scriptures may be understood.

So far as they are not understood, they are at least useless to us. Nay further, the Scriptures misunderstood may prove very hurtful to us. The things chiefly to be understood in Scripture are principles, or the grounds and reasons of things, and precepts which are the rules of duty: now, if we mistake either, we shall throw all into confusion, our way will be all mist and clouds; that which should be light will be darkness, or which is all one, a false light to mislead us; that which should be our joy, will be our heaviness; that which should be our comfort, and inspire cheerful hope, will be a dead weight to burthen our spirits and clog our course. Our path, which should be as the shining light, that shineth more and more, will be a gloomy melancholy road, and we shall
shall make our way with difficulty, because we want that true sense and knowledge of the ways and will of God, which is necessary to give life, comfort, and vigour. Chimeras and frightful images will terrify our consciences, and fill us with groundless fears; God will be painted in monstrous colours; and all the ravishing glories of his truth, wisdom, and love, which should powerfully draw our hearts to him, will be hid from our eyes. The lustre of redeeming grace will in part, or wholly, be eclipsed. Some parts of religion will be superstitiously magnified, while others of greater consequence will be undervalued.

Further, if for want of due attention to the sense of Scripture we mistake and fall into error, we ought to be sensible, that religious error is of a far worse nature than any other; not only as it is error in a matter of the greatest importance, but as it is of all others the most difficult to be corrected. For under the sacred name of religion it sheltered and defends itself, and gains the character of truth, of important, necessary, awful, and perhaps excellent truth; and the unwary think themselves bound in conscience and duty to maintain it with zeal; and then, whoever endeavours to correct it, though ever so much in the spirit of meekness and peace, must do it at his peril. Hence those grosser instances of persecution and bloodshed which have fouled the Christian name, hence those wranglings, debates, heats, animosities, which have destroyed Christian societies. These things are the fruit of men's taking their religious principles upon trust, and not fetching them from the Scriptures, studied, and understood by themselves. Such contempt and neglect of the word of God exposeth them to strong delusion, and such religion leads them to fight in the dark for they know not what. Thus religion is corrupted, the corruption of it defended, and irreligion and infidelity propagated, even by religious people themselves. So the sceptic, who is indifferent to any principles, when he finds absurdity mixed with the Christian faith, taking the whole for a true account of Christianness, rejects the whole; for even common sense will not allow that Revelation to be divine, which cannot, in many of its parts, be reconciled with the known perfections of God.

By this unhappy means what numbers in our land have been drawn into Deism! And, by this unhappy means, I guess, if the truth were known, religion appears but in a doubtful light to many who seem to be strict professors of it; for where it is not received in its proper evidence, there cannot be, I think, a full and strong assent of faith; and no man can receive it in its proper evidence, who doth not endeavour carefully to understand the Scriptures.

Thus many who talk much of the word of God, and pretend a great reverence for it, may possibly at the last day be ranked among the despisers of it; because, although they have, perhaps, been much in reading of it, they never set themselves in good earnest to understand it, and so in effect might as well not have read it at all; for their reading of it is only from a superstitious opinion, as Turks, and Jesu, and Papiasts, turn over the books in reputation among them, not from the love of truth, not with a desire to understand the truth; that most people suppose they understand before they read their bibles, or however without reading their bibles; not to open their eyes, and to give them a more
a more just and distinct view of the ways and dispensations of God, such things they learn from other books; not to confirm and establish their minds in the faith of God and of Christ; not for those purposes, I fear, are the Scriptures read, but only in a customary, superstitious, or however in a very careless, superficial way: and therefore there are so few Christians that grow in grace, that rise in spiritual strength, peace, love, and joy, because there are so few that grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

The full knowledge of Christ most people presume they have attained long ago; and to talk of knowing more of Christ, or in a clearer and more rational way, is perfectly shocking to them. They have somewhere or other fixed the precise standard of Divine knowledge, and either more or less than that standard of theirs is impious and heretical. How then can they grow in the knowledge of Christ? How can they set themselves to understand the Scriptures, who in another way, as they think, have already gained the whole sum and body of spiritual understanding? See Rom. xv. 4. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. We have hope through that patience and comfort which is taught in the Scriptures; but the grounds and reasons of that patience and comfort must be understood, otherwise we cannot establish in our minds a sure and solid hope. Hence it is that the Christian hope, that faith and hope which overcometh the world, is so great a rarity; therefore so few rejoice in hope, because so few understand the Scriptures, which are the ground of the Christian hope. Lastly, because the Scriptures are but little understood, therefore they are so little valued. We delight not in them, because we know so little of them."

Let it be remembered, that we shall have the benefit of the Scriptures by studiously endeavouring to understand them. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. So far as we understand the word of truth, we shall be truly enlightened, our consciences will be rightly directed, and all our principles well established; we shall see its real excellency, and it will accordingly be valued and esteemed; we shall taste its comforts, feel its power, be convinced of its Divine original, and it will be pleasant and precious to us. The more we understand of the Scriptures, the more we shall with pleasure see the righteousness, wisdom, and goodness of all the Divine dispensations, that all of them are adjusted and settled by the love of a Father, and calculated to promote our happiness. This will draw our hearts to God, and shew us the infinite reasonableness of comporting with the constitutions of his grace.

If we are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, our faith will stand upon a sure bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious judgment of man; henceforth we shall be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, Ephes. iv. 14. but shall by use have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Thus we shall with our own eyes see the truth, and be instrumental in preferring the purity of our religion. Thus we shall grow up into Christ in all things, in knowledge, in faith, and love. Thus we shall be rooted and grounded in love, in the love of God, of truth, and of our
our neighbour. The knowledge we gain, whether it be more or less, being drawn from the true fountain, will compose our spirits, and incline us neither to despise the weaknesses of those that know less, nor to reject the instructions of those that may know more than ourselves.

These weighty considerations should engage us to read the Scriptures with all possible care and diligence, to study them with an upright desire to gain their true sense and meaning. We all know how much men are at variance about the sense of Scripture, one affirming that this, another that that is the true sense. So it may well be expected to be in our present weakness; and so God hath permitted it to be; not to give us occasion to cenfure, judge, and disparage one another, as is too common, for this is expressly forbidden; but this variety of sentiments is permitted, to teach us to cease from man, and should convince us that we ought not to reign our understandings or conceptions to any man's judgment whatsoever.


C H A P. XXXIX.

The History of Revelation, and some Objections to it answered.

I SHALL consider, first,

The authority and original of holy Scripture; and then,

The use and importance of it: it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Tim. iii. 16. and so is profitable for the noblest purposes, the enlightening of our minds, the purifying of our hearts, the regulating of our practice, and the saving of our souls.

As to the authority and original of holy Scripture, it is said, by a very good and sufficient judge, that it is given by inspiration of God. How we are to understand being given by inspiration of God, the Apostle Peter will inform us, 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. Knowing this, says he, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, sense, or impulse; meaning, that no prophecy did issue or proceed from the private sense or thoughts of the writer; it was not giving a loose to his own conceits and imaginations. For, as it follows, the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost; or by the holy Spirit of God, enlightening their minds, and directing them what to say. Thus the Scriptures are inspired, they are the word of God; and what is contained in them, we are to understand and reverence, as spoken by God himself. But then, in the strictest sense, this is to be understood only of what Prophets, as Prophets, have delivered to us; such as Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest.
No prophecy of Scripture did proceed from the private sense of the writer, but was dictated by the Spirit of God. But as for the historical writings, though doubtless, they owe their original to the special Providence of God, yet it is sufficient to suppose that they were wrote by men of probity, fully acquainted with the facts which they relate.

This premised, I should now advance a few arguments to establish the authority and excellency of the Scriptures, that they were indeed given by inspiration of God, or that in them holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit. But to prepare the way, it is necessary I should give a general account and history of Revelation; then remove some Objections which are levelled against it, as if it were needless, too partial, or too ineffectual, to be consistent with the Divine goodness; or as if we were not sufficiently secure, that we now have in possession those very books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded.

Revelation is that which makes known to us the will and ways of the most high God, the Father of the universe, the Fountain of all being and happiness, upon whom we have a necessary dependence for life, for understanding, and knowledge, for well-being, and enjoyment, at all times and in every respect; for without him we cannot live, we cannot breathe, we can have no kind or degree of sense and understanding. This is true. And it is equally true, that the best and most beneficent of Beings, the greatest and the kindest of all Fathers, could have no other end or design in creating mankind, but his own glory, and their happiness. The chief end of man must be to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever; for perfect goodness cannot be conceived to propose any lower end in making a creature so noble and excellent. But then it is certain, both from the holiness of God, and the nature of an intelligent rational being, that a character of holiness and virtue, of obedience, righteousness, or right conduct, is necessary, on our part, to our enjoyment of God, or our happiness in his favour and blessing. It is necessary that we love the great Author of our being, that we pay him all due honour and obedience, that we are dutifully submissive to his will, that we understand our dependence upon him, and what we have to expect from him, that we may be excited to gratitude, and a due improvement of his benefits.

We cannot love, honour, and obey God, unless we know him, and are acquainted with him; nor can we possibly have any knowledge or understanding, of any kind whatever, but what must come originally from God. Therefore, that God, our Father, should instruct and teach his creatures, whom he has made for the highest and noblest ends, in those things which immediately relate to his glory and their happiness, is perfectly consonant to his goodness and love. And that Infinite wisdom, the Lord and Proprietor of all Being, should have various ways of making known himself and his will to us, is also perfectly true. He hath produced a great variety of creatures with different powers and inclinations in our world, by them to shew that he can bestow upon us any kind or degree of being; he hath displayed his immense greatness, power, wisdom, and goodness, in the numberless glorious bodies which, by his hand, are perpetually rolled about us in the heavens. His continually providing
providing for our subsistence, in a way which is quite out of our power, plainly demonstrates our absolute dependence upon him, and obligations to him. This is the book of nature spread before all nations, and legible to every understanding; in which every attentive mind may read the perfections of God, and the main duties which we owe him. But, to him who made our senses and minds, and is always intimate to them, there must be many other possible ways of making known his will to us; as by an audible voice, a vision, or secret impressions upon our spirits. Therefore, to believe that God, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake to the ancient fathers by the Prophets, is believing a thing very possible, reasonable, and fitting.

And it is no improbable supposition, that in the earliest ages of the world, God should only communicate his will to pious men, and leave them to hand it down to others by tradition; for in those days the longevity of mankind favoured this manner of conveyance. With our grand parent Adam, Methuselah lived 243 years; with Methuselah, Shem, the son of Noah lived about 97 years; and with Shem, Jacob the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, lived 50 years, as appears from the history of Genesis. So that no more than three persons, Methuselah, Shem, and Jacob, were sufficient to hand down the knowledge and worship of the true God from Adam to the time when the children of Israel went down into Egypt, that is, through the space of 2238 years. But when the life of man was reduced to the narrow period of four score years, and the world on all sides was fallen into various sorts of corruption, and idolatry and ignorance of God generally prevailed among the nations, tradition evidently ceased to be a safe mean of conveyance.

It was then the Divine wisdom judgeth it a proper time to erect a peculiar kingdom, church, or congregation, in the world; and for its illumination gave the knowledge of his will and worship in writing, by the hand of his servant Moses; that by such writing, or scripture, divine truth might more easily be preferred, be further spread, and, when lost, more easily restored. This must be acknowledged a wise and proper expedient. After the time of Moses, God was pleased to give Revelations to the subsequent Prophets, as occasion required; till in the fulness of time, the great Prophet, the Son of God, came into the world, opened a new dispensation, and all the treasures of the Divine grace, which had not before been so clearly made known to the church and people of God. And what he and his Apostles taught is also committed to writing, and completes what we call the Canon of Scripture.

This is the general account and history of Revelation which I proposed to give. And we may here observe, that a written Revelation and the church of God are co-existent; that is to say, at the same time the church was brought into the world, the Scriptures were brought into the church; and both are so essentially connected, that take away the one and you take away the other. Take away the Scriptures, and we are reduced to the state of mere nature; our charter is destroyed, and our polity, as we are God's church and kingdom, is overthrown. We may indeed, possibly, pretend, as the Papists do, that we are, though deprived of the Scripture, still a church; yet without the Scriptures, as
our rule and foundation, we are not the church of God, but under a different head, it may be the Pope, or some other usurped authority. But this by the bye.

I shall now remove some Objections which may be levelled against Revelation in general.

It is pretended— To be quite needless, nature and reason being sufficient to direct any man in the plain way of his duty, without any supernatural assistance. I answer— It must be allowed, in general, that nature and reason are sufficient to direct any man in the way of his duty, so far as God, in his circumstances, expects duty from him; for God expects duty from every person only in proportion to the light he enjoys, and to the talents he hath received. But the experience of all mankind shews that nature and reason, by themselves, will advance but a little way in the knowledge of Divine things. Gentlemen in a land like ours, where, in spite of themselves, their nature and reason is enlightened and directed in a considerable degree by Revelation, may talk of the perfection and sufficiency of nature and reason.

If we look into those nations which are perfect strangers to Revelation, we shall find them grossly ignorant of the being, unity, and perfections of God, the dispensations of his Providence, the proper honour and worship that is due to him, the prayers we may address to his goodness, and the hopes we may entertain of his acceptance. They know nothing of the pardon of sin, the promises of God's mercy and blessing, nor of any thing belonging to the covenant of his love, the present privileges, or future glory of his kingdom. The resurrection from the dead, the day of judgment, the immortal life, which will be the reward of piety and virtue, and the death everlasting, which will be the sad lot of all the impenitently wicked, they are altogether, or in a great measure, unacquainted with. But all these are great principles in religion, and of great force to purify our spirits, ennoble our minds, animate our hopes, and guard us against the influence of bodily appetites, and the violence of temptation.

And however others may fare, in a great degree of darkness and ignorance, through the favourable allowance of God, yet surely every man's reason will tell him, that superior knowledge, and a more extensive view of the Divine dispensations, is absolutely necessary to a higher degree of goodness, comfort, obedience, and devotedness to God. What the poets relate may be true, that some primitive mortals subsisted only upon acorns and water, in dens and caves; and we know there are some parts of the world where the naked inhabitants enjoy very few conveniences of life; but shall we therefore despise the blessings of agriculture, and the various accommodations which make life happy and comfortable, and say they are needless? Would any man in England ever think of turning out naked into the fields and woods, because it is possible, and may somewhere in fact be true, that men may live upon wild fruit and water, without clothes, or any habitation but the dens and caves of the earth? Corn and other agreeable food, clothes, and commodious habitations, fitted up with proper furniture and utensils, are necessary to our kind and degree of life in the natural world; and so is Revelation to a corresponding kind and degree of spiritual life. The food,
food, raiment, and habitations we enjoy, are the gift of God's goodness, and it is our duty to accept and use them with thankfulness. In like manner, Revelation is the gift of God, and, as such, it ought to be received; and as it gives greater light, we are obliged to attend accordingly to it, because we must, in the nature of things, be accountable for it.

I may add upon this head, that however nature and reason, in their pure and most perfect state, may be sufficient to direct in the way of duty, yet, when nature is corrupted, and reason obscured, or almost quite extinguished, they are by no means sufficient to restore and recover themselves to the knowledge and obedience to the truth; because they themselves, who should be the physician to heal themselves, are sick and disenabled. But it was the primary intention of Revelation to restore and preserve the knowledge of God and of his will in a corrupt and degenerate world.

So far therefore I see no objection against Revelation, but it may be both very needful, and a very great blessing to mankind.

It may be said—*If this blessing was given to all mankind, who all equally stand in need of it; but whereas it is confined only to a part of mankind, while others are left to grope in the dark, how can it be accounted the gift of Divine goodness? For is not God equally the God, Father, and Saviour of all men? How then can it be consistent with his benevolence to confine the light of Revelation to some, which would so much contribute to the happiness of all? May we not then conclude, that a partial Revelation is no Revelation from God, nor worthy of our regard?*

I answer—*It is very certain that God is the Saviour of all men, that he is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. But while we are sure of this, we are not equally sure that our reason is a perfect rule for adjusting the distribution of his benefits: on the other hand, we may be sure that it is not. From the lowest to the highest degree of existence, from a grain of sand to the most glorious Angel in heaven, every higher degree of being is an incontrovertible proof that God may very justly, according to his own wisdom and good pleasure, bestow what gifts, endowments, privileges, and advantages upon his creatures he sees fit. He is debtor to none. Our understanding is no measure of his wisdom, neither are his dispensations to be cenured by our narrow and imperfect judgments. And methinks, we may as well make it an objection against the goodness of Divine Providence, that all men are not rich alike, wise alike, or knowing and learned alike.*

*Would you not think him a very foolish man, who should be displeased that God has made him rich, and placed him in easy circumstances, because there are many about him in a poor low condition? Who refuse wealth, or objects against plenty, because his neighbours are pinched, and make but a hard shift to get a living? Or who can be so absurd, as to reckon his superior knowledge and learning to be no valuable advantage, because there are numbers of illiterate persons, who are much below him in understanding? or that the possession of reason is no blessing, because there are so many idiots to be found among mankind? Or can you suppose there are any of the angelic body, or of those spirits*
spirits who excel us in all endowments and happiness, who despise their own blessings and heavenly felicity, as no gifts of the Divine bounty, because we in this earth are not set upon a level with them? And is it not as foolish and absurd to deny Revelation, or to argue against it, as improperly bestowed, and unworthy of the Divine goodnesse, because it is not communicated to all the world, as well as to ourselves? It is very unnatural to dispute against God’s goodnesse in any shape, and very presumptuous to direct him how to bestow it, either as to quantity, quality, or extent. If it is fact that he has given us any blessing, our duty surely is to be thankful, and to enjoy and improve it, whether he has bestowed more or less upon our fellow-creatures; being certain, where less is given, less will be required; and that the judge of the whole earth will, in the last day, deal with all in perfect equity and goodnesse. But,

If Revelation is such a blessing, surely it would appear in the fruit or effects of it. Whereas great numbers, if not the generality of those who enjoy Revelation, are as bad as the very heathen, who are strangers to it. And such evils have been produced, such variance, discord, and bloody persecutions, on account of revealed religion, that it may justly be questioned, whether it has not done more harm than good. What reason then have we to say, it is a valuable gift, or worthy of the Father of the universe?

To this I reply——That natural causes, by a sort of necessity, produce their proper effects; so fire always burns combustible matter, and a good medicine heals a disease; and that is no fire which will not burn proper matter, nor that a good medicine which never heals a disease. But moral causes are of a different nature, because their efficacy depends upon the choice and disposition of the subjects to whom they are applied; and therefore a moral means, or cause, may be in itself most excellent, though it happens to produce no good effect; nay, though accidentally it may prove the occasion of very bad effects. Our Lord’s ministry and doctrine was perfectly divine, and yet it had but small influence for good upon the Jewish nation; nay, on the other hand, excited their malice to that degree, that they slew the Prince of Life.

Whatever effects therefore Revelation may have produced in the world, still it is true, that it is a valuable gift, and worthy of the Divine goodnesse. But it must ever be remembered, that it is absolutely necessary to our receiving any benefit from Gospel means, that we be truly desirous to shake off the yoke of sin, and to cultivate and improve our minds in virtue and true holiness. If therefore we expect there is any life or power provided in the Gospel, which will anticipate our own thoughts and concerns, or that will begin to work upon our minds, and excite them to thoughtfulnesse and care, whilst we ourselves are thoughtless and unconcerned, we shall but deceive ourselves. For sure I am, there is nothing in the Gospel that encourages such an expectation: on the contrary, such an expectation is utterly inconsistent with the grand design of revealing the grace and mercy of God; which is, to awaken our consciences, and to excite us to care and diligence in our spiritual concerns.

The notion I have just now mentioned, manifestly tends to lull us asleep in security and indolence; and encourages to go on in the contempt
tempt of God and our own salvation; or in any of the paths of folly and sin, upon a presumption that we can never turn out, till we are constrained by some uncertain, accountable act of Almighty power. True indeed, our own thoughts, desires, and endeavours, will effect but little, without the help of Divine power: but yet, if we choose to live in ignorance, unbelief, or any branch of impiety and wickedness; if our hearts are so attached to the world, so engrossed by busineses, sensual pleasures and amusements, that we can spare no serious reflections for God, our souls, and a future world; I cannot see how we should be saved by any grace which the Gospel has provided in Jesus Christ.

It is certain, the Gospel hath produced many good effects, and will always do so, where it is received and attended to. For as for those pretended Christians who make it the occasion of variance, hatred, and persecution, we cannot, with any justice or propriety, say, that they do receive or attend to Revelation; nay, it is very certain that in fact they do not. Nor must we allow, that in Popish countries, where corruption of manners greatly prevails, and superstition, idolatry, and persecution are established, they enjoy the benefit of Revelation, when we know, that for many ages the use of the Scriptures hath been forbidden, and a religion taught and professed, which is quite foreign to the word of God.

But how can we be sure, that we have now in possession, those very books, entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded? May they not in length of time be lost, or quite altered from what they were at first? or so varied and changed by transcribers and translators, that we can never be sure that we have the true and genuine sense of Scripture?

I answer——No nation in the world can be more sure of any of their public acts and records, preserved in their archives with the utmost care, than we are of the truth of the Scriptures now in our hands. The Jews preferred the book of Moses, as the laws of their kingdom, in the most sacred part of the tabernacle and temple; those books, the Psalms and Prophets, were every where publicly read in their synagogues, every week, on the sabbath-day; their learned men, with the utmost exactness and scrupulosity, inspected and guarded the text, even so far as to count the very number of letters in every book. In short, our Lord and the Apostles frequently quote Moses, the Psalms, and Prophets, without any intimation that those books were in any respect altered or depraved. Whereas, had they indeed been corrupted, we need not doubt but our blessed Saviour would have reformed that as well as, or rather, more than any other influence of corruption among the Jews.

From our Lord's time, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were publicly read by the Jews in all parts of the world; and those Scriptures, and the Apostolic writings, as they came out, were read by Christians every where in their assemblies, and dispersed over all the world, where the religion of Jesus was professed, as containing the laws and rules of the religion he taught: so much that it was impossible to corrupt or deprave them. And for that reason, even the church of Rome, or those who erected that Antichristian power, never durst attempt to make the least alteration in the Scriptures, as knowing it would be to no pur-
pose; but instead of that, they claimed the sole right of interpreting the Scriptures, which served their ends full as well as corrupting them. For he who hath power to put what sense he pleases upon a law, may as effectually make it void, as he who destroys it.

And as for transcribers, or translators, it is for the same reason impossible they should make any material alterations. And it is in fact true, that they have not; for you may take any translation, in any language, or by any party among Christians, Papists as well as Protestants, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the covenant of the Lord our God, and the several duties to which we are thereby obliged, though they may differ in some things, and Commentators may put their own sense upon others. But the main things, I am well satisfied, have been preserved pure and entire in every translation, from the beginning to this day.

Thus the Objections against Revelation in general, which are all that I have heard of, are removed, I hope to satisfaction. Upon the whole, they seem to me to proceed not from a sober mind, sincerely desirous of the best knowledge and instruction; for how can one allow him to be a true scholar, or sincerely desirous of improving in useful learning, who, meeting with a book excellently adapted to that purpose, refuses to make use of it, because he is already possessed of the faculty of reason, or because it is not in the hands of every body, or because some have made a bad use of it, or because he doubts whether it may not have undergone some alterations; when the book, in itself considered, is an excellent performance, and capable of giving him the most profitable instruction?

The Bible, as we now have it in our hands, thanks be to God, is by far the most excellent book in our language; and, as we have it in our translation, is in itself, setting aside all circumstances, a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the Divine dispensations, and particularly of the Gospel of our salvation. So that whoever studies the Bible, the English Bible, is sure of gaining the knowledge and faith which, if duly applied to the heart and conversation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life. For which reason it is our wisdom and duty, to be much in reading and meditating upon the Bible, that our minds being well furnished with heavenly wisdom, and our hearts tinctured with a Divine Spirit, we may be prepared for glory, honour, and immortality.
That the Scriptures are given by Inspiration of God, appears from the express and frequent Assertions of Moses, the Prophets and Apostles.

I have already given a general account and history of revelation; and have shewn that it is perfectly consonant to the goodness and love of God, to the relation in which we stand in to him, and the high and glorious purposes for which he has given us our being; and that he committed revelation to writing at a very proper time, when the shortness of human life, and the general corruption of the world, rendered tradition no longer a safe mean of conveyance; and when the kingdom or peculiar congregation he had erected, required a standing light for the preservation of divine truth.

I have likewise endeavoured to remove some objections against revelation in general.

On this head I would beg leave to repeat, that never were any books more publicly and commonly known, being read and heard with the greatest reverence once every week, in both Jewish and Christian assemblies, for a very long tract of time, the Old Testament before the coming of our Lord, and the Old and New after his coming, to this very day. So that it is, in the nature of things, impossible that the holy Scriptures should be adulterated; nor could any man, who had a mind to alter or corrupt them, promise himself success in an attempt which must immediately be detected, and confounded, by thousands of copies every where dispersed, and constantly read before numerous assemblies, in the various languages of even more nations than ever composed the Roman empire in its largest extent.

Transcribers may indeed make literal mistakes, but those are easily corrected by a variety of manuscripts; and translators may differ in giving the literal sense of some words and phrases, but not so as to render the main subjects and substance of the Scriptures either obscure or uncertain. For you may take any translations in any language, or done by any party among Christians, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the covenant of the Lord our God, the state of things in a future world, and the several duties to which we are obliged, though they may not render the letter of the text in the same words, nor with the same propriety of expression. The more perfect and exact in all things any translation is, the better it is; but I am very sure, that all things pertaining to the dispensations of God, his grace and promises, and our hopes and duty, have been preserved pure and entire in every translation, from the beginning to this day. And this is abundantly enough for our instruction, comfort, direction, and edification.

Gentlemen in foreign business, who do not understand foreign languages, are obliged to carry it on by the help of translations; and if a letter in Italian, German, Spanish, or French, was put in the hands of twenty translators, there are great odds but every translation would differ,
differ, more or less, in some expressions. The same words or phrases would hardly be rendered in the same manner by every one of the translators; and yet they might all agree with respect to the sense of the merchant: and that being all this correspondent wants to understand, he will never think it worth his while to enter into minute particulars, or a critical propriety of phrases, which have nothing to do with his business. Just so it is with reference to the translation of the Bible. In above the space of an hundred years, learning may have received considerable improvements, and by that means some inaccuracies may be found in a translation more than a hundred years old. But you may rest fully satisfied, that as our English translation is, in itself, by far the most excellent book in our language, so it is a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the Divine dispensations, and particularly of the Gospel of our salvation; insomuch that whoever studies the Bible, the English Bible, is sure of gaining that knowledge and faith which, if duly applied to the heart and conversation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life.

[But you may say, how then comes it to pass, that learned men differ so much about the sense of Scripture? I answer—They differ not so much about the literal sense, or translation of Scripture, as about the construction which they put upon the literal sense. For example, all are agreed that those words, 

\[\textit{Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you,}\]

are rightly and well translated; but the question is, what is the meaning of them? The Papist will tell you, they mean, that the bread in the Lord's supper is really turned into the body, soul, and divinity of Christ; the Protestant very justly denieth the monstrous and idolatrous absurdity, and affirms, that the bread is only a figurative representation of Christ's sacrificed body. Translators are generally pretty well agreed, but divines differ very much about the sense of Scripture, which may afterwards be considered.]

Thus, by demonstrating the reasonableness and expediency of revelation in general, by removing objections against it, and by shewing the sufficiency of the translation, which, thanks to God, is in all our hands, the way is prepared —

To advance a few arguments to establish the authority and excellency of the Scriptures; that they were indeed given by Infpiration of God, or that, in them, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit.

We have sufficient reason to believe that we have in our hands the very books that were written by Moses, by the Prophets, and by the Apostles of Christ. Now, that those books were given by Inspiration of God, or that the persons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from heaven, will appear —

From their own express and frequent assertions. Moses and the Prophets always declare they spake in the name of the Lord, and delivered to the people what they received in commission from him; the Apostles likewise assure us, that they were taught by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, were endued with the Spirit of God, and commissioned by him to preach the Gospel to all nations. And we have all the reason in the world to believe they have told us the truth; for, if they have not, they
must be very bad, designing men, who solemnly and publicly fathered upon God, constitutions, laws, doctrines, and declarations which they knew very well were false and fictitious, the creatures of their own invention, obtruded upon the world to serve some selfish, sinister purposes. But, for any thing we can see, they appear to be persons of the highest character for honour and probity. In the whole of their conduct we find the utmost integrity and disinterestedness, and in every part of their history and writings the utmost simplicity and impartiality.

We may carry this argument further, and set it in a still stronger light in the case of the Prophets. For if, when they declared they spake in the name of God, and by a commission from him, they declared a falsehood, they must certainly know that it was a falsehood; and if they knew it was a falsehood, they were not only very wicked, but even void of common sense. For the Prophets, in a long series one after another, got nothing by speaking in the name of the Lord, but scorn and contempt from the generality of their countrymen. When they entered upon the ungrateful office, they renounced all worldly views, and were harrassed and persecuted in proportion to their fidelity in executing it.

Now this is too much by far for any pious fraud to bear, even in the case of a single person, much more in a series of succession of men in several generations. An impostor, like Mahomet, may carry his pretences very high, but he can never bear the furnace of persecution: that terrible scourge will either silence his false and arrogant claims, or force him to take up arms, if it is in his power, for his own vindication and security. But the Prophets were naked men, who, without the least dependence upon worldly power or policy, opposed nothing but a divine commission to very unkind and severe ulage. Now there is nothing to be found in human nature, or in any supposable state of things, that can possibly account for this conduct, but either that really they had a divine commission, or else that they were disordered in their heads, and had lost their senses. But their writings prove they were men of good sense, and of a sound and excellent judgment; therefore, nothing remains but that they really acted by a divine commission.

The force of this argument will be seen even still more evidently in the case of the Apostles. No history in the world has been better preferred than that of the New Testament. There we find that Jesus Christ had gathered, while he was upon earth, some hundreds of disciples, who all of them made profession of faith in him immediately after his death, declaring that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Particularly, the Apostles, with several others, went about preaching the Gospel, first in Judea, then in all parts of the Roman empire, perilling men to believe in Christ, affirming that he was the Son of God, that all the wonderful things related of him were true, and that they had a commission from Heaven to teach, spread, and propagate his religion every where, though they knew they should every where meet with the most violent opposition, and the cruellest treatment. Now, they must either be fully convinced in their own minds that their assertions were true; or, if they knew that the Gospel, and their commission to preach it, was a forgery, we must conclude they were distracted,
and had lost the use of understanding and reason. For supposing our blessed Lord never did or said any of those things which the Apostles repeated, and that they had no instructions or commission from him to preach the Gospel, then we must suppose they entered into a foolish and frantic confederacy after this manner:

"Men and Brethren, what that seducer was, who lived among us the other day, and how justly he suffered death for his vile imposture, we, of all men living, have most reason to know; and though others, who were less intimately acquainted with him, and his ways of deceiving, might have some opinion of his worth and honesty, yet we, who were the daily companions of his conversation, saw nothing in him answerable to the greatness of his pretensions, but that his design was, by all the boldest arts of craft and hypocrisy, to get a name in the world: and therefore let us enter into the most solemn agreement to propagate the belief of this notorious cheat among mankind, and to feign all manner of lies in its confirmation; to aver that we saw him restore eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and life to the dead; and though it be all false, yet let us confidently report and assert it to the very last drop of our blood."

"And because, after all his great and glorious pretences of being no less than the Son of God, he was at last executed as a vile malefactor, with all the circumstances of shame and dishonour, we must agree among ourselves upon some story to wipe off this disgrace. Let us therefore resolve to affirm, with undaunted steadiness, that after he was thus dishonourably crucified, the third day he rose again; often conversed with us, in the same familiar way as he had always done before his execution; and that, after a while, we saw him ascend up into heaven. But then, we must be sure to stand unalterably to this bold falsehood, and persevere to death itself in the assertion. For what absurdity is there in throwing away our lives, with no other prospect than that of final perdition? And why should any man think it hard to suffer stripes, bonds, imprisonments, reproaches, dishonour, and death itself, with this view only?"

This, or something like it, must be the sense and resolution of the Apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, upon supposition they knew and believed that the Gospel, and their commission to preach it, was a forgery. In this case, a set of men in private and low life, without any manner of worldly power or interest; in the certain prospect of all manner of opposition, of sacrificing all that is dear and valuable in life, of suffering all manner of indignities, tribulations, and cruelties, and of exposing themselves to all the terrors of death; must agree together to propagate throughout the whole world a system of falsehood, knowing it to be false, directly contrary to their own consciences, and to all their interests both in this and a future world.

None but a company of madmen, seized with the most extravagant frenzy, and void of all sense and reason, could possibly join in such a design. Whereas, if we peruse their writings, we shall find that the Apostles were men of the finest sense; not only in full possession of understanding, but endowed with knowledge and wisdom in a degree far beyond the most eminent philosophers, or masters of reason, that ever had
had been in the world. They had a surprising acquaintance with God and the perfections of his nature; they set the dispensations of his wisdom, and the grand designs of his love, in the clearest and most amiable light; they well understood the whole system of morality, and fixed every branch of it upon its proper foundation: upon principles either self-evident or allowed, they demonstrate and establish the whole scheme of the Gospel. The Apostles were so far from being void of common sense, that they were, in fact, men of the best sense, of the most accurate and sublime knowledge, of the most excellent and divine spirit, next to their Lord and Master, that the world ever was acquainted with. Therefore their espousing and asserting the Gospel with so much zeal could not proceed from any disorder in their heads.

There remains then but one other cause to which it can possibly be assigned, and it is this, that they were fully persuaded of the truth of what they reported. And if they were fully persuaded of the truth of what they reported, then it follows, that what they reported was certainly true. They were fully satisfied that it was true, and they were perfectly capable of receiving the clearest evidence, and fullest satisfaction; for observe, what they reported was not a matter of mere opinion, as in the case of superstition, nor a warm suggestion or secret impulse upon their minds, as in the case of enthusiasm, but bare simple matter of fact. We cannot, say they, but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Acts iv. 20. They were things, not which they conceived, or fancied, but which all of them, which great multitudes of all sorts of people, had often and openly, for the space of three or four years together, seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears. And that they were not mistaken, or deceived, they were so fully satisfied, that they ventured all they had in the world, and life itself, upon the truth of what they had heard and seen. Consequently, their assurance must be in the highest and fullest degree of satisfaction, leaving no room for doubt or uncertainty.

However some nowadays may cavil and object, it is certain the Apostles, who were the familiar companions of our Lord, had not the least scruple or difficulty about any thing related in the Gospel. They were perfectly satisfied they saw Christ upon earth; that they conversed with him; that they heard the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth; that they saw him work all his miracles; that they saw him crucified and dead; that they saw him alive again within a few days; that they heard him give then a commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, and promise them success; that they actually saw him ascend into heaven; that the Holy Ghost actually fell upon them on the day of Pentecost; and that by his influences they actually felt themselves endowed with new and miraculous powers, which accompanied them during the course of their ministry. And, to their being fully persuaded of the truth of these things, and to no other possible cause, can we assign their steady and zealous endeavours to publish and spread the Gospel every where.

Add to all this, that the Apostles were surprisingly successful in preaching the Gospel. These men in private and low life, these defenceless men, quite destitute of all temporal power and interest, only by the force of
of truth, the truth of the Gospel which they preached, and the power which they received from their Master, after he was gone to heaven, encountered the fury of the multitude, the most inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of superstition, the hatred of the Jews, the contempt of the Greeks, the power of the Romans, the pride of the philosophers, and the policy of statesmen; all these difficulties they encountered, and surmounted them all. The doctrine they taught, like the sun, enlightened the whole world, in a manner, all at once; and infinite multitudes of people, both from city and villages, were, by the Apostles preaching, brought into the church, like corn into a granary.

All this, taken together, amounts to a sufficient proof, that the Apostles are to be credited when they affirm, that they received their instructions and commission from the Son of God; and upon the foot of this argument alone, I am, for my own part, as fully convinced that the Apostles were inspired by the Spirit of God, and that they have in their writings infallibly delivered the truth, in all things pertaining to the Christian faith and doctrine, as I am of any mathematical proposition, or that twice two is equal to four. The proof indeed is of a different kind, but fully convincing and satisfactory.

And if our Lord came from God to teach us the truth, and if his Apostles received from him their instructions, commission, and the holy Spirit, then it follows, that the books of Moses, and of the Prophets, are undoubtedly the word of God, and that the sacred history may be depended upon as a true account of things; for those books are not only attested by our Lord, and his Apostles in general, to be the word of God, given by Divine inspiration, and a true rule of knowledge, faith, and doctrine, but particular passages are frequently produced in proof or confirmation of the doctrine they taught; and almost every single part of the history, from the beginning to the end, as of Adam, Enoch, Noah, the Deuc, Sodom and Gomorrab, Abraham, the Israelites, and their miraculous deliverance from Egypt and settlement in the land of Canaan, and all the surprising events in their story, are referred to as true and authentic.

What Jesus Christ and his Apostles have reported and taught in the books of the New Testament, is certainly the truth, as they received it from God. And if so, then the Scriptures of the Old Testament are also given by inspiration of God, a storehouse of sacred and religious knowledge, of undoubted credit and veracity; for our Lord and his Apostles have represented and established them as such.

Thus the frequent and express assertions of Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles, taken in connexion with their proper circumstan-
ces, is a proof of the truth of revelation as it stands in the Scrip-
tures.

Let me recommend it to your serious consideration, that we certainly have in our hands an inestimable treasure, a revelation from heaven, a sure word of prophecy, shining as a light in a dark place; a magazine of the most excellent knowledge, clearly displaying the Divine nature and perfections, opening fully the dispensations of his wisdom and good-
ness from the beginning of the world, shewing the riches of his grace and love to mankind; delivering the most excellent precepts of wisdom, truth,
truth, and holiness, for the purifying our hearts, and directing our conversation; and proposing the noblest motives to engage us to, and encourage us in, the practice of all virtue and goodnes. We cannot over-value this blessing, neither can we despise it without great guilt. We are accountable to God for the use we make of it. Let us esteem it in proportion to its worth, and study it as the rule of our life, as the grand source of our comfort and hope, and as an infallible guide to eternal glory.

CHAP. XLI.

The Divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures, proved from the Harmony and Agreement of the several Writers of them.

HAVING gone through the first argument, I proceed—To prove the Divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures; which we may do from the Harmony and Agreement of the several Writers of them.

They are not a book compiled by a single author, nor by many hands acting in confederacy in the same age; in which case there would be no difficulty in composing a consistent scheme, nor would it be any wonder to find the several parts in a just and close connexion: but the Scriptures were done by several hands, in very different conditions of life, from the throne and sceptre down to the lowest degree, and in very distant ages, through the long space of about 1500 years, when the world must have put on a quite new face, and men must have different interests to pursue; which naturally would have led a spirit of imposture to have varied its schemes, and to have adapted them to different stations in the world, and to the different turns and changes in every age.

David wrote about 400 years after Moses, and Isaiah about 250 after David, and Matthew more than 700 years after Isaiah; and yet these authors, with all the other Prophets and Apostles, write in perfect Harmony, confirming the Authority of their predeceflors, labouring to reduce the people to the observance of their instructions, and loudly exclaiming against the neglect and contempt of them, and denouncing the severest judgments upon such as continued disobedient.

This was the principal work of the Prophets in a long succession. And it is well known our Lord came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil, i.e. to vindicate and illustrate their meaning, to complete what was imperfect, and to answer the highest ends of what was typical and figurative. Now, this is a very strong proof that the Scriptures were throughout dictated by one and the same spirit, which could be no other then the Spirit of God, and of truth. It is allowed, as in the case of Mahometism, that an imposture, or religious fraud, may be
be handed down from one age to another, but not by several different persons, all making equal pretensions to a Divine authority and communion. For in this case they are to be considered, not as a succession of teachers, deriving their doctrine from one common original, but as single and distinct impostors; and consequently, every one in a distant age, and in a quite different state of things, would set up for himself, and seek a singular glory by building upon a distinct and separate foundation from others. It would signify little to an impostor, who has no other intention but to advance his own honour and renown, to pretend a communion from heaven, only to give reputation to another deceiver, by confirming what he has already established.

Therefore, as the Writers of the holy Scriptures, though they all claim a Divine Authority, yet write in perfect connexion and Harmony, mutually confirming the doctrine and testimony of each other, and concurring to establish the very same religious truths and principles, it is a strong proof that they all derive their instructions from the same fountain, the wisdom of God, and were indeed under the direction and illumination of his Spirit.

We may take another argument from ourselves, as we make profession of faith in Jesus Christ. For our profession of Christianity, who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, is a proof that the Gospel spread itself over all the Roman empire; for, from Jerusalem, it came to us by a gradual progress, and, advancing from one country to another, arrived at length in these islands of Great-Britain and Ireland. Nobody can doubt or deny that the Christian faith is, and for many ages past has been, embraced in all those numerous and distant lands which once composed the Roman empire, and even in countries far beyond the utmost bounds thereof. In all these spacious tracts the Christian faith, in one form or other, has been professed; and baptism and the Lord's-supper, in one form or other, have been administered, in a succession of ages, quite up to the times of the Apostles and our Lord.

It is most certain that baptism and the Lord's-supper, those summaries of the whole Gospel, were not instituted in any following age, by any one party of Christians, but have been handed down to us, and to all parties among Christians, from the very mouth and institution of Jesus Christ. No fact can be more evident than this. From our Lord therefore, and his Apostles, the Gospel spread over the greatest part of the known world, which before the publication of the Gospel was universally involved in idolatry, established by long custom and human laws, strongly guaranteed by all the power and learning of the world, by all the zeal of the wildest superstition, by all the violence and obstinacy of prejudice, by all the blindness of profound ignorance, and all the incorrigible perverseness of corrupt and dissolute manners: a complication of caues which would for ever have bid defiance to any philosophy or wisdom of the few that can be supposed to attain a better sense in the midst of universal darkness and depravity. But the Gospel gained a most complete and extensive victory over all these, demolished every idol in the heathen world, and every where erected the trophies of a conquering Jesus.

Now this surprising change, which is notorious to all mankind, must be
be effected either by human power and policy, or by a divine and supernatural influence. By human power and policy great revolutions have been brought about in all ages and parts of the world; and therefore we do not wonder at the spread of the Mahometan or Turkish religion, as it was propagated by the sword, under the conduct of a mighty warrior and politician, who by ravages, bloodshed, and defolations, conquered many nations and kingdoms, laid the foundation of a potent and spacious empire, and thus by violence opened a way for the reception and extensive profefion of his newly-devifed religion. But the religion of Jesus was triumphant, not only without the aid of human power or policy, but even in direct opposition to it.

For the plain fact is this. A poor young man, about 30 years of age, called Jesus, a carpenter's fon, of no education or learning, without house or habitation, without the leaft human interest or influence, begins to preach up reformation among the Jews, the moft suspicious and bigoted people in the world; declares himself the Son of God; gathers a few Disciples, persons in the same low and naked condition with himself, fishermen, publicans, and such like, and sends them about preaching what he called the Gospel of the kingdom of God. He was despifed by the generality, and greatly oppofed and harrassed by the men of power and learning. However, he fifted for himself as well as he could; but, after he had preached three or four years, they caught him and crucified him as an infamous malefactor.

This direful event, which would have totally ruined an impositor, he plainly forefaw and foretold; but, not in the leaft discouraged by the prospect, he ordered his Disciples to go and preach his Gospel over all the world, promifing that after his death he would affift them with power from heaven, in virtue of which they should certainly succeed. They believed him, they set out, they preached up their crucified Master as the Lord and Saviour of all mankind; and, which is very strange, under the conduct and influence of a master who was dead to this world, and gone to the other state, they prevailed; and in spite of the fury of the multitude, the moft inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of superfiition, the hatred of the Jews, the contempt of the Greeks, the power of the Romans, the pride of philosophers, and the policy of statesmen, their doctrine, like the sun, almoft at once, enlightened the world, overthrew the whole fystem of Pagan idolatry and religion, and advanced as far as our own country in the darkeft and remotefi corner of the earth.

Of this we ourselves, we Christians, are living monuments and proofs: we have received the Gospel, we own it a glorious and shining light; we have renounced the idolatry and vain conversation of our fathers; we acknowledge and worship the living and true God; we confefs and adore the crucified Jesus, our king and head, and hope for eternal life through him. Now, there is no possible way of accounting for this, but by allowing that Jesus really was the Son of God, that he really rose again from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, and that he actually from thence fent his Disciples the aids and powers which he had promised, and which were so far above all that is human, that they carried their own.
evidence along with them, and rendered their doctrine so surprisingly successful.

And as Jesus did not send his Disciples to preach to all the world, till after his death, and as he then, after his death, did actually furnish them with all miraculous powers to render their doctrine effectual, this is the most conceiving proof that his doctrine was divine, and that he himself was actually gone to heaven, and lived there in the highest interest and favour with God. For that an impostor, a deceiver, hateful to the God of truth, should, after his death, be able to animate, instruct, authorize, and empower a company of men, otherwise destitute of all assistance, and labouring under all possible difficulties, to throw down all the religions of the world, and to erect a new one in their stead, is utterly impossible. It is therefore certain, beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ was sent from heaven to reveal the Gospel to the world. And as we are very sure that we have in our hands the writings of his Apostles, we may be as sure, that they contain a revelation from heaven, or that doctrine which Christ received from God and delivered to his Disciples. And if so, then the writings of the Old Testament are also the word of God, for Christ and his Apostles declare them to be such. Therefore all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

The same thing may be proved by the long train of miraculous operations which could be effectual only by a Divine power, and which were wrought in confirmation of the mission of Prophets and Apostles; as also from the spirit of prophecy predicting future events at a great distance of time, which no human wisdom or sagacity could possibly foresee, and yet were actually and punctually fulfilled in correspondence to the prediction. But as a minute detail of particulars would perhaps be somewhat tedious, I shall single out one instance of the Divine miraculous power, and the truth of the prophetic spirit; which instance has been in all ages a standing proof of revelation, and which still exists, and is before the eyes of the present generation, in almost all countries of the world; I mean, the present state and being of the Jews. For this people, as they were originally chosen to be the repository or repository of Divine knowledge, by the revelation which was given to them, so they were also intended to be visible proofs of the truth of it in all ages and parts of the world. Our Lord, contrary to all human probability, while he was on the earth, foretold the destruction of the Jewish temple and polity, and their dispersion among all nations, which was exactly accomplished in about 40 years after. And in this dispersed state they have now continued about 1700 years, in great numbers, and in great ignominy and contempt, and yet quite distinct and separate from all the people among whom they lived.

This appears to me a standing miracle; nor can we attribute it to any other cause but the will and extraordinary interposition of heaven, when it is considered, that of all the famous nations of the world who might have been distinguished from others with great advantage, and the most illustrious marks of honour and renown, as the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, who all in their turns held the empire of the world, and were, with great ambition, the lords of mankind;
mankind; yet these, even in their own countries, are dissolved into the bulk of mankind, nor is there a person upon earth can boast he is descended from those renowned and imperial ancestors.

Whereas a small nation, generally despised and hated, and which, though now upon pretty good terms with us, both Pagans and pretended Christians have for many ages treated with the utmost insult, indignity, outrage and cruelty, and which therefore, one would imagine, every soul that belonged to it should have gladly disowned, and have been willing to have loft the odious name by mixing with any other nation; yet, I say, this hated people,arrassed and butchered more or less by all mankind, banished and bandied from one country to another, and who scarce had any peace till trade and traffic brought the world to a better temper, and more favourable treatment of them—I say, this hated people have, under all temptations to the contrary, and against the ordinary course of things, continued in a body distinct and separate from all mankind, even in a state of dispersion, for about 1700 years.

This demonstrates, that the wisdom which formed them into a peculiar people, that they have almost ever since the deluge, for about 3600 years, remained in a distinct and separate state, and are still likely to do so, is not human, but Divine; for no human wisdom or power could form, or however could execute, such a vast, extensive design. It must be the wisdom and power of that God alone, who is the same in every age, and who in every age has exercised a peculiar providence over his peculiar people, the descendents of Abraham his servant. And thus the present state and being of the Jews is everywhere a public and standing evidence of the truth of revelation, in two respects.

1. With respect to their long dispersion, or captivity, as they call it, and the various calamities they were to suffer therein.

This is foretold in several places, particularly, Deut. xxviii. 63, 64, 65. The Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and bring you to nought, as to their singular privileges and enjoyments; and ye shall be plucked off from the land, whither ye go to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other—and among these nations thou shalt find no edge, neither shalt the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and sorrow of mind. Ezek. xxxvi. 19. I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed among the countries. I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee among the countries. And our Lord predicts, Luke xxi. 24. And they, the Jews, shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.

2. With respect to their being preferred in their dispersion, and preferred as a distinct and separate body, this also was plainly predicted. Deut. xxvi. 44. Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them. Jer. xxx. 10, 11. Fear not, O my servant, Jacob; neither be dismayed, O Israel; for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; for though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee,
The word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off; and say, be that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. Ver. 35, 36, 37. Thus faith the Lord, who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night; who divides the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, faith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus faith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, faith the Lord. Rom. xi. 25, 26. Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

These, and many more passages, too numerous to be now quoted, plainly shew that it was the design of Divine Providence to preserve the Jewish nation, in their dispersion, and to preserve them a distinct and separate people in order to their future restoration. And we, and many other nations, at this day, see these predictions made good in the present state of the Jews, who have been so long, and still are miraculously preserved separate from all other people. Now this is, in my opinion, a standing miracle, a wonderful work of Divine Providence, and as strong a proof of revelation, as if we were to see the dead, every year, rise out of their graves in confirmation of it. For we have still among us, after so long a time, and so many various revolutions in human affairs, the peculiar people whom God, above three thousand years ago, separated unto himself; the very people who are the principal subject of revelation, and who are laid there to be the principal objects of his providence; and we see them at this day to be so in a very surprising manner.

Therefore in their present state we may plainly read the ancient promise made to Abraham, the head and root of the nation, the many wonderful works wrought for them from first to last, and the truth of prophetic predictions; in the present state of the Jews we may read the truth of the Gospel, for the rejection of which God rejected them, and scattered them over the face of the earth. In short, we are sure there was such a people as the Jews, to whom God delivered the revelation of his will in ancient times; for this very people exist among us at this day, and preserve among them that very revelation, with the most sacred and religious care. And we are sure the numerous predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, relating to their future state, are true, for we see them made good in the present state of the Jews: and therefore we may be as sure that the holy Scriptures are given by inspiration of God; for only the Spirit of God could foretell such events; and the same Spirit which foretold these events, spake in the Prophets and Apostles, and inspired them with all that Divine wisdom and knowledge which we find in all their writings.

I might add the long apostacy, and general corruption of the professors of Christianity, so plainly foretold, and under such express and particular characters, in the Apostolic writings. This, all the world may see, has been abundantly fulfilled in the church of Rome. Now, only the
the Spirit of God could foresee such a distant and deplorable state of things, which no human probability could have conjectured would have risen out of the pure and heavenly doctrine of Christ. But the Spirit which predicted this event, is the very same which was poured out upon the Apostles, and enlightened their minds with the knowledge of the Gospel; therefore the Apostles, who wrote the New Testament, had the Spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By these arguments I am pointing out to you the only fountain of life and happiness, a mine infinitely more valuable than of gold and precious stones, a plentiful magazine of heavenly and everlasting wealth, an inexhaustible fund of solid comfort and peace, the holy Scriptures, the word of the ever-blessed God; a treasure of immense value, which we have in our possession, if we are wise to make a right improvement of it.

There remains yet another argument to prove the Divine Authority and Original of Scripture, taken from the internal excellency of it. This I shall consider in the following chapter.

**CHAP. XLII.**

The internal Worth and Excellency of Scriptures considered, as containing the best Principles of Knowledge, Holiness, and Comfort.

The arguments which I have already advanced, are taken from the external evidence that the Scriptures are the word of God. Proceed we now to consider their internal Worth and Excellency, which more fully and directly demonstrates their Divine original, and falls in with the second part of my design, which was to consider the use and importance of the holy Scriptures.

Considering the Scriptures as a gift and blessing from God, the Father of lights and the Fountain of all good, for our improvement in knowledge and holiness, in order to our being advanced to eternal glory and happiness, we may in general conclude, that the Scriptures are in worth and usefulness fully proportionable to the wisdom and goodness of the Donor, and to the noble and beneficent end for which they are intended. They are a glorious display of heavenly light, irradiating the darkness of the world, which otherwise would have been involved in the blackest night of ignorance. Let it be observed, to the honour of the Bible, that it is the book which, under the Divine Providence, has preserved in the world the knowledge of the one true God, which otherwise must have been lost and extinguished. For when God in his infinite wisdom was pleased to call Abraham, and separate his family to the purposes of revelation, idolatry, even in those early days, not long after
the flood, was so far spread, that even Abraham's family were idolaters, and served other gods; and so far did the corruption of religion prevail, that all nations, losing the true idea of one God and Father of all, fell into the fouleft idolatry, the groeffeft superflition, and all the abominable vices in connexion with them, except the nation of the Jews, who enjoyed the word and revelation of God. And it was the word and revelation of God, at the time our Saviour came into the world, which enlightened the Gentiles, and so generally reduced them to the worship and obedience of the everlafting Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

What knowledge of the living God, what detestation of idol-worship, what belief of a future state of rewards and punishment, Mahomet has propagated in the world, he received partly from Jews, and partly from Christians, who had learnt those things from revelation; though, as he could not read himself, with much confusion, and a large mixture of fiction and falsehood. Is any part of the Christian world sunk into superflition and idolatry? It is because they have shut up the Scriptures, forbidden the free use of them, and commanded the people under pain of damnation to follow other guides. Is any part of the Christian world reformed from the gross errors and monstrous corruptions of Popery? It is because they have asserted the authority of the Scriptures, refused the use of them, and opened them again to free and common perusal. Nay further—Is the Deity, or the man who in a Christian land denies or disparages revelation, acquainted with the first cause, the Fountain of all being, power, life, and happiness, the universal Sovereign? Has he a clear idea of the system of duties which we owe to our Maker, and to one another; or any expectation of a future state of felicity? It is because he has lighted his twinkling candle at this refulent Sun, which he unnaturally, ungratefully, and weakly endeavours to extinguish. I say weakly, because this Sun, which God, ever since the creation of his church and kingdom, has caused to shine in the moral world, shall by his Providence be preserved, and shine with a growing lustre, so long as the Sun in the firmament shall endure.

Under God, it must be owned the instrumental cause of all the true religion and piety that is to be found in the world, which, for aught we can see, notwithstanding all the philosophy and wisdom of man, would have been totally lost among all the nations; and it shall be establisbhed more and more, it shall shine forth more and more, it shall be honoured more and more, in the truth of its doctrines, in the wisdom of its precepts and instructions, in the accomplishment of its predictions and promises, and in the appearing of our Lord at the last day, to receive into his joy all that know God, and obey his Gospel. It shall be established, it shall shine, it shall be honoured, when those who now despise and disparage it, shall be confounded and perish for ever.

Thus much may be truly said of the usefulness of Scripture in general; which gives it infinitely the preference to all books of mere human compofure, that it has been the means of preserving in the world the grand principles of religion, the knowledge of the being and perfections of
of God, and of that true spiritual worship which alone pleases him, and ennobles, purifies, and comforts our souls. And just in proportion as the Bible is received, esteemed, and diligently studied, true religion has prevailed, and will always prevail and flourish. On the other hand, in proportion as the Scriptures are unknown, neglected, abused, and perverted, ignorance, idolatry, irreligion, error, superstition, and wickedness, have and will spread their gloom, and more or less infect nations and particular persons.

The Scriptures contain principles which must be allowed to be of a superior and most excellent kind; the best principles of knowledge, holiness, and comfort.

In the Scriptures we find the best principles of knowledge. There the mind expatiates in a boundless field of heavenly light, and clearly views the prospects of truth, where the eye of mere nature could never have penetrated. There you see the being of God asserted, his nature and perfections, his glorious Majesty and universal Sovereignty, described with the justest propriety of sentiment, and magnificence of language. There you read——“That the everlasting God, the Lord, the Poffessor of all being, of all wisdom and power, made the earth and created man upon it; that he stretched out the heavens, and commanded all their hosts. He measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. He toucheth the mountains, and they smite; he looks upon the earth, and it trembleth. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the earth. Behold, he takes up the isles as a very little thing. All nations are before him as nothing, and they are counted to him as less than nothing and vanity. "The whole universe rests wholly upon his arm, and is entirely subject to the dispensations of his will. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who has created these things, that brings out their host by number? He calls them all by name; by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one of them fails; in understanding he is infinite; he is mighty in wisdom, wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. He fills heaven and earth; nor can any hide himself in secret places from his all-penetrating eye. The earth is full of his glory and riches; and his providence is perpetually exercised about all and every one of his creatures. All power belongs to him; he can help and cast down, he can save and destroy; and nothing is too hard for the Lord. God is love; the Lord is good, and doth good; he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; he is daily loading us with benefits. The righteous he will bless, to them he will give grace and glory; and even to the wicked the Lord is plenteous and rich in mercy. He is a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he. He is glorious in holiness, and of purer eyes than to behold evil; neither can he look on iniquity. And this God, so great, so glorious, is our God, our Maker, Owner, and Ruler, our Father, Shepherd, and Friend.”

This is the doctrine of Scripture; and a sentence or two in this holy book
book will give you much clearer conceptions of God than all the vo-
lumes of philosophy, wrote by strangers to revelation. There you are
taught the various dispensations of the Divine wisdom and goodness,
from the beginning of the world to this day, and even to the end of
time. There you see the excellent schemes which he has formed for the
instruction, reformation, and happiness of the children of men; and
we read with pleasure the numerous instances of his favour to the righ-
teous, and with dread the terrors of his vengeance upon the wicked.
There we find a twofold covenant; of works, which threatens death to
every transgression; of grace, which grants the benefit of repentance
and pardon, and promises all needful supplies of strength to the sincere
and upright. There we learn how he erected a kingdom among the
nations, or a peculiar congregation, to prevent the universal corruption
of the world, and, like a beacon upon a hill, to diffuse the light of
Divine knowledge in the darkness of the earth. At length we see the
Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, appear, to take
away sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, or salvation, to illustrate
the grace of God, and give the plainest explications of his will and our
duty; to shew the future world in the clearest and most awful view, and
to appoint the most powerful means to attract our hearts to God, and to
guide our feet into the ways of peace.

In his Gospel we see the dead, small and great, restored to life, and
appearing before his judgment-feat, to receive a sentence according to
what they have done in the body. There he has opened the glories of
heaven to our sight, and shewn to our faith the far more exceeding and
eternal weight of glory, the asured consequence of patient continuance
in well-doing; he has also uncovered the bottomless pit, the blackness
of darkness for ever, which will be the terrible portion of all impenitent
workers of iniquity. In the Scriptures the state of the church to the
end of the world is described, and we see the present state of things cor-
respondent to prophetic descriptions.

I should exceed my bounds, only to mention the several heads of in-
struction and knowledge with which the word of God is crowned. I
shall mention but one more, and that is, the design of our present being
in this world, which is there represented, agreeably to the appearances
of things, and the wisdom and goodness of God, to be not for enjoy-
ment, but for trial; not to gain temporal pleasures or possessions, but
to discipline our souls, and to prepare them for immortal honour and
glory. In particular, the many afflictions incident to our frailty, are
set in a true and encouraging light, as the discipline and correction of our
heavenly Father; not for our destruction, but for our improvement in
holiness, to purify our spirits from sensuality, to draw our regards to
things heavenly and eternal, to exercise our faith, hope, patience, and
evry virtue, which is our real excellency and best qualification for ever-
lasting happiness. This is a brief and very imperfect specimen of Scripture
doctrine; which, even in this cursory view, afflicts a little with sober
reflection, must, to an impartial judgment, moderately acquainted with
what the wise of Pagans have taught, appear infinitely superior to the
darkness and uncertainty of mere human knowledge and wisdom.

In the Scriptures you will find the best principles of holiness, or of that
state
state of mind whereby we are habitually devoted to God and truth. For there we are shewn the dignity and worth of our being, vastly beyond any thing we could have hammered out of our own reflections. There we read that we are made in the image of God, inspired with understanding, raised vastly in our faculties above the beasts or the fowls, and made for ends proportionably grand and noble; not for the mean purposes of time and sense, but for God, for his honour and favour, to shew forth his praise, and for ever enjoy his goodness. And every obligation resulting from this superiority of nature, and the highest and most excellent purposes of our being, is with the greatest propriety and force urged upon us. In every page of the holy Scriptures the love of God smiles upon us with an attractive and endearing aspect, to draw our affections to him, and to give a constancy and steadiness to our virtue in the midst of so many and so strong temptations, when we know that only such an adherence to truth and righteousness will finally and for ever give us an interest in our heavenly Father’s blessing.

In the Scriptures we have the Divine displeasure against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men set upon its true foundation, the odious and pernicious nature of sin; which is in itself false and mischievous, the only proper and radical evil in the universe, and which alone can deprive us of happiness, and subject us to misery. In the word of God, his favour to men of piety and virtue is also set upon its proper foundation, the amiable and excellent nature of true holiness; which in itself is true and salutary, the only proper and radical good, the glory of our nature, and which alone can render us fit to dwell for ever with God.——There we are kindly encouraged by the Divine grace to think of our ways, and by true repentance to turn from whatever is sinful to the obedience of God.——There we are directed frequently to scrutinize our hearts, to banish thence every corrupt principle, and to keep the spring of action within us pure from every disorderly thought and inclination; to guard our spirits with a watchful eye from every impure motion and suggestion, to be vigilant against every attack of temptation, that we may keep ourselves undefiled in the good ways of God.——There we are instructed in the most perfect and reasonable sobriety, temperance, and self-denial, and warned of the danger of every sensual snare and allurement.——There this perishing body, with whatever can delight and adorn it; there this present world, with whatever in it can engage our affections and esteem; are fully exposed to the judgment and censures of reason, and manifestly shewn to be emptyness and vanity, infinitely below the excellence and worth of immortal spirits, and therefore infinitely unfit to be purloined at the expense of our present integrity, or future felicity.

In the sacred writings we find a rich magazine of all proper means for the sanctification of our souls, and our most successful advances in the life of God.——There we see that the Divine Power and Spirit is ready with its mighty aids to assist, enlighten, and strengthen our spirits, in proportion to our sincere desires and endeavours in godliness; and there we are directed every day, and at all times, to seek unto God, by fervent and believing prayer, for his guidance and protection, and are assured we never shall seek his face in vain.——There, in the holy Scriptures,
Scriptures, we are taught the ordinances of religion, both public and private, in the conscientious use of which we shall grow up into Christ Jesus; particularly, we are commanded to set apart a competent portion of our time, every day, and to keep the sabbath holy every week; that by serious meditation upon God’s word, and by pouring out our hearts before him in prayer and thanksgiving, we may renew our spiritual strength, be more and more confirmed in the habits of holiness, and find ourselves still advancing nearer to heavenly perfection. This sketch of the principles of holiness, to be derived from the Scriptures, clearly proves their Divine original and excellence, as it sets them vastly above any thing more human wisdom can discover or devise.

In the Scriptures we also find the best principles of comfort and refreshment to the soul. How needful are such principles in a scene of affliction, sin, and weakness! In general, under how many amiable characters, under how many sweet encouragements, are we invited to trust in the Almighty and Eternal; to look unto him, and make his name, his goodness, and power, our refuge in every want, danger, difficulty, and conflict! being assured that he cares for us, while we hope in him, and that he will never leave us nor forfake us; that, however he may permit our sufferings and griefs, he never can forget us, and will make all things, how bitter forever, work together for our good. Heaven is at all times open to our complaints and supplications, and the throne of God, which is a throne of grace, is easy of access to the breathings and desires of our hearts.

Are we loaded with a sense of guilt? See the blood of Jesus the security and seal of our pardon. Are we humbled under a sense of our own unworthiness? Hear the voice of Divine grace freely conferring a dignity upon us far superior to all the honours of this world. Look into the Scriptures; view the unsearchable riches of Christ; behold the love of our God and Redeemer; of his own gracious will, and mere good pleasure, he has begotten us, he is become our Father, he has justified us, he has bestowed upon us the honours of his children, he has made us welcome to all the blessings of his covenant, and to all the glories of his kingdom. Fearful and dejected Soul, look into the Gospel, and see thy God shining in all the beams of free, rich, and heavenly grace. Be of good comfort; thy sins are forgiven, thy interest in the covenant is sure; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is thy God and Father, and thou art welcome to all the treasures of his mercy and goodness. Only rejoice in this grace, and live agreeably to it in all faith, purity and holiness, love and goodness.

Are you afraid your own weakness and surrounding temptations should draw your regards from God, pervert your minds, and caufe you to fall short of salvation? Fear not, thou worm Jacob, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteousness, or salvation. Only cleave unto God, by faith in Christ, with purpose of heart, and he who has begun a good work will certainly perfect it unto the day of Christ. You shall be more than conquerors through him that has loved us. Doth the world frown, and pour its sorrows into your breasts? Look to the heavenly world, the glory that shall be revealed
revealed in the saints. That is your home and country, that is your portion and inheritance; and if you regard it as such, you will rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and be raised far above the cares and fears of this low and transitory state. Such strong confolations the holy Scriptures supply, and therefore their author is undoubtedly the God of all consolation; for no wisdom of man could ever possibly have opened to us such a fountain of joy and refreshment. And thus we see the Scriptures contain, beyond all dispute, the best principles of knowledge, of holiness, and comfort.

It is no less evident that they deliver the best precepts for directing all our actions. Such precepts are reducible to three heads, our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. God we are taught to worship with a sincere admiration of his glory and perfections, with profound reverence of his greatness, with humble adoration of his Sovereignty, with the highest love and esteem for his excellency and amiable-ness, with joy and gratitude for his goodness, and with a heart truly devoted to his honour, and determined for his obedience. To our neighbour we are directed to perform not only justice, truth, and equity, but also unfeigned charity, the most extensive kindness and benevolence. To ourselves we owe self-preservation and self-government; and the Scriptures admonish us to take the wisest care of our being, by cultivating and guarding our minds, and by mortifying all inordinate affections and passions. In short, all that our reason can find in the law or religion of nature, is, without the least omission, transcribed into revelation; and moreover, the wisdom of God has not only perfected and supplied our deficiencies, but has discovered to us the riches of goodness, knowledge, and power, infinitely beyond what our natural faculties could ever have attained.

Thus we are furnished both with the most perfect rules of virtue and godliness, and also with the most powerful motives to the observance of them; and thus the Scriptures are a storehouse of the most sacred and useful knowledge, adapted to the improvement of our minds in whatever is good or excellent, beyond all competition and objection. But as those only can object against them, who never read them, or never with serious minds, if you would know what the Scriptures are, if you would know whether they are of God, read them, study them, meditate upon them, and you cannot fail of being convinced of their excellency and Divine original.

Such being the intrinsic excellency of the Scriptures, it is no wonder it entered into our Lord's thoughts, and was the object of his care in his last moments, even amidst the pains and agonies of death. Its being the subject of his thoughts at a time when his thoughts turned upon nothing but what was infinitely momentous, his being concerned upon the cross, that no point of Scripture should want its full evidence, or establishment, is a demonstration of the high worth and excellency of Scripture. Under all his preceding sufferings, which must be exceeding bitter, he never dropped the least expression of the sorrow and anguish he felt, but endured it with the silence of the most perfect meekness and patience. We must therefore conclude, he would not have opened his mouth to signify his grievous distress, when on the cross, Why hast thou...
forsaken me? had it not been for the sake of expressing his trust in God; nor would he have mentioned his thirst, but out of regard to divine revelation, and its accomplishment.

Our Lord has, all along, from first to last, shewn the highest respect to the word of God. With this sword he did combat and conquer Satan, when tempted by him in the wilderness. He always in the course of his ministry appeals to it as the standard of religious truth, revealing the will of God, and explaining his dispensations. He declares he came not to destroy so much as one title of the Law or the Prophets, but to complete, vindicate, and illustrate them; assuring us that as their original is Divine, their honours shall be perpetual; and that, till heaven and earth pass away, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, not one jot shall pass, or perish, from the Law, or from Revelation, till all be fulfilled. John v. 39. He directs the Jews to search the Scriptures, as they rightly apprehended the doctrine of eternal life was contained in them, and as they testified of him.

As his sufferings drew nearer, he frequently takes notice of the fulfilment of the Scriptures in the several steps and events which led to them. Matt. xxvi. 31, 54. John xiii. 18. xv. 25. That the Scriptures might be fulfilled in his sufferings and death, he would not allow his Disciples to rescue him out of the hands of those who came to seize him. Matt. xxvi. 53, 54. Had he prayed to the Father, he would have given him more than twelve legions of angels; but how then, says he, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? And when upon the cross, he is not diverted from the same important subject, though in the midst of the most exquisite torments, and labouring under a violent drought. Regard to the Scriptures prevails in his mind, more than the sense of the greatest pain and anguish; and not to relieve his thirst, but that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, he cried out, I thirst.

Thus our crucified Lord has set the seal of his blood to the Divine authority, excellency, and certainty of the holy Scriptures. He came into the world, he laid down his life to accomplish what was foreordained, and foretold in the Scriptures. Now this evidently implies, that our Lord knew, and was persuaded, the Scriptures are of Divine original, are the word, and declare to us the mind and will of God; consequently, that they contain discoveries and instructions of the highest and most excellent nature; and that all things they predict must, and most certainly will, be accomplished.

It seems but an inconsiderable circumstance, that the Scriptures intimate they would give the Messiah in his thirst vinegar to drink. This seems to be a fact of no great moment, nor do we know that it flood in connexion with any thing of consequence, and yet our Lord would not overlook it. He took care it should be punctually fulfilled. How much more then may we persuade ourselves, that all the great promises, and all the predictions relating to matters of vast importance, shall be accomplished? The apparent insignificance of vinegar being offered to Christ on the cross, adds great force to this argument. If a point, seemingly so minute, was carefully attended to, and punctually discharged, when the Redeemer was in extremity of pain and torture, how much more, now that he is entered into his joy, now that he is possessed of the
the highest felicity and glory, now that he is invested with the most extensive power and dominion, how much more will he make good all that God has declared by the ancient Prophets in the Old Testament, and all that he himself hath foretold and promised in the New, relating to things of infinite moment! Exceeding great and precious promises are given us of the Divine presence, blessing, and protection, through this world, which every upright mind may be assured will be fully made good.

How many magnificent predictions has our Lord, and his Apostles, delivered concerning the world that is to come—*That he will raise us up again at the last day.* And we shall certainly be raised out of our graves, and restored to a life quite different from the present—*That he will come in great power and glory to judge the world.* And most assuredly he will so come, and we shall every one of us stand before his tribunal to give an account of ourselves—*To his faithful servants he has promised eternal life:* and to all such, without fail, he will give eternal life.—It is frequently foretold, that *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord will be the dreadful lot of the impenitently wicked, and doubtless everlasting destruction will be the dreadful lot of such.—Most clearly he has made known his everlasting kingdom of glory, where his sincere followers shall partake of his glory and felicity; and we may firmly believe and hope, this will be our happy condition, if we make it our present care to be his sincere followers. Thus has our benevolent Saviour afforded us, in his last moments, a most solid ground of hope towards God, and directed us absolutely to depend upon all that the Scriptures reveal concerning our salvation.

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C H A P. XLIII.

Christians ought to be thankful for the Scriptures, and maintain a high Esteem for them.

HAVING, so far as seems necessary, considered the use and importance of the holy Scriptures, I would now point out the proper improvement of this interesting subject.

We may evidently see our obligation to be thankful for the Scriptures; they are the gift of God, and a great help to our understanding, and rational powers, in the best attainments. And as our natural light and faculties certainly demand our gratitude and thanks, that God has made us wiser than the fowls of heaven, and taught us more than the beasts of the earth; and as our joy and praise will be agreeable to our illumination, when in God's heavenly light we shall see glorious and eternal light; so the
the superior instructions and discoveries of revelation do challenge our
sincere thanks to our wise and benevolent Father, who has employed his
spirit at sundry times, and divers manners, to pour knowledge and light
into the darkness of the nations, which otherwise would, in effect, have
generally left the use of intelligence; and that at length he has visited us
with the day-spring from on high, a full display of his heavenly grace in
the everlasting Gospel.

Should we not maintain a just, that is to say, a very high esteem of
the word of God? If it is true, that all Scripture is given by inspiration
of God, and is profitable for the noblest ends, for doctrine, for reproof,
correction, instruction in righteousness, then it is true that we cannot set too
high a value upon it. The things of this world, which are very imper-
fect and transitory, have, alas, too large a share of our hearts; but
the holy Scriptures are a treasury of heavenly and everlasting riches; and
it is but reasonable we should give them the preference to what we know
is infinitely inferior in worth. And it is upon this ground that the wisest
and best of men have represented them as the highest object of our de-
light and esteem. Psalm xix. 7—10. The law of the Lord is perfect,
converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be desired
are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey,
and the honey-comb. Psalm cxix. 96, 97, 103. I have seen an end of all per-
fecion; but thy commandment is exceeding broad. O, how love I thy law!
It is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea,
sweeter than honey to my mouth! And we may then only call ourselves
happy, when we have attained the same sentiments and taste of the good
word of God. Indeed I cannot see that we use it as what it is, or answer
our Christian profession, if we do not treat it with great esteem and re-
gard. To this purpose let us—

Not allow ourselves to think of it with indifference, or in any respect
to treat it irreverently. The worth and infinite importance of the thing
will not bear a cool and languid though; and it is too sacred and divine
to admit of any degree of contempt. It is with some reckoned a turn
of wit to introduce Scripture phrase into common conversation, and to
provoke pleasantry by quoting the Bible. What is this but burlesquing
the word of God, and raising a laugh at the expence of the greatest bless-
ing of heaven? Such a profane levity will by degrees lessen the reve-
rence we owe to Scripture, and destroy all serious regard to it; which is,
in effect, to destroy ourselves; and therefore should not only be carefully
avoided, but with abhorrence detested.

Guard your minds well against Deism on the one hand, and Popery
on the other. Both these agree in depreciating the Scriptures. The
Deist will persuade you revelation is unnecessary, and consequently that
the Scripture is no revelation from God, but a fallacy and cheat, at first
invented, and afterwards supported, by those who find their account in
it. He racks his invention to start any difficulty or objection, to prove
that the Bible is not sufficient to the purposes of revelation. And here,
the Romanist joins him. They go indeed different ways; the one, as
he pretends, to the mere religion of nature; and the other, in reality, to
the authority of the church, and a living infallible guide upon earth. But
both
both start from the same point, degrading the holy Scriptures; and I fear very much, they will meet and unite again in a few generations. For where Deistical principles prevail in a family, the rising generation must grow up in great ignorance of revelation, and the true worship of God, and so will be exposed to the artifice of the seducer, who lies in wait to deceive. For however men may refine in their speculations, and put a force upon the most common and obvious principles in their minds, yet certainly such is the general sense of mankind, when left free and unbiased, with regard to religion, that they easily admit the belief of some superior invisible powers, and their intercourse with this world; and being ignorant of the truth, are with little difficulty drawn into error.

This makes me apprehend that the present spread of Deism will, in a few ages, produce a large increase of Popery among us. Not to say, that Popish seminaries, where they cannot directly promote the cause of the church of Rome, are allowed and instructed to do it in this indirect way. For confusion and ignorance of any kind is a proper ground for them to work upon. But this by the bye. My design is to guard you against those who would raise scruples and prejudices in your minds against revelation. And without descending to particulars, you may be very sure of this one thing, that whoever cavil against the Scriptures are strangers to them. They object and take upon themselves to judge in a matter in which they are no ways qualified to be judges; in a matter which they neither understand, nor, in their present way of thinking, ever intend to understand. For, whatever airs such may give themselves, or what semblance or show forever they make of knowledge and wisdom, these men have never studied the Scriptures; nor, generally speaking, have they learning or capacity to enter into their deep and abstruse parts. Had they ever soberly and seriously studied the Scriptures, they must of necessity have found so many, and such evident marks of a Divine Spirit, such glorious displays of the wisdom, power, and truth of God, as would have taught them to think more modestly of what is doubtful and obscure.

When did you ever hear of any name, illustrious for learning and wisdom, that ever disputed the Divine original and authority of Scripture? Did ever a Boyle, a Newton, or a Locke, question the Divine original or truth of Scripture?* No. These men, of the most eminent attainments

* The famous Selden, one of the most eminent philosophers, and most learned men of his time; who had taken a diligent survey of antiquity, and what knowledge was considerable amongst Jews, Heathens, and Christians, and read as much, perhaps, as any man ever read; towards the end of his days, declared to Arch-Bishop Usher,

"That notwithstanding he had been so laborious in his enquiries, and curious in his collections; and had possessed himself of a treasury of books and manuscripts, upon all ancient subjects; yet he could rest his soul on none from the Scriptures. And above all, that passage gave him the most satisfaction, Titus ii. 11—14, as comprising the nature, end, and reward of true religion.

"The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men. "TEACHING
attainments in wisdom and knowledge, held the Scriptures in the highest veneration and esteem, as a revelation from God; and by their excellent comments have acknowledged the Divine authority even of the most abstruse and difficult parts. No. The cavillers against Scripture are men of an inferior class, who want, and are no ways solicitous to gain, the qualifications needful to render them in any degree fit or competent judges. It is enough for such to pick up a small collection of scruples, to ease themselves of the trouble of thought or study, and at the same time to give a plausible appearance of both. But with men of judgment, such must stand in a very ridiculous light. To a judicious physician, how silly and contemptible must a person be, who, though no ways skilled in the science, should take upon him perpetually to confute, vitify, and condemn a Boerhave, or a Sydenham, the greatest matters in the art of medicine!

Perhaps you may say—Are there not real difficulties in the Scriptures? And will not difficulties naturally and unavoidably produce objections? I answer—There are difficulties in the Scriptures; and difficulties are the

"TEACHING us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

"LOOKING for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Sir Christopher Hatton, a great statesman, a little before his death, advised his relations to be serious in searching after the will of God in his holy word; for, said he—

"It is deservedly accounted a piece of excellent knowledge to understand the laws of the land, and the customs of a man's country; how much more, to know the statutes of heaven, and the laws of eternity, those immutable and eternal laws of justice and righteousness! to know the will and pleasure of the great Monarch and universal King! I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad. Whatever other knowledge a man may be endowed withal, could he by a vast and imperious mind, and a heart as large as the sand upon the sea-shore, command all the knowledge of art and nature, of words and things; and yet not know the Author of his being, and the Preserver of his life, his Sovereign and his Judge, his surest Refuge in trouble, his best Friend or worst Enemy, the Support of his life and the Hope of his death, his future Happineses and his Portion for ever; he doth but go down to hell with a great deal of wisdom."

Mr. Locke, also justly esteemed one of the greatest matters of reason, and a philosopher of the greatest freedom of thought, at the close of his life, thus advised an intimate friend.

"Study the holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It hath God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter." Poetical Works, p. 344.

And to the same effect, a wiser still in the same situation, Solomon. To fear God, and keep his commandments, (in order to which, it is necessary that we read and study them) is the whole of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Eccle. xii. 13, 14.
the natural ground of objections, but not of destroying any truth, otherwise well established. For all science whatever is attended with difficulties, and objections may be raised against the clearest and most demonstrable truths. The being of God, and his perfections, the creation of the world, the constitution of nature, the ways of Providence, and any the best and most useful knowledge we can gain, is attended with difficulties, and consequently liable to objections. Let it be well observed, those difficulties arise not from the things themselves, but from the imperfection of our minds. In the things themselves there are no difficulties, nor any ground for objection; the difficulties are in the narrowness of our understandings, which find a great difficulty in comprehending many things relating even to the most certain and undoubted truths. And, with regard to the Scriptures, I myself have had large experience of this. Many things which at first, and for some time, appeared to me very obscure, unaccountable, and inconsistent, by patient application, and a closer attention, have shone out unclouded into the plainest and clearest truths. By this I am convinced, that all remaining difficulties are not so in themselves, but only so with respect to the imperfection of my mind. And upon the whole, you may be very sure, when you hear any objection advanced against the Scriptures, that the objection, in truth and reality, lies against the objector himself, as he either cannot, or will not, see the truth as it stands in the word of God.

But you may say—Why should God put into his word things to us difficult and obscure? I answer—To exercise our diligence, and to try our integrity. I have said so much to convince you of the vanity and folly of Deism, and to guard you against any bad impressions from that quarter, which may prove of very fatal consequence. A little of this leaven may do a great deal of harm, as it creates an indifference to Divine knowledge, to the instructions and counsels of our heavenly Father; as it takes us off from the study of the Scriptures, robs us of the best guide of our actions, the most powerful motives to all virtue, the strongest consolations in every day of affliction; and at last exposes to the righteous judgment of God, for the neglect and contempt of the best of blessings he ever bestowed upon the world.

We have the strongest reason to be fully satisfied of the sufficiency of Scripture, as perfectly able to make us wise unto salvation. The Papist will own the Scriptures to be the word of God, and a true rule of faith, but not a sufficient rule. The only sufficient rule of faith he will tell you, is the church of Rome, which infallibly understands and propounds what the Christian world is to believe and do, in order to eternal salvation; and therefore you ought implicitly to submit your understanding and conscience to her direction and decisions; and doing so, you have no need to consult the Scriptures, being already provided with a living infallible guide. But if the Scriptures are a true rule of faith, then are they a sufficient rule to all sorts and degrees of persons, for they expressly affirm their own sufficiency in this extensive sense.

That nothing but Scripture is a sufficient ground to build our faith and practice upon, as Christians, will clearly appear to any confidrate person. All besides is uncertainty and confusion. You have Popes against Popes, councils against councils, fathers against fathers, the church of
that which is good; to try every spirit, and to bring every doctrine to the test of God's pure and holy word. And thus we are at liberty to review the ground upon which we stand, to correct any error, and to improve our minds in the knowledge and love of the truth.

In these and several other respects, the sufficiency of Scripture to guide us in the way of life and salvation, is evidently seen, and how foolisf and unsafe it is to forfake this heavenly guide, and follow the delusions of the church of Rome. But then, the greater the evidence that Scripture is a perfect guide to eternal life, the greater must our obligations be to use it faithfully as such.

Let us be much in reading the Scriptures, and think and judge freely. By judging freely, I do not mean rashly and at random; we must judge of the Scriptures with all possible care and caution; but judge freely, without regard to the authority of any person, party, or church whatsoever. We are made by our gracious Creator for the knowledge of the truth; not to be the dupes of custom or authority, not blindly to follow the dictates, decrees, and constitutions of weak and ambitious men; but to employ our minds generously in the search and knowledge of the truth. Christianity calls us to the noblest exercise of our understandings; and we lose the benefit of it, if we do not think seriously, and judge freely.

There is no other way of having our minds established, and well seasoned with the principles of our religion. In this way we shall see the glory and excellency of the holy Scriptures; thus we shall feel the power of God's word upon our hearts; thus our understandings will gradually be enlightened with Divine knowledge, and, to our unspeakable comfort, grow up into Jesus Christ, and gain the happiness of the man who, forfaking all impiety, and every false way, delights himself in the law of the Lord, and daily meditates therein. Such a one is under the special blessing of heaven, and, like a tree planted in a fruitful soil, shall grow and flourish, and rise infinitely higher than all the honours, wealth, and enjoyments of this world; he shall rise to immortality, and there find all the glorious fruits of a life of piety, and the full accomplishment of the magnificent promises which here on earth he with pleasure perused in the word of God.

This is what I have to offer on this important subject. Whatever the result may be, with regard to others, this one point is sufficiently secured—I have satisfied my conscience by discharging what I esteem an incumbent duty: and I have done it in the faithfulness and integrity of my heart, according to the wisdom God has given me.
APPENDIX.

Chronological Dates for Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. and xxxvi.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Prophets before the Captivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years before Christ</th>
<th>Chronicles Dates for Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. and xxxvi.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>812</td>
<td>MAZIAH king of Judah</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeroboam II. king of Israel</td>
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<td>800</td>
<td>Uzziah king of Judah</td>
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<td>Jeroboam II.</td>
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<td>800</td>
<td>Jeroboam II. king of Israel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Uzziah king of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>772</td>
<td>Jeroboam II. Uzziah</td>
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Joah sent with a message. 2 Kings xiii. 20, xiv. 25.

Joel i. ii. iii.

Amos i—ix.

Hosea i. ii. iii.

Hosea iv.

Jonah i. ii. iii. iv.

Isaiah vi. ii. iii. iv. v.

Micah i. ii.

Isaiah vii.

Isaiah viii. ix. x.

Isaiah xvii.

Isaiah i.

Isaiah xxviii.

Hosea v. vi.

Isaiah xiv. ver. 28, &c.

Isaiah xv. xvi.

} { Hosea vii—xiv.

} { Micah iii. iv. v. vi. vii.

Nahum i. ii. iii.

Isaiah xxiii—xxvii.

Isaiah xxxviii—xxxix.

Isaiah xxix. xxi—xxxv.

Isaiah xxii. ver. 1—15.

Isaiah xxi.

Isaiah xx.

Isaiah xvi. xix.

Isaiah x. ver. 5, &c. xi. xii. xiii.

xiv. ver. 28, &c.
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Ch. XXXV: Prophets after the Destruction, &c.

Years before Christ.

589 Zedekiah II. Jehoiachin’s capt. II. first month
In the same year, third month
In the same year, fourth month
In the same year, fifth or sixth month
In the same year

Ezekiel xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii.
Ezekiel xxxi.
Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 1—11. lii. ver. 1—30.
Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 1—15. xl. ver. 1—7.
Jeremiah xl. ver. 7. xli. xlii. xliii. xliv. ver. 1—8.

CHAP. XXXV.

Prophets after the Destruction of the Temple, during the Captivity.

Years before Christ.

588 Jehoiachin’s captivity
12. tenth month
In the same year, twelfth month
Between the 12 and 25 captivity
In the same year
In the same year
In this year Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image

754 Jehoiachin’s captivity 25.
569 Jehoiachin’s captivity 30.
In the same year
562 Jehoiachin’s captivity 37.
555 Belshazzar 1.
553 Belshazzar 3.
539 Belshazzar 17.
538 Darius the Mede 1.
In the same year
536 Cyrus 1.
535 Cyrus 2.

Ezekiel xxxiii.
Ezekiel xxxii.
Ezekiel xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxviii.
Obadiah
Ezekiel xxxv.
Daniel iii.
Ezekiel xl. xli. &c.
Ezekiel xxxi. ver. 17, &c.
Daniel iv.
Jeremiah lli. ver. 31, &c.
Daniel vii.
Daniel viii.
Daniel v.
Daniel vi.
Daniel ix.
Ezra i. ii.
Ezra iii.

CHAP. XXXVI.
CHAP. XXXVI.

Prophets after the Captivity, under the second Temple.

Years before Christ.

535 CYRUS 2.
   In the third year of Cyrus, and third after the captivity

520 Darius Hyttaespes 2. sixth month
   In the same year and month
   In the same year, seventh month
   In the same year, eighth month
   In the same year, ninth month
   In the same year, eleventh month

516 Darius 3.

518 Darius 4.
   In the same year, ninth month
   Subsequent to the fourth year of Darius Hyttaespes

515 Darius 6.

492 Ahafuerus 3.

491 Ahafuerus 4.

498 Ahafuerus 7.
   In the same year

457 Ahafuerus 8.

453 Ahafuerus 12.

445 Ahafuerus 20.

433 Ahafuerus 32.

429 Ahafuerus 36.

428 Ahafuerus 37.

296 Ptolemy Soter 9.

Ezra iv.

Daniel x. xi. xii.
Haggai i. ver. 1—12.
Haggai i. ver. 12, &c. Ezra v.
Haggai ii. ver. 1—10.
Zechariah i. ver. 1—7.
Haggai ii. ver. 10, &c.
Zechariah i. ver. 7, &c. ii—vi.
Ezra v. ver. 3, &c.
Ezra vi. ver. 1—15.
Zechariah vii. viii.

Zechariah ix—xiv.
Ezra vi. ver. 15, &c.
Esther i.
Esther ii. ver. 1—16.
Ezra vii—x.
Esther ii. ver. 16—21.
Esther ii. ver. 21, &c.
Esther iii. iv. v, &c.
Nehemiah i—iii, &c.
Nehemiah xiii. ver. 6.
Malachi i—iv.
Nehemiah xiii. ver. 6, &c.

The Canon of the Old Testament completed, by adding two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi; by Simon the Just.
ONE may divide men into two general classes. Some are without any knowledge of a Deity, or sense of Religion: travellers tell us, that in the West-Indies, the easterm parts of Tartary, and some places of Africa, such people are to be found. I know this is a fact which is disputed by others; and Fabricius, a divine of the Palatinate, pretends that he has solidly confuted it. If this fact should be thought doubtful, yet it is known at least, that some persons may be found here and there in the world, who look upon the existence of a Deity as upon a fable, and who ridicule all acts of religious worship whatsoever: but one may also say, that if he compare these with the rest of the world, they make the leaft and worst part of mankind, though many of them affect to live morally well.

All the rest of the world make profession that they own a God; that is to say, a most perfect, eternal, and independent Being; that he governs all things by his providence; that there is a difference between good and evil; that man doth well or ill in those actions which depend on his liberty: from whence they equally conclude, that man was designed for the duties of the religion, that society without it would be pure robbery; and that, as it is hard to conceive that men should be wholly destroyed by death, so it is directly contrary to the sentiments of conscience to deny all rewards for virtue, or punishments for vice, after this life.

All the diversities of religion amongst men are reducible to two kinds. The first is, of those who suppose that there is more than one God; and this is the belief of all Pagans in general.

The second is, of those that acknowledge one only God; such are the Jews, Christians, and Mahometans.

Now, as for the cure of different diseases several remedies are made use of, so it is visible, that, to deliver men of their various prejudices, we must take very different methods.
The ignorance of those barbarous people in the Indies, Tartary, and Africa, must be removed, by teaching them the first principles, and making them apply the little sense they have left them of good and evil, right and wrong, to the fundamental maxims of religion.

Atheists must be convinced by reflexions upon those principles which they admit, by shewing that the truths which they reject are the natural consequences of those principles which they dare not dispute.

To convince the Heathen, who suppose many gods, we must examine their principles, and confute them; which is the easiest thing in the world; the wisest men having formerly acknowledged, as they also own to this very day, that there is but one God.

And indeed it seems, that the greatest part of philosophers did own a plurality of gods, only in compliance with the opinions of the people, which it was dangerous to contradict.

And as for the Jews, forasmuch as they agree with the Christians and Mahometans about the unity of God, we are only to prove to them the truth of that which is the very essence of the Christian Religion, in opposition to their prejudices: one may prove this against the Jews without any trouble, because they are agreed in most of those principles which the Christian Religion supposes. So likewise it is easily established against the Mahometans, who grant the truth of Christian Religion in general, but pretend that it ought to give place to Mahometanism, as the Law ought to give place to the Gospel, preached by Jesus Christ.

My design is not to prosecute every one of these ways in particular. There are books enough in the world which solidly prove the necessity of Religion against all sorts of Atheists, as well those who are so through ignorance, as those who profess themselves such from love to libertinism, and to pass for men of a mighty reach.

There are also several famous authors who have made it evident, that reason alone is sufficient to overthrow all Pagan religions whatsoever.

I am resolved to follow a more compendious and sure method, that is, to demonstrate the truth of the Christian Religion, considered by itself.

In short, it is impossible (considering the opposition there is between the Christian Religion and all the other religions in the world) but that, if the Christian Religion should be the true, all others must be false in those articles wherein they essentially differ from it.

And on the other hand, one cannot explain those arguments which clearly evince the truth of Christianity, without convicting all other religions of falsehood, because they are destitute of those proofs which are peculiar to the Christian Religion.

I know very well that there are several ways which lead to the end which I propose. Men that think much, wish that a perfect conformity of the Christian Religion with the conscience of man might be demonstrated, from reflexions on the heart of man, and the dictates of it, which to them would be a convincing and demonstrative proof.

Others apply themselves to a speculative examination of the doctrines and proofs of the Christian Religion, to shew their conformity with the notions of reason. I will not deny but that both these employ themselves usually in this sort of study, and that truth finds a considerable support from their meditations.
But how useful soever they may be, I have rather chosen to follow another course, as thinking it of more advantage, solidly to establish the facts which the Christian Religion propofeth; which appears to me to be more proper to persuade all forts of readers, and better levelled to the ordinary capacity of thofe who newly enter upon the examination of this truth.

And as the necefly of revelation is generally owned by heathens, and by all other nations of the world, I thought it a thing altogether unnee-

sary to enter upon the examination of several abftracted questions, such as these: whether there be any natural knowledge of God, whether men are naturally inclined to be religious, and the like. When I fhall have firmy proved, that God revealed himself, that he prescribed a service to the firft men, who left the rules of it to all their posterity, from whence all the religion that ever was, or is yet in the heathen world, was derived, I fhall have prevented many very unprofitable difputes, and which can only perplex the mind by their obscurity.

I have therefore confined myself to certain considerations, which do fo establish the truth of the books of the Old and New Testament, as by their union they firmy prove the truth of the Christian Religion.

I hope that it will not be thought needful for me to demonstrate, that the Mahometan religion ought not to abolish the Christian, as the Chriftians pretend that the Christian Religion abrogated the ceremonial part of the Jewifh worship.

As soon as an understanding Reader fhall make some reflexions upon the nature of the arguments which demonstrate the truth of the Christian Religion, he may eafily perceive that God never framed the model of that religion which the Mahometans would obtrude upon us.
Concerning the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion.

We are to consider three things in the Christian Religion; the Matters of Fact it propounds to us for true, the Promises it affords us, and the Worship it commands.

The Matters of Fact it propounds to us as true, are—that God created the world; that he formed the first man, from whom the rest of mankind have been propagated; that a while after this man was created, he violated the law God had given him; and that whereas he deserved to have perished for this his disobedience, God was pleased, instead thereof, to comfort him with the hopes of a Saviour which was to be born of the seed of his wife; that God hath actually sent this Saviour into the world, which comprehends the whole economy of Christ, viz. his birth, life, preaching, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, &c.
The Promises it vouchsafes, are the forgiveness of our sins, the resurrection of our bodies, and a state absolutely happy for ever in heaven.

And lastly, the Worship of divine service it prescribes consists in obedience to the law of God, in prayer for the pardon of our sins, and his protection, and in a grateful acknowledgment of what we owe him for all his benefits towards us.

The first of these three parts of the Christian Religion, viz. the truth of the Matters of Fact it relates, may be said to be the foundation of the other two, viz. the Promises and commands.

It is impossible to be persuaded, that God hath created this world in which we live, and made mankind of one and the same blood; that after the fall he promised to save men, and did actually redeem them in sending Jesus Christ, who suffered death, and being raised the third day ascended into heaven, &c. I say, it is impossible to look upon these facts as true without being assured that God will accomplish the promises he hath made to us.

And it is as evident that we cannot be convinced of the truth of these matters, without being sensible of a strong obligation laid upon us to perform all the duties of the Christian religion.

As soon as a man reflects upon his being God's creature, he finds himself naturally obliged to obey God universally, according to his utmost ability: but when he comes further to believe, that God did not destroy the first man for his disobedience, but was graciously pleased to promise him a Saviour for himself and all his posterity; and when moreover he is assured, that God hath really sent this Saviour in the way and manner the Gospel relates to us; we cannot conceive but that he must find himself under the highest engagements imaginable of rendering to God a religious obedience, and believing his promises.

But there is yet another obligation whereby man is bound to obey God, to pray to him, and to offer him all manner of religious worship: God, by redeeming him, hath obtained a new claim to, and right over him; and a more indispensible obligation is laid upon man to submit himself to God, in all religious concerns, as being not only created but also redeemed by him.

Reason acknowledgeth, that if the truth of these things be once admitted, nothing can be more just and natural than those consequences which the Christians thence infer.

All the difficulty therefore that occurs in this matter, consists in the proof of those facts which the Christian religion propounds to us; that is to say, in proving the creation of the world, the fall of man, the promise of a redeemer, his coming into the world, his miracles, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, &c. which are the foundations of the Christian Religion. And indeed these are the very matters of which Atheists and Libertines require a solid proof.

And it doth the more concern us to satisfy their demands, forasmuch as the Jews, who are scattered throughout the whole world, do oppose our assertion, that the promise of sending the Messiah is already accomplished, though they agree upon the matter with us in all other articles. Moreover, the performing this task may very much contribute to the conversion
version of a great number of bad Christians, whose fall and continuance in vices and licentiousness is to be ascribed to their being so weakly persuaded of the truth of these Fundamentals, and that because they have never considered of them with sufficient attention.

C H A P. II.

That the Christian Religion is founded upon Proofs of Matter of Fact.

FORASMUCH as, in order to establish the truth of the Christian Religion, we confine ourselves at present to those Proofs which make out the Matters of Fact it proposes; omitting all other arguments which may evidence the truth of it, though possibly no less convincing; it is obvious, that the proofs we are to produce in confirmation of them, must be such as are proper to evince the truth of things long since past and done.

If we were treating of the events of the time we live in, it might be justly required that we should produce eye-witnesses of them: but forasmuch as the question here is concerning matters long since past, it is natural for us to have recourse to history, which furnisht us with the relations of those who were eye-witnesses of the same; this being the only way left us to confirm our belief of things at so great a distance from us.

I am beholden to history only for the knowledge I have of a Cyrus, an Alexander, or a Caesar; and yet having read the account they give me of them, I find them matters I can no way rationally doubt of.

I acknowledge that the certainty we have of things long since past, is much inferior to that which we have of matters confirmed to us by eye-witnesses. Nevertheles, because it is evident that the events of ancient times cannot be confirmed but by proofs of this nature, it has never entered into the minds of any to account the existence of such men as Cyrus and Alexander for fables, upon the pretence that none now alive did ever see them, or because there are scarce any traces left of those empires of which they were the founders.

Indeed the certainty we have of these things is such, as nothing can be superadded to it; for though it be founded on the authority of historians who lived many ages ago, yet withal we are to consider that the matters related do not only carry the idea of probability and truth along with them, but that they are the very ground and foundation of all the histories of following ages; which cannot be questioned, if we consider the connexion and dependence of the things related, according to the light of sense, and the equity of reason.

A Matter
A Matter of Fact then is accounted certain, when it is attested by those who were eye-witnesses of it, when recorded by an historian who lived amongst those who had perfect knowledge of it; when the matter is not gainsaid or contradicted by any; if we find it penned at a time when the things could not be related by any otherwise than indeed they were, without exposing themselves to public derision; and last of all, when the matter is found to be of that nature, as none could be ignorant of it, either because it was the interest of every one to be informed of it, or because the thing was so public that it could not be hid from any; or lastly, because of its natural connexion with all those other events which necessarily depend on it.

To speak plain, it is very unjust to demand either more proofs, or such as are of another nature, for the confirmation of the truth of our religion, than are required to verify any other matters of fact. Why should not the testimony of Noah's children be sufficient to conclude there was such a man as Methusalem, in case they assure us that they have seen him? Or why should not the testimony of Methusalem be of credit enough to prove there was such a man as Adam, if he avers that he saw him, and conversed with him? Do we not every day give credit to the account which old men give us of their predecessors, especially when we find that what they relate hath an exact reference and connexion with those things we are eye-witnesses of?

But it is an easy thing to make it appear, that the proofs which evidence the truth of the matters which our religion propofeth, are infinitely more strong and convincing.

All the circumstances we can imagine proper to evince the truth of any relation, do concur to place the matters recorded in holy Scripture beyond the reach of doubt or uncertainty.

We account the single testimony of an historian a sufficient proof that there was once a very famous temple at Delphi or Ephesus, notwithstanding that all the monuments remaining at this day to confirm his relation be very doubtful and defective. Whereas I shall make it appear that an entire nation, yea, many nations, do attest the truth of those matters which the Christian Religion propofes; and that all the actions, discourses, and whole series of events thereto relating, do furnish us with an infinite number of characters which invincibly signalize the truth of the holy Scriptures.
C H A P. III.

Some General Remarks, in order to establish the Truth of Holy Scripture.

Forasmuch as I have undertaken to prove the truth of the Matters of Fact contained in our Religion from the testimony of the penmen of the Old and New Testament, it will be proper, in order to the executing of my design, to begin with a general proof of the truth of the said books; which will not be difficult, if one makes the following remarks.

The first is, That it appears from the five books of Moses, that he wrote the history of the creation of the world, and of the promise of the Messiah; of the deluge, the rise and pedigree of the several nations of the world, of the division of tongues; and in particular, the history of the family of Abraham until the entering of the children of Israel into Palestina, 2552 years after the creation of the world.

The second is, That the following books, viz. of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the four books of Kings, of Chronicles, with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, are a continuation of the said history, from the entering of the Jews into Palestina, until their re-establishment in the said country, about the year of the world 3600. Here we read the conquest of Palestina under the conduct of Joshua, how it was divided amongst the tribes after they had destroyed, drove out, or subdued, the inhabitants thereof; how often they were brought into bondage by the bordering nations, whose rise and pretensions Moses sets down. Here we have recorded the several names and actions of the judges which God from time to time raised to the Israelites, to restore them to their first estate. Here we have an account of the establishment of a kingly government amongst them, which happened about the year 2909; as likewise of the division of this people into two kingdoms, which for three ages together were most opposite in their interests, and made great wars against each other, as well as against their neighbouring states. We find here the utter ruin of the most puissant of these two states, viz. that of Israel by the arms of the kings of Assyria, about the year of the world 3283; and after that, the destruction of that of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar king of the Chaldeans, anno mundi 3416. And last of all, we have an account of the Jews restoration by Cyrus king of Persia, and the state of the Jews under his successors.

The third thing observable is, That in the remaining books of the Old Testament we find several historical relations relating to both kingdoms, with several prophecies relating to their decay and restoration, as likewise many discourses of morality and piety; and that all these relations and prophecies appear to have been writ at such a time, and with those circumstances, which have a natural reference to what the other books recite to us, and an essential relation to the books and laws of Moses, which we find to be the foundation of all these prophecies, relations,
tions, and whatsoever else we find there concerning their government or religion.

The fourth is, That the books of the New Testament contain an exact relation of the life of Jesus Christ, who appeared to the world under the reign of Tiberius, of the establishment of his religion in the world, together with some disputes with the Jews, who refused to own him for the Messiah promised by the Prophets; and, lastly, prophecies, declaring what in process of time was to happen both to the Jews and Christians until the end of the world. These books take the truth of Moses’s writings every where for granted, as also of the other sacred writings of the Old Testament, both historical, prophetical, and moral.

These four particulars do in a manner give us an entire idea of the holy Scripture; and we shall scarcely stand in need of ought else to manifest the truth of those writings, if we consider those undisputable matters of fact I am now to speak of, and will but make some very natural reflexions upon them.

The first is, That the Christians, notwithstanding their being divided into several sects and parties presently after our Saviour’s time, have, and do still, in all places, every first day of the week, read the books of the New Testament translated into their respective languages; so that it appears absolutely impossible that any spurious writings should have been slipped in amongst them.

The second is, That as the Christians have had the books of the Old Testament amongst them in Greek these 1600 years, so the Heathens had them in that language 300 years before, being translated by order of one of the Ptolemys’s kings of Egypt, whether a considerable part of the Jews were carried, after that Alexander the Great had conquered the greatest part of Asia, having overthrown the empire of Persia, to which the Jews were in subjection.

The third is, That though the Jews had not all the books of the Old Testament from the beginning of their commonwealth, they that followed the party of Jeroboam, and formed the kingdom of Israel, having only had the five books of Moses amongst them; yet, notwithstanding their irreconcilable hatred against the house of David, they have most religiously preferred the said books from anno mundi 5030, in which the divisions of the two kingdoms happened, even until this day.

The fourth and last is, That as the Jews every where, at this day, read the books of Moses and of the Prophets each sabbath-day (which is also observed by the Samaritans), and the Christians read them every first day of the week; so the Jews have always continued to read them for a long series of ages, as esteeming it a great part of the sanctification of the sabbath. Besides which, they also solemnly read them every seventh year, in obedience to a law of Moses, as being one of the principal parts of their religion.

I say, that the sole consideration of these matters of fact (which are indisputable) are sufficient to prove in general the truth of the books of the Old and New Testament.

First then, I affirm, that it is as ridiculous to maintain, that the books of the Old and New Testament, translated into so many languages, cited by an infinite number of authors, and which have been the subject
subject of various disputes from the very times of the Apostles, or soon after, should be supposititious, as to aver that the books of Justinian, or Mahomet's Alcoran, have been falsely obtruded on the world under their names. I speak now only of the books themselves, not of the truth of the history they contain.

Secondly, It is ridiculous to suppose that the books of the Old Testament were forged since the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, forasmuch as they have been in the hands of the heathens themselves ever since that time.

Thirdly, It is as inconsistent to suppose them contrived since the time of the separation of the ten tribes from Judah, because we find the books of Moses among the Samaritans, who have preserved them ever since their revolt, without any other change but what is incident to all manuscripts that pass through many hands.

I grant indeed that the Samaritans have none of the other books of the Old Testament; but this being to be looked upon only as an effect of their departure from the kingdom of Judah, it cannot in the least shake the certainty we have of those books. For, first, the three other tribes had them, and preserved them with the greatest care, esteeming them of Divine authority. Secondly, there were also reasons of state which made the kings of Israel not to regard the divisions made by Josua of the land of Canaan, nor the authority of the priesthood; which reasons of state (hereafter mentioned) were the cause why the ten tribes would not allow the same authority to some of those books which were written before their revolt, as those of Samuel, and the writings of David and Solomon, which they did to the Pentateuch of Moses. Most of the others we know were penned since the division of the two kingdoms, and so did more particularly respect the kingdom of Judah, and some of them after the carrying away of the ten tribes by the Assyrians.

Thus we see the truth of these books, and more especially those of Moses, confirmed till the time of the revolt of the ten tribes, and confirmed beyond exception; at least far beyond the certainty we can have of the truth of any other book in the world. It remains only now to examine, whether as to the books of Moses we find not the same certainty, when we look back from the departure of the ten tribes to the time of Moses; that is to say, whether there be the least probability that they were forged in any part of that interval of about 500 years.

I say then, in the fourth place, that it is no less ridiculous to suppose them forged during that period. First, because it is impossible that these books should have been forged in the form we now see them, but that the forgery must have been apparent to all the world. Nothing could be more notorious, than whether the Jews did read the law of Moses every sabbath-day in all their families or synagogues, and every seventh year besides: nothing was of more easy observation than whether they did keep their three solemn feasts, viz. that of the passover, pentecost, and of tabernacles: nothing could be more apparent than whether the Jews did obey the laws contained in the Pentateuch, whether relating to particular persons, to tribes, or their lands, and the manner of posse cling of them. Indeed, nothing can be imagined more absurd, than to suppose
an insensible change wrought either in the form of their civil government, or the ceremonies of their religion.

Indeed it is an unutterable piece of boldness to charge the Jews with forging these books of Môses, or adulterating of them in this period of time, when it appears they have kept them without any alteration for the space of 2700 years, as hath been shewed already. If it be said, that the Jews being divided into two kingdoms, and dispersed into distant countries, were not in a condition to forge or adulterate any of the said books, because it might easily have been discovered; it may be answered, that the same reasons took place in this interval of 580 years: for, from the time of Môses to Rehoboam, they were not only greatly divided amongst themselves, but almost continually subject to neighbouring states, who subdued them by turns, as we see in the book of Judges.

Moreover we are to take notice, First, that these books of Môses are the rise and foundation of the laws and customs of the heathens, as well as of their fictions, which we shall have occasion to point at in the sequel of this discourse.

Secondly, that the history contained in the Pentateuch is evidently confirmed by the following books of Joshua and Judges, which have an essential reference to the same, and contain a relation of the public acts of many nations, attested and acknowledged by heathen authors, who were the mortal enemies of the Jews.

Thirdly, that the said books are so closely linked and related to those public and known actions, that it is impossible to separate the laws they contain from the matters of fact attested by Pagan history, or to be ignorant that the form of the Jewish government was nothing else but an execution of the laws contained in the Pentateuch, which equally lays down that platform of their policy and worship.

My business at present only is to hint these general reflexions concerning the truth of the books of the Old and New Testament; though the sequel will oblige me to make some more particular reflexions upon each book, when I shall come to consider the several relations they contain.

I now come to the matter in hand, beginning with the book of Genesis; where we find an account of the creation of the world, the forming of man, the fall, the promise of the Messiah, the propagation of mankind, the deluge, with other matters, until the death of Joseph, which contains the history of the world for the space of 2369 years.

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CHAP. IV.

That the Testimony of Moses concerning the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah, is unquestionable.

FORASMUCH as amongst those matters which Moses relates in the book of Genesis, that of the Creation of the World in seven days, and of the Promise of the Messiah, are such upon which all the rest do depend.
depend (as I shall shew hereafter), it is evident that I must make it my business in a special manner to evince the truth of the same.

Towards the confirmation of which matters of fact; the one of which is, that God created a first man; the other, that God had promised in due time to send the Messiah for redemption of mankind from the punishment of sin; I shall propose the following remarks.

Moses, the great law-giver of the Jews, laid these two matters of fact as the basis of the laws he was to publish; and he relates them to us, as things which were not only known to him, and some others of the Jewish nation, but to all the people of the world, and particularly the whole nation amongst whom he lived.

To understand the force of this argument, we must mind three things: the first is, the nature of the matters themselves; the other is, the character of him that relates them; and the third, the use Moses makes of them.

For the first, nothing was more needful to be known than these two things before us; they were matters which concern the whole world, and of which every one ought to be informed; they are matters about which it is not easy to be deceived, every one being in a condition to satisfy himself about them, and of which consequently they could not but be most thoroughly informed.

I dare maintain that there are no facts in profane history of importance comparable to these of the creation of the world, and the promise of the Messiah, as Moses has related them.

2. And as for the author who relates these points, it is as plain that his character did wonderfully contribute to the making of his book famous. He was a man illustrious, as well by reason of his education, as the rank he held amongst men; a man equally exposed to the judgment of enemies and friends, and who could not vent the least thing contrary to truth, in matters of great importance, without seeing himself immediately refuted, or rather without exposing himself to public scorn.

Besides I aver, and am ready to maintain, that we find no author of so illustrious a character as Moses was, or who is distinguished with so many essential marks of faithfulness and veracity, as appears throughout the whole tenour of his writings.

3. This will appear more evidently when we consider the use to which Moses designs these two relations of the creation of the world, and the promise of the Messiah.

In a word, his design was not, in furnishing his books with the recitals of these important facts, to engage others to read them with more attention, or to get himself reputation by exciting a curiosity in people for his books. This would not have been becoming the gravity and wisdom of so great a legislator, of whom all succeeding ages have borrowed their laws.

It is apparent, that his end in the recording of these matters was to inspire with a sense of piety and religion, those who were committed to his charge.

This is that which in general we may observe about these matters; but more particularly it is certain, that Moses his end, in recording the oracles
oracles by which God promised to Abraham the establishing his posterity in the land of Canaan, was to represent to the Jews the right they had to that land, according to the design and intent of the Divine wisdom.

But without making this particular reflexion, it is clear that the law took its beginning at the twelfth of Exodus, where God prescribes to his people the manner of celebrating the passover; at least, this is the first law which God gave them through the ministrty of Moses: but forasmuch as Moses his end was to justify in the minds of his people, the design he had to make them leave Egypt, as well as their pretensions to the land of Canaan, whither he was to lead them; it was natural for him to lay before them the ground of those pretensions, which he could not do without relating the whole series of the history until the time of their bondage in Egypt, which we read in Genesis; the greatest part of which only concerns the ancestors of that people, after that Moses had first laid down the grounds of religion, and that which was known to all nations.

Let us now imagine to ourselves a man endeavouring all of a sudden to introduce into the world the belief of things so far distant from common apprehension as these two points must needs be, viz. that of the creation, and the promise of Christ, in case we suppose them generally unknown: let us yet further conceive a man not only relating those things, but making them the foundation of a new sort of laws never before heard of. Is there any wit or judgment in such an undertaking? Can we therefore suppose that Moses, whose writings testify his great wisdom, should ever have entertained such unaccountable thoughts?

I dare aver that there was never any legislator so stupid and inconsiderate, as to pretend to engage a whole people to submit themselves to the yoke of obedience, and to receive a great number of laws respecting their civil government and religion, by declaring to them two fictions, of which they had never before had the least idea.

It is also very considerable, that these things are not recited by Moses as a preface to the Decalogue, as if they were to have been proposed to Moses, or the people by God; but Moses sets them down as truths known to them all, and as principles universally admitted, and such as the mere mentioning of them could not but strongly engage the Jews to render a ready obedience to the laws which God gave to Moses in their presence of the Divine authority, of which their very senses were convinced.

Let us also consider the nature of those things, the relation of which Moses has joined with these two general points, to make an impression on the minds of the Jews. Let us consider the account he gives them of their ancestors, nearer or farther off, whom he represents as equally informed of these matters, as having severally delivered the knowledge of them to their children, and having joined to these first truths of the creation, and the promise of a Saviour, many other notions thereon depending, and which tied their hopes and expectations to the land of Canaan. And now judge whether Moses were not to be accused of great folly and senselessness, if he had proceeded to make such a vast people (all of the sudden) to receive for truths publicly and generally owned, what indeed was nothing but the most ridiculous and ill-cohering romance that ever was broached.
Now, since as it is visible (taking in the circumstances I have hinted) that the authority of such on historian and law-giver as Mofes was, relating such important matters, cannot be called in question; it follows, that the Atheist can have nothing to object against his testimony, with the least shadow or pretence of reason. So that we may already affirm, that there is nothing better attested than the creation of the world, and the promise of Christ, which are the immovable foundations of the Christian Religion.

Nevertheless, for a more evident conviction, we are willing, before we draw this conclusion, to make it appear how weak and inconsiderable all those objections are, which Atheists can possibly frame against what Mofes relates concerning these matters.

What can they with reason object? Perhaps they'll say, that Mofes is not the author of Genesis, but that it was foisted in under his name, and consequently, that whatsoever is built upon the authority of Mofes and his evidence is all without ground; or they may object, that, if Mofes be indeed the author of Genesis, he lived at such a distance of time from the things which he relates, that it makes void the authority of his writings. They may moreover allege, that Mofes relates things impossible, and of which therefore those that mentioned them before, the things themselves being so long since past and done, could not be fully informed of, and that they may well be supposed greatly changed and altered by a tradition of so many ages. They may also allege, that according to the common opinion, Mofes penned not these things as an historian, but as a prophet; and that the apprehension of most concerning his books are, that he wrote of things whereof the knowledge before his time was very obscure and confused, or rather were generally unknown.

They may object against these relations of Mofes, that which the most ancient people, such as the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Chinese, allude for their antiquity, which far surpasseth the date of the world according to Mofes.

These are the principal ways to assault the truths which Mofes relates; either by maintaining with the Atheists, on one hand, that the things which Mofes relates are indeed mentioned by the authors, but that they forged them themselves; or that Mofes, being an able and refined politician, designed, by creating a belief of these matters in the Jews, to make them more submissive and obedient to him.

In a word, it may be said, that supposing the books of Genesis to be written by Mofes, it was an easy matter for him to dictate whatsoever he pleased to a people who were under a law that made it capital to call in question the truth of his relations, or the authority of his laws.

This certainly is the farthest to which the height of obstinacy can carry this matter, and the very last refuge of the strongest prejudice. But it is an easy matter to confound the Atheists and Libertines in every one of these articles, and to shew that all their objections do in effect serve for nothing else but to make a more lively impression of this argument taken from matter of fact, which I have undertaken to set forth in a full and clear light.
CHAP. V.

That Moses is the Author of the Book of Genesis.

I shall in the sequel of this discourse make it appear, that we cannot with reason contest the authority of a tradition which hath those characters which we find in the relations contained in the book of Genesis: the only thing that can be questioned in this matter is, whether Moses, the great captain of the Israelites, and founder of their commonwealth, be the author of it. This therefore is the thing which we ought solidly to evince.

Though it seems that we might dispense with this trouble; forasmuch as it is easy to shew, that the greatest part of the most considerable events, which are recorded in the book of Genesis, were generally believed by others as well as the Jews.

At least it must be granted, that these matters have given occasion to most of their fables, viz. to that of the chaos; to that of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis; for the forming of man, to that of Prometheus; to that of Jupiter's continued laughter for the seven first days of his life, which they looked upon as the original of the solemnity of the seventh day, known amongst the heathens; to that of the golden age, and of the deluge; to the name of Deucalion; to the fable of Janus, to that of the division of the world amongst Saturn's sons; to the name of Jupiter Hammon; to the fable of the Titan, and of the changing of women into statues of stone; to the stories of the incest the gods committed with their daughters; to that of the firing of the world by Phaeton; and to a great number of other fictions, which cannot be otherwise explained, as the learned have shewn at large.

Whosoever was the author of Genesis, whether Moses or another, sure it is that he was exactly informed of the matters he relates, and that he lived soon after Joseph.

First then I say, that it appears he was fully informed of those matters of which he treats: he sets down the names of the heads or fathers of the several nations of the world, and does it so, that what he faith doth very well agree with what the most ancient historians have left us concerning that matter; he speaks of these nations, of the countries they possessed, and their kings, as of things he was perfectly informed of; he very carefully distinguishes the original of these several nations: and the same being at that time commonly known, no historian could represent them otherwise than they were, without exposing himself to the laughter of all, by endeavouring to mix fables with relations of this nature.

In the second place, I say, that this book was writ by a man that lived soon after Joseph: he speaks very exactly of what Joseph did in his place of chief minister to Pharaoh; in particular, he sets down the first original of the fifth penny which the Egyptians, so many ages after, continued to pay to their kings, being a thing which no Egyptian could be ignorant of.
And lastly, it is visible, that this book serves for an introduction to Exodus, and the following books, which have no other foundation but the truth of those things which are related to us there, and do throughout allude and refer to the several passages of it; and that all matters of religion and worship contained in them, are founded upon the truth of the creation, and the promise of the Messiah, which we find in Genesis; and upon the truth of all those other succeeding matters of fact, until the coming of the children of Israel into Egypt, when Joseph was chief favourite and minister of Pharaoh.

But we have yet a more easy way to make out that Moses, whose history is contained in Exodus and the following books, is the author of Genesis.

For first, it cannot be denied that the heathens themselves have acknowledged Moses for the most ancient law-giver: for this, we have the testimonies of Plato, Polemus, Artafanus, Pythagoras, Theopompos, and Diodorus Siculus, who places Moses in the front of six of the most ancient law-givers thus; Moses, Sauchnis, Sefonchos, Bacheris, Amasis, and Darius father of Xerxes.

But further, if, when the Lacedemonians tell us of the laws of their law-giver Lycurgus, and the Athenians of those of their Solon, we think ourselves obliged to believe them, because naturally every nation is supposed to be a faithful depositary of the laws of him who first founded their government; yea, if we do not in the least doubt of these relations, though there be no people at this day who live according to the laws of Lycurgus or Solon; can any valuable reason be imagined, for us to doubt whether Moses wrote the book of Genesis, when an entire nation have constantly averred that he did so? I say, when all the Jews, who continue at this day, do in all places, where they are scattered throughout the world equally, and with one consent, maintain that they received this book from him, together with the laws and worship therein contained? nay, when it is notorious that many of them have suffered martyrdom in confirmation of this truth?

I omit now to mention the consent of the Christians, who, though they be not descended of Abraham, and do not observe the greatest part of the laws of Moses, yet do not cease highly to defend this truth throughout the world, the Gospel in their sense being nothing else but the literal accomplishment of that promise, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. I shall shew, in the sequel of these my Reflections, with how much justice they assent to this truth; but at present I tie myself only to the testimonies of the Jews, and that which confirms the authority thereof.

CHAP. VI.
C H A P. VI.

That the Book of Genesis could not be forged under the name of Moses.

I SHOULD never have done, should I go about to set down all the observations which might be made in comparing this book of Genesis with other histories commonly known to the world, and whose faithfulness is unquestionable. Without entering upon this comparison, we may boldly assert, that there is no history in the world whose author we can be so sure of, as that Moses was the penman of Genesis.

But I go further, and assert, that the Jews could not be mistaken in the testimonies they give to this truth; which I prove by these two remarks.

The first is, That their observations, both civil and religious, are at this day founded upon no other principles than those which we find in Genesis: as, for instance, they compute the beginning of their day from the preceding evening, they keep the sabbath, they observe circumcision, they abstain from eating the muscle which is in the hollow of the thigh, &c. The observation of which laws is indeed prescribed to them in the other books of Moses; but the occasion and ground of them all is nowhere to be found but in Genesis, to which all these laws have a natural relation.

The second is, That the book of Genesis taking for granted, that the posterity of Abraham, as well as his ancestors, had always observed the sabbath and circumcision; and the books of Moses ordering the same to be constantly read in every family, to which the sabbath-day was more peculiarly appropriated, and the whole to be read over every seventh year, as we know the Jews practice was, according to the law of Moses; the first of which injunctions they practice still in all places, and have left off the other, only because they cannot do it now they are out of their own land; I say, supposing all this, it is absolutely impossible that any other than Moses could have made this book to be received.

The forgery, at the beginning, would have been palpable, even to children themselves: as, for example, let us suppose that Solomon had formed a design of deceiving the people, in publishing the book of Genesis for a book of Moses; is it possible he should so far impose on his people, as to make them to receive the said book all at once, as that which had been constantly read in their families every seventh day, and year, and that for 600 years before his time? and therefore, as a book that had been so long in all their families, though indeed it was never heard of by them before that time.

If an impostor can create a belief in others, that he hath some secret communication with the Deity, those who are thus persuaded by him, will easily submit themselves to his laws; but it is absolutely impossible that a whole people should all at once forget whatsoever they have learned or
or heard of their parents or forefathers, and instead thereof admit of tales forged at pleasure.

Some nations have been so ridiculous, to derive themselves from a fabulous original; but they never fell into such mistakes about those things which were at no great distance from the time in which they lived.

Besides, we know that these fabulous originals never made so lively an impression upon the minds of a whole nation, especially the learned amongst them, as generally to be believed; but we rather find, that they have endeavoured to reconcile them to truth, by shewing something else was hinted thereby, as we may see by the explication the heathens themselves have given us of all their fables, and utterly rejected those which they could not reconcile to good sense.

But in this case, we find a whole nation to this very day maintaining all the matters of fact related in Genesis, and in particular that of the creation, as of matters whose memorial they have constantly celebrated every seventh day, since the time they first happened.

Lastly, It cannot be denied but that this book was constantly used to be read amongst the Jews, especially on the sabbath-day, and that under the name of Moses; for instance, since the time of Jesus Christ, or since that of David: neither can it be denied, but this constant reading was observed by virtue of a law contained in the said book. Now, if this law has always been in this book from the first appearing of it, which cannot be questioned, how was it possible to forge and foist in this book under the name of Moses, the founder of the Jewish government? I say, this book, which, besides all this, contains such extraordinary matters, and is the very foundation of all their religion.

I will not repeat here what I mentioned in the third chapter, to make the vanity of those men appear, who imagine the book of Genesis, and the four that follow it, might have been forged by others, under Moses his name: yet I think I ought, before I proceed further, to remove a seeming difficulty, which is often alleged by this sort of people: for, say they, it cannot be that these books were ever read with that care and constancy we speak of, because a time can be pointed at, wherein the said book was wholly unknown in the kingdom of Judah; and indeed, the history plainly informs us, that the book of the law was found again in the reign of Josias; from whence they infer that, if it were then unknown, it might as well be forged.

But indeed they may conclude from hence, that which willingly we allow them, that there was a time wherein ungodliness did prevail, and idolatry was publicly established in the kingdom of Judah itself, yet can they not from this instance draw any other consequence which might support their pretensions.

They must needs acknowledge first, that the books of Moses were not only amongst the three tribes, but also amongst the ten, since the time of their revolt under Rehoboam; that they who were carried by Salma-nazar into the land of Assyria, had the said books amongst them, as well as those of the ten tribes who were left in their own country. Thus we see, that when the king of Assyria sent some of the priests of Samaria

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Samaria to instruct the colony which he had settled in their country, in
the law of God, it is not said that those priests went to borrow the law
of Moses from them of Judah, nor that the said law was altogether un-
known in that country; but only that they had formerly violated the
law of God, in serving strange gods, as they still did; but that, withal,
they kept the law of God, which to this day is yet found among their
poverty.

Secondly, It is evident that, though the wickedness and violence of Man-
nofeb caused a great change in matters of religion, yet not so great but
that his subjects notwithstanding had still the books of Moses amongst
them, the blood which he shed in Jerusalem was an evident sign that
there were some godly men left amongst them, who continued true to
their religion, and observed the laws of God. Besides, if we consider
his repentance, we must conclude, that towards the end of his reign
he did in some degree re-establish the purity of that religion he had be-
fore profaned, a main part of which was the expounding and reading
of the books of Moses, according to those laws before mentioned.

In the third place it is visible, that the reason why Hilkiah, having
found the book of the law in the temple as they were cleansing and re-
pairing it, sent the same to Josiah, was not because there was no other
such book left in Judah, but because the said book being written by the
hand of Moses himself, there seemed to be something very extraordinary
in the finding of it at that very time when they were endeavouring a
reformation; and it was this circumstance which did in a more parti-
cular manner excite the zeal of this good prince. And indeed, if we
suppose that Josiah had never before seen the book of the law, how could
he have applied himself to the reforming of his country, his people, and
the temple, in the manner which is recorded in the book of Kings? How
could a sufficient number of copies of it be dispersed over all his
kingdom in an instant, to inform the people about the ceremonials of the
pilgrims, which soon after was so solemnly celebrated by them? Or,
how is it possible that the Levites, the priests, and people, could have
been all of the sudden instructed in all the points to be observed in the
performing of that holy solemnity.

It is apparent that the sacred Historian did for no other reason take
notice of this circumstance, that the book found was of Moses’s own hand
writing, but to make it appear that their devout respect for this book
was not wholly stifled, as having been by them carefully hid from the
fury of their idolatrous kings, and laid up in some secret place of the
temple, where now they had so happily found it again.

Over and above what hath been said already, we are to observe, that
how great ever the wickedness of the kings of Judah and Israel was, as
well as that of their objects, yet the same generally consisted in nothing
else but the imitation of the worship of their neighbour nations, as to
some particulars, which though they were forbid by the law, yet they left
the far greater part of their religion in full force. This we have an in-
fstance of in the time of Abab, where we find Elijah reproaching the Is-
raelites with the monstrous alliance they had made betwixt the worship
of God and that of Baal, which queen Jefabel had introduced.

All
All this clearly proves, that the book of Genesis, which is the first of the books of Moses, was never forged under his name, since it was always owned as the writing of that famous author, and is still so acknowledged by the Jews at this day.

C H A P. VII.

That it appears from Genesis, that the Sabbath was constantly observed from the Beginning of the World until Moses.

The other objection of the Atheists (supposing that Moses was the author of Genesis, as we have now proved) is this, that it seems absurd to give credit to the relations of a person who lived so many ages distant from the things he recites. To answer this objection, we must first of all declare to them, by what means the memory of the fact which Moses relates was preserved so lively and entire as to give Moses so distinct a knowledge of them, and that it was not in his power to forge or add any thing of his own, it being a thing known to the whole world as well as himself.

There is no way whereby we can more solidly evince that it is impossible the creation of the world should be forged by Moses, than by making it appear, that the law of the sabbath hath a natural relation to the creation of the world, and that it hath been always constantly observed from that time until Moses. The same also will help us clearly to conceive after what manner the memory of the promise of the Messiah hath been preferred so distinct amongst those that lived since the creation until Moses. We are no sooner informed that the sabbath is a solemn day, ordained at first to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of the creation, but we judge it impossible that so important an event, commemorated every seventh day, by virtue of a Divine law, should be an imposture. But forasmuch as this imposibility is grounded on these two propositions; the one, that God gave this law of the sabbath to the first man; the other, that the same was observed by his posterity ever since, till the time of Moses, and that God only removed it in the law given from mount Sinai: these are the truths I am now to clear; and it is of more importance to be proved, because, though the generality of authors, ancient and modern, Jews as well as Christians, are of this opinion, yet there are some of the Chriftian fathers who seem to deny that the sabbath was ever observed by the Patriarchs. But it will be an easy matter to prove from Moses, that the antiquity of the sabbath is such as I assert, and at the same time time to demonstrate the truth of the creation, as well as of the promise of Messiah, which in a manner immediately followed it.

Moses, in the second chapter of Genesis, expresses himself thus: And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from
from all his work, which he had created (a): which words clearly evince a solemn consecration of the seventh day to God's service, by its being made a commemoration of his finishing the creation of the heavens and the earth.

But because it may be said, that the intent of Moses in this place was only to set down the reason why God set apart this day, of all others, to his service, by the law at mount Sinai, we are to take notice, that this appointment was made for man's sake, already placed in the garden of Eden. This we may gather from the order Moses observes: for he sets down first the formation of man on the sixth day, and his being placed in Paradise, which he gives a more particular account of in the second chapter; and after these, he relates God's resting from his works, and the consecration of the sabbath, with the reason of that law which he imposed on man; and then adds, These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the heaven and the earth. All that precedes these words, is only a relation of what passed in the seven first days; and that which Moses sets down concerning God's blessing of the seventh day, and his consecrating it, ought as well to be accounted a law appointing the seventh day for his service, as those other blessings given to the creatures according to their kinds, are acknowledged as inviolable laws of God, by virtue whereof they subsist, and are perpetuated, each according to their kind, by the way of generation.

In the second place, it is very remarkable that the Patriarchs maintained a public worship, at least since the time of Seth; which it was necessary should be determined to some certain day; and since we find that even at this time they distinguished between beasts clean and unclean, with respect to their sacrifices, (which they could not do but from revelation) we have much more reason to conclude that God had set apart a time for his own worship and service.

And, indeed, there are many evident signs, that even then the seventh day was observed (b). I will not here peremptorily assert that ancient tradition of the Jews which tells us, that the ninety-second Psalm, whose title is a Psalm for the Sabbath, was made by Adam himself, who was made on the evening of the sabbath: but this I dare assert, that it is apparent, that what we read in the eighth chapter of Genesis, (c) about the deluge, doth refer to this custom, where we find Noah sending forth the dove and the raven on the seventh day, which plainly hints to us his observing of that day; for it seems, that Noah having, in an especial manner, on that solemn day, implored the assistance of God in the assembly of his family, he expected a particular blessing from it.

And we cannot but make some reflexion on that which we read in the xxieth of Genesis concerning the term of a week set apart to the nuptials of Leah, where, at the twenty-seventh verse, Laban thus expresses himself: Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years (d). This week here doth plainly signify a week of days, that it cannot be more naturally expressed; and, indeed, all generally understand by this week of the marriage-feast of

(a) Gen. ii. 3.  
(b) Kimchi Proefat, in Psalms.  
(c) Gen. viii. 10. 12.  
(d) Gen. xxix. 27.
of Leah, that term of time which in succeeding ages hath been customary to allot to nuptial festivals, as appears from the book of Esther, where the wedding feast of Vashti lasted seven days; this term of seven days having so long since been consecrated to nuptial rejoicings.

The same we may also gather from the time which was ordinarily allotted to mourning for the dead; to which we find the Patriarchs allotted a term proportioned to that of their rejoicing. For as we see that the Egyptians mourned ten weeks for Jacob, because of his quality, as being the father of Joseph; so we find that Joseph, and those that accompanied him, mourned seven days at his interment in the land of Canaan: and as we find, that this custom was perpetually afterwards observed by the Jews, as appears from Ecclesiasticus xxii. 12. so likewise we find the same observed by the Asiaties, as may be seen in the history of Ammianus Marcellinus, at the beginning of his nineteenth book; and from them it passed to the Christians, as we find in St. Ambrose (e).

Thirdly, It appears from Exod. vii. 25. that God observed seven days (f) after he had smote the river to change the waters thereof into blood; from whence the Jews conclude, that the three plagues, viz. that of blood, of frogs, and of lice, abode on the land of Egypt six days, and were withdrawn on the seventh, which is the sabbath.

We may also gather, if we calculate the time exactly, that the Jews in Egypt observed the sabbath. We find from the history of their departure out of Egypt, that the same happened on a Thursday, being the fifteenth of the month Nisan; and the day in which they sung those hymns of deliverance, was the sabbath which God had particularly set apart for this week.

It is also evident from Exod. xvi. that the keeping of the sabbath was observed by the Israelites, before the law was given on mount Sinai. For we find God speaking there concerning the sabbath, not as of a thing newly instituted, but as of an ancient law, which they were not to transgress by gathering the manna on that day; for he orders them to gather a double portion the sixth day, and not to gather any on the seventh. We see that the Israelites resting on the seventh day is here supposed a known and customary thing, prescribed to them by a law of old.

They who went forth to gather manna on the seventh day are represented as transgressors of a known law, as appears from the words of the Lord to Moses. How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? Moses also speaks of the sabbath, which was to be the next day, as of a thing customary, and received amongst them. To-morrow (faith he, at v. 23.) is the rest of the sabbath of holiness unto the Lord; words which would have been unintelligible to the Israelites, and expressed a law altogether impracticable, in case they had been destitute of any further knowledge concerning it, and had not been acquainted that it was the very day in which the great work of creation had been finished.

My fourth observation I take from the very words of the Decalogue, where first of all we find God speaking in this manner, Remember the sabbath.

(c) De fide Refur. in obitu Sett. p. 271.

(f) Seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had smote the river. Jakhut in h. i.
sabbath day (g); which words clearly import, that the law he gave, was not a new law, but indeed as old as the world, and which had been observed by their forefathers. It seems probable also that God expresses himself in these terms, because the tyranny of Pharaoh had forced them to break this law, by obliging them to deliver their tale of bricks every day, without excepting the sabbath, which before he had allowed them to keep.

This is explained very distinctly in the fifth of Exodus, and seems to have been the occasion of Moses's demanding straw of Pharaoh for the Israelites to go and sacrifice; in answer to which demand, Pharaoh (b) expresses himself in terms which shew that formerly they had observed a rest on that day: however it be, yet thus much is apparent, that God commands them to make their bond servants to observe the sabbath, because the Egyptians, by their example, inclined them not to be very careful in exempting them from all labour on that day.

Moreover, in the second place, we are to take notice, that in the last words of the fourth commandment, God speaks of it as of a thing formerly appointed and determined by him, saying, For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it; which words have a manifest and undeniable reference to that which happened the seventh day after the creation, and to the laws then given to man concerning it.

We may gather from the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, that the figure which we have put upon the third verse of the second of Genesis, is the same which the Jews have always had of it. The Apostle, discoursing from those words of David, Psal. xcv. To whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest, doth suppose a threefold rest; the first of which is the rest of the sabbath, of which mention is made in the second of Genesis, where we have the first institution of it; the second was the rest in the land of Canaan promised to the Jews upon their enduring all those trials in the wilderness; the third, the rest in heaven, of which the two foregoing were but the figures. He argues therefore that these words of David could not be understood concerning the sabbath day, forasmuch as from the beginning of the world men entered into that rest of the sabbath; and he proves this, by that passage in Genesis of which he only cites the first words, viz. that God rested the seventh day from all his works; as supposing that the Jews, to whom he wrote, had no need of having the following words quoted to them, which tells us, that God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it: that is, he confeocrated the same to his worship and service, forasmuch as nothing was more publicly and universally known amongst them, the observation of the sabbath being a thing generally received, even before the giving of the law.

And, indeed, though Philo the Jew be of opinion that the practice of solemnizing that day had suffered some interruption, and that for this reason the law of the sabbath was given to Moses, yet it is well known first of all, that Aristobulus the Peripatetic (i), in a treatise dedicated by him to Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, cites several passages of Homer, Hesod,

(g) Exod. xx. 8.
(b) Exod. v. 5.
Hesiod, and Linus, heathen poets, which mention the seventh day as a festival and solemn day, because all things were finishe in the same.

In the next place, it is notorious, that if some of the fathers, as Justin Martyr and Tertullian writing against the Jews, have denied that the Patriarchs observed the seventh day, they did so rather with regard to the rigour of that law which forbid all manner of work on that day upon pain of death, (which was superadded by God to the first law of the sabbath) than to the observation of the sabbath, as it was a day appointed to make a solemn commemoration of the creation of the world.

In a word, we are to take notice, that the difference which God makes between the sabbath observed by the Patriarchs, and that which he appointed to the Jews, did consist in two things. First, in that God did impose an absolute necessity upon the Jews to abstain from all manner of work, even to the very dressing of meat, necessary for the support of life: we find this distinction clearly expressed in the law which God gave concerning the first and seventh day of the feast of unleavened bread; for he absolutely forbids all manner of work on these two days, as much as on the sabbath, even the preparing of necessary food, which he permits the five other days, forbidding only servile laborious works.

Secondly, In that the working on that day by the law is made punishable with death, which was not so before; which innovation, and new rigour of the law, established by God, was authorised by the punishing of him who had gathered sticks on the sabbath-day; whereas we find, that before the law was given upon mount Sinai, God did not command those Jews to be punished with death, who went forth the seventh day to gather manna, according to their ancient custom of dressing their meat on that day.

Let me add this further, that though the Apostles had abolished the rigour of the law concerning the sabbath, introduced by Moses, yet they themselves observed it; which practice of theirs, in all probability, gave occasion to the Christians, for almost four centuries, to keep the sabbath as well as the first day of the week, solemnizing both the days, the one as a commemoration of the creation of the world, and the other of the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

But whatever judgment may be passed on this last remark, it is very evident from Genesis and Exodus,—first, that the law of the sabbath was observed before Moses: secondly, that this observation was by the first Patriarchs propagated among the heathens also, as well as the idea of the creation; or as the practice of sacrificing, with the other parts of religious worship, the original whereof may be seen in the book of Genesis, as we shall make appear in our following discourse.

After all this, we must conclude against the Atheist, that either Moses must have imprudently laid a snare for himself, in forging a matter of fact of which not only the Jews, but all the world, were able to convince him, since there were none amongst them but must needs be conscious whether they had observed the sabbath in commemoration of the creation, as he relates it, or no; or else, that the creation of the world, being a matter of fact so generally known, and the memorial of it solemnized every seventh day by all those who preceded him, must needs be an uncontested and immovable truth, which I shall farther evince by
by those observations which I shall raise from the dependence and connection which the matters related by Moses in Genesis have with the creation, and the promise of the Messiah. This is my business at present; in performing of which I shall make it appear, that nothing can be imagined more rational and coherent than the relations of Moses, in which the Atheists imagine that they discover so great absurdities.

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**CHAP. VIII.**

*That Adam was convinced of his Creation, by Reason and Authority.*

THOUGH it might be thought more natural, in these our disquisitions about the history of Genesis, to begin with those matters which happened near the time of Moses, and from them to pass to those at a greater distance; yet I have chosen rather to follow the thread of Moses his discourse, hoping that this method will afford more light to these our Reflexions; at least, it will spare me the trouble of frequent repetitions, which in the other way I should be necessarily obliged to. I begin then with this, That Adam was convinced of his Creation, both by Reason and Authority.

The creation of Adam being a thing of that nature, that he must first be convinced of it himself, before he could persuade his posterity to entertain the belief of it, it is worth our inquiry to know what ways he had to assure himself that he was indeed created in that manner as Moses relates. And, forasmuch as the certainty of this tradition depends upon the authority of Adam, whom Moses supposes to have been the first deliverer of it, it is plain that we must be assured that Adam could not deceive himself in this matter, as it is evident enough that he would not deceive his children, when he took care to instruct them concerning it.

As to his own existence, he could not but be as strongly persuaded of it as we are of ours, all the difficulty lying in the manner how he came to exist. Now, there were two ways by which Adam might inform himself of this, viz. by reason, and the testimony of authority. He could easily find out this secret by a rational reflexion; or, he might also be persuaded of it by God himself, who had created him, not to mention now any information which he might have from the angels who were witnesses of his creation.

It appears that Adam, whose tradition Moses has recorded, supposes that he had learnt of God himself the manner of his own formation. God speaks to Adam, and sanctifies the seventh day; that is, obliges Adam to keep the memorial of his creation; he ties him, by a law, to commemorate his creation fifty-two times a year, and to render him continual thanks for the being he had received.

But, forasmuch as Adam was capable of making reflexions upon those several matters which God had made known to him concerning his creation,
creation, I say, it cannot be imagined, but that he must have taken these things into consideration, and have been convinced of the truth of them by the light of reason.

The truth of a relation consisting in its conformity with the matter related, it appears clearly that Adam could certainly know the truth of what God had declared to him, by examining the things themselves.

We may distinguish several propositions in the revelation God made to him concerning the manner of his creation.

The first was, That his body was taken from the earth.

The next, That his soul was not framed before his body.

The third, That his soul had been joined to his body, to constitute one individual person.

The fourth, That he was created in a full and perfect age.

The fifth, That his wife was formed of a rib, taken out of his side, during the time that he was cast into a deep sleep.

These are the truths I propose as influences, the rather because there is not one of them of which Adam himself could be a witness.

And yet I affirm, there is none of these which he could not be assured of by the light of reason, being convinced of them by the same means which assured him of the existence of his soul and body. The consideration therefore of these two matters was of good use to confirm the revelation which God had vouchsafed him concerning his creation, of which he could not be a witness himself.

That his body was taken from the earth, Adam might easily infer from the food that maintained it; for what is the matter of man's nourishment, but a digested and disguised earth? And finding himself, at first, in a perfect estate, it was natural for him to judge that his body had been thus at once framed of the earth, without passing those several degrees of growth whereby children arrive to their just figure.

And he might as easily be assured, that his soul was not formed before his body. The soul is a being, conscious of its own operations and thoughts; wherefore he needed only make this reflection: 'My soul has had neither knowledge nor thoughts before it was united to my body; therefore my soul did not exist before it.' No great study was required to make so natural a conclusion as this is.

Again, how could he be ignorant of the union of his soul with the body? Was it not obvious for him to be assured hereof, by the ready obedience which he saw his body yield unto his soul? He had the idea of a tree, as well as the idea of his foot or arm; whence it was easy for him to reflect thus: 'How comes it to pass, that I command my feet and my arms, and that I cannot do the same to a stone or tree, though I have the idea of the one as well as of the other? Must not this proceed from a nearer union it hath with the one than with the other?' He knew that this union continued during his sleep, and was independent of his will. In a word, he had the same proofs of this union, which we have of it at present; only they were in him much more lively, because our infancy makes us in some sort ignorant of the nature of our souls, our souls accustoming themselves, by little and little, to depend upon the senses, so as
as not to be able to raise themselves, without some trouble, above their operations.

Neither was it less evident to Adam, that he was produced at a perfect age. He saw that his food maintained life, and he knew assuredly that he had not taken any but very lately: how then could he attain to that stature without that help? Or how was it that he found himself now ready to faint, if he deferred to take it, which formerly he had not felt the want of? These reflexions made it unquestionable to him that he was formed in a perfect age.

And lastly, it was yet more easy for him to be persuaded of the truth of God's revelation concerning the forming of Eve: he needed but to count his own ribs and those of his wife; for he could not find one less in himself than in his wife, without being fully satisfied in that matter.

These propositions, with many others of like nature, being such as Adam could be assured of the truth of, by making reflexion either on himself, or on plants, or living creatures, greatly confirming his belief in the Divine testimony concerning his creation, we may easily infer, that Adam could not deceive himself about that matter.

C H A P. IX.

That Adam was confirmed, by his own Experience, in the Persuasion he had entertained concerning his Creation.

WHEN I take for granted that Adam could satisfy himself concerning the truth of God's revelation, by some natural and easy reflexions, I do not find how any can think strange of this hypothesis; except some, perchance, who might think that I make Adam too contemplative.

But if any will be pleased to make these following observations, they will justify me, that I have attributed nothing to him but what agrees exactly with his character.

The first is, That Adam finding himself, immediately upon his creation, at his full and perfect age, he was void of those prejudices which the ignorance and weaknesses of his infancy are the cause of; his mind was not tainted with popular errors, which often are so great a hindrance to the knowledge of truth: he had not yet received any ill impression; and when afterwards he was so credulous as to give way to a temptation, his experience proved a most powerful means to inform his reason, and withdraw him from his error.

Besides, we suppose here, that the Divine testimony which acquainted him with the particular circumstances of his creation, was precedent to the reflexions Adam made, and indeed was the cause of them. If we suppose some contryman, not capable of discovering of himself, all on a sudden
sudden, the manner how such a thing came to pass, yet this is certain, that his reason alone will be able to satisfy him whether the thing happened in that manner which the relation of it imports; he need but consult the rules of probability, to be determined in this matter.

Adam had not only the advantage of being formed at a perfect age, of being acquainted, by the mouth of God himself, about the creation of the world, &c. and of living so many ages, which gave him leisure enough to consider the probability of what God had revealed to him, to examine the grounds and certainty of it, and, in a word, to judge whether the said reflexions were to be rejected as fabulous, or to be relied on as of most certain and evident truth; but over and above all this, Adam could rationally assure himself of the manner how the things (which he had not seen) were done, by the experience he had of other matters which were comprehended in the Divine revelation.

The manner how his body had been formed of the earth, was, I confess, a thing difficult to be conceived; but the production of an infant like to himself, by the way of generation, which he afterwards was assured of by experience, was sufficient to confirm his mind in the belief of the Divine revelation; the way of generation being at least as much, if not more difficult to comprehend, as the manner of his creation.

We have great reason to suppose that, as it was Adam's duty, so he did really make those reflexions I have attributed to him, if we consider that God gave him a law proportioned to the state in which he was created; for this law supposes that Adam owned himself God's subject, that he considered God as his great benefactor, that he hoped for rewards from him, and feared to be punished by him.

And lastly, if I should grant that these reflections did not at first make so deep an impression in his heart, yet at least it cannot be denied, but that after his fall he was in a manner necessitated to meditate on these truths. God appeared to him in a visible manner; God passed sentence upon him, his wife, and the serpent; God condemned the serpent, and afforded his grace to man; God made him a promise proportioned to the evil into which he was fallen. The woman had deceived her husband, which did naturally tend to disunite them; but God uniting himself again with Adam, made the effect of his promise to depend upon Adam's reunion with his wife, having assured him that the offspring of his wife should be his Redeemer. God threatened the woman with extreme pains in child-bearing; he drave them out of the garden of Eden, and placed a flame of fire to guard the entrance there.

All this, without doubt, would never suffer Adam slightly to pass over matters of so great importance as his creation, and the manner of his being formed out of the earth. Things being thus stated, it is easy to judge whether we have supposed Adam too subtle and contemplative, by attributing the aforesaid reflexions to him.
CHAP. X.

That the Children of Adam had reason to be convinced of the Creation.

It is apparent, that as soon as the children of Adam were arrived to years of understanding, they were in a condition to make reflexions on the manner of their production, according to the information received of their parents. They were able to compare the twofold original of man; the one, in which the body was immediately taken from the earth; the other, in which it was produced by generation; and were able to judge if either of them were improbable; and in particular, whether the formation of their parents, with other matters consequent, and depending on it, could be sufficiently proved and confirmed.

For it was easy for them to judge, that their parents, of whose tenderness and care they had so great experience, could not have had the least design to deceive them in what they had delivered to them concerning the creation. They had also leisure enough, during the long lives they enjoyed, to examine the solility of those reasons which persuaded their parents of the truth of their creation.

For instance, they could easily inform themselves whether there were any more men and women than their father and mother, that had been before them; whether they were produced from the earth, or by a fortuitous concourse of atoms; whether there were any other language besides that which they spake; whether there were any ruins of buildings, or other remains, which signified that arts had been formerly cultivated; and in a word, whether there were any reason to persuade them, that the world had not its beginning at the time which their parents assigned for it.

Neither were they only in a condition to judge of the truth of these things: but their senses were able to convince them of it; as, for instance, by seeing the first trees, the production of others from them, and the different degrees of their growth.

But besides all this, they could experience most of these things in their own persons; they could know whether God had assigned to man the fruit of trees, and grain for their food, as Moses has recorded, only by examining their own mouths, which were formed to chew fruits, and not to tear the raw flesh of animals, which requires sharper and stronger sets of teeth than those they found themselves provided with, the eating of flesh not being introduced till after the deluge.

Thus, after the act of generation, they saw their children born, as it was represented to them that they themselves had been formed.

They had also before their eyes sensible signs of the truth of the matters related to them: as, for instance, the continual miracle of a flame of fire, which kept them from entering into Paradise, was a certain argument of the first sin, of which they had not been eye-witnesses.
The pains of a woman in child-bearing did the more confirm the truth of the Divine sentence, because it was not obvious for them to apprehend such consequences from an act which was pleasing to their sensual appetites.

And lastly, Forasmuch as they kept a solemn day to celebrate the memory of the world's nativity, on which seventh day their parents repeated to them no less than two and fifty times a year the same thing, informing them of the manner of their formation; it is impossible to suppose that they should let these things pass without making any reflection on the truth of them, and the rather because we cannot rationally conceive that they should have been serious in any duties of religion, without having first examined the truth of the creation, and of the promise of a Redeemer, which are the true grounds of all religious acts whatsoever.

CHAP. XI.

That the Children of Adam were actually convinced of the Truth of the Creation, and the Promise of the Messiah.

I SUPPOSE it is sufficiently evident that the immediate posterity of Adam could easily be assured of the manner how their parents had been produced, from whom they derived their beings. They could likewise be fully satisfied about the truth of their sin, and the promise God had made them, That one of their posterity should destroy the enemy of mankind.

My business therefore next, is to shew that they were actually assured of the truth of these matters: this will appear, if we consider two things.

The first is, that as these matters were the chief objects of their meditation, because of their extraordinary importance, so it is evident that they acted as persons fully satisfied of the truth of them.

The other is, that as they had been instructed in these truths by their parents, so they delivered the same to their posterity, to whom they transmitted the belief of these matters, as of things altogether unquestionable.

I say then, that they acted as those who were fully assured of the truth of these matters, which appears throughout the whole course of their lives, not only when they did that which was good, but when they were overtaken with sin: and this alone, methinks, is sufficient to evidence the deep impression the belief of the creation, and the promise of the Messiah, had made on their hearts.

Sacrifices are acts of religious worship; and this custom therefore of sacrificing, which we find amongst the Children of Adam, was an evident mark of their piety; and this their religious inclination was, without doubt,
doubt, the effect of their being persuaded of the truth of the creation and first promise.  

The sin of Cain in killing his brother, shews the same persuasion: the Divine oracle, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, being expressed in very general terms, was applicable either to the first son of Eve, or to his potterly; or else to some other who might be called her seed, because born from one of her potterly.

It is natural for us to pass from one meaning to another, when we are in search for the true sense of such general propositions as these. Now it appears, from the name which Eve gave to Cain, that she took the words of this oracle in the first sense, that is, she looked upon Cain to be the son that had been promised her, as appears from her own words. I have (faith she) gotten a man from the Lord (k). And it cannot be doubted, that being in this opinion herself, she was not wanting to cherish and flatter this hope in her son, that he was to fulfill the first prophecy or Divine oracle: neither is it any whit stranger to suppose this, than to imagine that Mandane did infil into her son Cyrus aspiring thoughts for the empire of Asia, from the dream of his father Astyages, which he looked upon as a divine foreboding.

When we read therefore that Cain slew his brother, seeing him preferred of God by a very distinguishing mark in the act of their sacrificing, through the jealousy and hatred he had conceived against him, may we not very naturally conclude from thence, that as he had never doubted of the truth of the promise, so he could not endure to see another come, to dispute his pretensions of being the fulfiller of that first oracle?

A like reflection we may make upon the name which Eve gave to Seth; and indeed the Jews, in their ancient commentaries on Genesis, lead us to it: She called his name Seth, for God (said she) has appointed me another seed (l). R. Tanchumah, following the notion of R. Samuel, faith, That she had regard to that seed which was to proceed from another, or a strange place; and what seed is that? faith he. It is the King, the M'siah.

I pretend not to maintain the solidity of the reflections they make upon the words, another seed. They seem rather to have pleased themselves in sporting with a word which admits of both significations, other and strange, then to give us an exact and distinct notion of the importance of that word. Thus much, at least, we cannot deny, but that Eve considering her son Seth as him whom God has given her instead of Abel, she could do no less than acquaint him with her hopes; and indeed, this information was that which not only disposed Seth and his potterly for piety and the spirit of religion, but did also in a particular manner incline them to separate from the race of Cain, as from thofe whom God had bereft of the right of fulfilling the first oracle, to which naturally they might pretend.

It appears from the example of Enoch, that the children of Adam lived in the exercise of religious worship: and we know that the said worship supposeth the creation of the world, and promise of the M'siah, and that all the acts of religion are employed either in commemorating these truths

Q. 4  

(k) Gen. iv. 1.  
(l) Rabbath, fol. 27. col. 2. par. 23. & alibi.
every seventh day, or in unfolding the wonders therein contained, or in testifying our thankfulness to God for the same.

We may add here, that the infallance of Lamech's polygamy does in some sort make out to us the force of this persuasion.

Cain being rejected by God, and distinguished by an exemplary punishment, for killing his brother Abel, it is evident that no man could any longer interpret that promise in the first sense, by applying it to Adam's first son, or his posterity. This being so plain, as none could be ignorant of it, it was therefore natural to seek for another meaning of that promise, and to place the fulfilling of it in a posterity at a greater distance, or more numerous.

And indeed so it happened; for the exemplary punishment which God inflicted on Cain during the seven first generations, according to those words, That he should be punished sevenfold, made his posterity apprehend, that God (for the sin he had committed) had justly debarred him of the right he might otherwise have had of fulfilling the promise.

But yet at the same time they conceived also, that this right, which belonged more properly to the eldest or first-born than to the younger brothers, was now to return to his posterity after the seventh generation; and in this view it seems, that Lamech affected polygamy, as if by multiplying his posterity he had hoped to see that promise fulfilled by some one or other of them.

It cannot be denied but that he imitated the crimes of Cain, and therefore may well be supposed to have been leavened also with his false maxims. But how greatly for ever he was corrupted, yet forasmuch as he had been educated in the hopes of his father, and in converse with the family of Seth, who many ages before had formed public assemblies for religious exercises, we cannot well imagine but that he must have had the same pretensions.

It appears, therefore, that the polygamy of Lamech may justly be esteemed an effect of his misapprehensions concerning the sense of the first promise; those means which he conceived most likely, he made choice of, to give him a share in the fulfilling of that promise which pointed at a son to be born. So that the irregularity he was guilty of in marrying two wives at the same time, may pass for a proof of his being persuaded not only of the promise, That the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head, but also of the creation of the world.

It seems that, according to these principles, we may give a very plausible account, as well of those violences which were exercised in the old world, and of their strong inclinations to senfuiality, as of those alliances between the family of Seth and that of Cain, which did not happen till seven generations after Cain; that is to say, at a time when the family of Cain pretended to be restored again to his ancient right, from which he had been suspended during seven generations: the family of Seth, by these alliances with the family of Cain, seeming desirous to secure their hopes and pretensions. It will not be thought strange that I look upon the jealousy of Cain towards his brother (as thinking himself supplant ed by him of his right to accomplish the promise), and the polygamy of Lamech, as an effect of this persuasion, if it be considered, that in all likelihood this
this belief was more strong at the beginning of the world, the idea of the promise being more fresh and lively in the minds of men, as a thing at no great distance from those times; and that we find in the holy family in general, manifold instances of this spirit of jealousy, and burning desire of a posterity.

We find also, much about the same time, another Lamech, the father of Noah (m), declaring by the name he gave his son, the hopes he had that he might probably be the person who was to comfort mankind concerning all the misery sin had brought into the world.

Thus it appears clearly, that for above sixteen ages, from the creation of the world to the deluge, we find in all the actions of the children of Adam a strong impression of the belief of the creation of the world, and the promise of the Messiah; and till this time we find not the least instance which might seem to convince the relation of Moses of the least absurdity. We see men acting from the persuasion of these two matters of fact; we must conclude therefore, that they were distinctly informed of them: yea, we see all men in general acting according to this persuasion; it is evident therefore they were known to all; and the weekly observance of the sabbath-day continually representing the truths to the eyes and minds of all, takes away all possibility of forgery in these matters.

Let us now inquire whether after the deluge these ideas were effaced; or, whether they have not exerted the same efficacy in the spirit of Noah, and the actions of all his posterity.

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**C H A P. XII.**

*That Noah was fully persuaded of the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah.*

If we find that the children of Adam, and their posterity, could be exactly informed of the creation, and the promise of the Messiah, and that indeed they were so, it will follow, that Noah could not be unacquainted with the same truths.

Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came: he had conversed with Lamech his father, who had seen Adam and his children, as being fifty-six years of age when Adam died; he had conversed with Methusalem his grandfather, who died that very year the flood came, and who, being three hundred and forty-three years old when Adam died, had without doubt instructed Noah during so vast an interval of time, in like manner as himself had been instructed by Adam for many ages.

And as Methusalem had lived a long time with Seth, who died in the year of the world 1042, so it is evident that Noah, who was born in the

(m) Gen. v. 29.
year 1056, had not only seen Lamech and Methusalem, but many also of their ancestors, whose discourses he heard, examined their traditions, and imitated their way of worship.

Moreover, Noah saw that there were no men in his time who did not deduce their genealogy from Adam: all his contemporaries could convince him of it, every one of them having as exact a knowledge of their ancestors as he could have of his.

Now, that this was a matter which they might be easily assured of, appears on these two accounts: the one is, the long life which the men of that age enjoyed; and the other, the short interval of time which was between the creation and the deluge, the whole amounting only to 1056 years. Adam died in the year 930, and the deluge happened in the 600 year of Noah's life. Adam died 126 years before the birth of Noah; so as Adam must have been seen and known by Methusalem, Lamech, and thousands of others who were contemporaries with Noah.

To these we may add a third remark, and that is, the jealousy and hatred which was between the two families of Cain and Seth: Cain's posterity were altogether corrupted, and the greatest part of Seth's also. Noah, being of the posterity of Seth, had no reason to call those matters in question, which he saw generally owned and received of those to whom their wickedness and crimes suggested objections against them. And I do not know, whether I might not suppose that Noah had before his eyes Paradise, with the cherubims who guarded the entrance thereof, and made it inacessible; which, if so, was an authentic proof of the truths in question; that garden, as far as we can judge, being not destroyed, nor the guardian angel discharged, till the time of the flood.

Be it as it will, yet Noah, being a man fearing God, was honoured with an extraordinary call to exhort men to repentance; he was commanded to build an ark; he saw the deluge happening, according to what God had foretold; he saw the beasts, of their own accord, gather themselves together, to enter into the ark, in like manner as he had been told that they came to Adam; he saw the deluge cease, according to the Divine declaration; he saw fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice he offered in acknowledgment to God, in like manner as the words of Moses seem to imply that it happened at the sacrifice of Abel; he saw himself chosen in a peculiar manner to be the depository of the promise which Adam had left to his posterity, though he never had the satisfaction of seeing it fulfilled himself, God having reserved the accomplishment of it for another time, and to one of his posterity at a great distance.

It is very evident that all these particulars could not but conduce to preserve the memory of these first most important matters of fact of the creation and the promise of the Messiah; and therefore, that Noah must of necessity be convinced of the certainty and truth of them. Let us now see whether Noah's offspring had the same persuasion concerning these things.
That the Children of Noah were convinced of the Truth of those Matters.

The children of Noah were an hundred years old when the deluge happened, and consequently had conversed a long space of time with Methusalem, and many other of their ancestors and relations of the old world, and had frequented the religious assemblies, observed every sabbath-day in the family of Seth, whence they were descended, and had been instructed there by those who had seen Adam and his posterity: it is evident therefore, beyond all contest, that they could not be ignorant of the creation, and promise of the Messiah.

Now, that they had a distinct knowledge of those matters, we may evidently conclude, not only because they had seen God, when he blessed them, and a second time laid to them, as after a new creation, Increase and multiply (n); nor only upon the account of his giving them a positive law, forbidding them to eat the blood of living creatures (o), whose flesh they were permitted to feed on, as he had forbid Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, when he left the rest to their free use: not only for that he had given the rainbow, as a new sign of his covenant with mankind; nor only because they had practised those acts of religion to which they had been educated by their parents and ancestors before the deluge: but because the same may be inferred from that action which drew upon Cham his father's curse.

What is the meaning of Cham's deriding the nakedness of his father, and of his father's taking occasion from thence to curse him so solemnly, and that in the person of Canaan his first-born? If it were only a piece of irreverence in the father, what reason had Noah to curse the son on that account? Or was it (as some have supposed) that Canaan had given occasion first to his father's irreverence, by acquainting him with the disorder in which he had found his grandfather Noah? Without doubt, there is something more than ordinary in this history. Sure it is, that the account given us of Cham represents him as a profane person, and deeply tainted with the maxims of Cain and his posterity, and seems to hint to us, that he supposing the promise of the Messiah either frustrated by the death of Abel, or altogether false, he made his father's nakedness the subject of his mockery; who seemed to be incapable of begetting any more children, and therefore incapable of contributing to the accomplishment of the promise of the Messiah, in hopes of which he accounted himself so happy that he had escaped the deluge.

What means it also, that Noah pronounced so terrible a curse against the posterity of Cham by Canaan, who were so far from giving an accomplishment to that promise, that they were in a manner wholly exterminated by Japhua, when God put the posterity of Shem by Abraham in possession of the land of Canaan? It is very natural for us to conceive, that

(n) Gen. ix. 1.  
(o) Gen. ix. 5.
that Noah considered his son Cham's deriding of him, not only as contrary to the respect which was due to him as his father, but also as the effect of a horrid impiety, which attacked God himself, as making that promise, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*, a subject of raillery.

This reflexion upon the action of Cham, and the curse of Noah consequent to it, does appear very natural, if we consider that Noah could not but reflect upon the name his father had given him, and the special favour shewed to him, in being alone preserved of all the posterity of Adam, and consequently the only person in the world by whom this promise was to be fulfilled. At least, it cannot be denied, but that this reflexion is as natural as it would have been just, in reference to the fact of cruel Ahyages (p), if, when he had (as he thought) sufficiently eluded his dream, which prefaged the glory of the son of Mandane his daughter, he had found her indecently uncovered, and had taken thence occasion deridingly to reflect, with his other children, upon a dream which seemed to promise to the son of Mandane the throne of all Asia, and threaten the ruin of his own.

It is a thing worth our noting, that in the time of Ezra (q) the Samaritans had so fresh a memory of Cham's sin, which they supposed to be generally preserved amongst other nations, that in their letter to king Artaxerxes against the Jews who rebuilt Jerusalem, they declare, they would not discover the king's nakedness; implying, that they could not consent to the injury he might receive from the Jews in suffering Jerusalem to be rebuilt. It is not needful to repeat those other arguments which prove that the children of Noah had reason to be, and were actually as much convinced of the creation and first promise as their ancestors were; for, seeing that these arguments were the very same which their fathers had to persuade themselves of the truth of these things, we had better proceed to the inquiry, whether their posterity that followed them, had the same persuasion they had? which may easily be proved, in making some reflexions on the following ages, and upon those who descended from Noah and his children.

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**CHAP. XIV.**

That the Posterity of Noah's Children were persuaded of the Truth of the Creation, and first Promise.

If Noah saw Methusalem, who had seen Adam and his posterity before the deluge; Abraham saw Shem and his children, who were unquestionable witnesses of what had passed before and since the flood.

Noah


(q) Ezra iv. 14.
Noah dying 350 years after the deluge, it appears that his death happened in the year of the world 2006; so that Noah died only two years before the birth of Abraham, he being born in the year 2008.

Abraham lived 150 years with Shem, who died in the year 2158, and 88 years with Arphaxad the son of Shem, who died in the year 2096; he lived 118 years with Selah son of Arphaxad, who died in the year 2126, and 179 years with Heber the son of Selah, who died in the year 2187.

Ifaac being born in the year 2108, might see Shem, Selah, and Heber, who for some hundreds of years had conversed with Noah and his other children; I say, we may suppose him to have conversed with those patriarchs, or at least with those who, being their contemporaries, discussed of Noah as a man but of yesterdays, and from his relation and his children's were informed of the creation of Adam, his fall, the promise of the holy seed, the death of Abel, the miracle of Paradise, the preaching of Noah, the deluge, &c. and who, in obedience to the law of God, observed by their ancestors, did meet together fifty-two times every year, to celebrate the memorial of these wonders, and to teach them to their posterity.

We may take notice of three things here which conduct much to the preservation of a distinct knowledge of these matters.

The first is, That the ark itself might be seen by all the world, as a certain monument of the deluge, and the saving of Noah and his sons (r). This monument continued very many ages after Abraham, and was a means to preserve the memory of the deluge amongst the Pagans, as Lucian, to name no more, acquaints us.

The second is, That it was as easy for any of Abraham's contemporaries, as for Abraham, to deduce his genealogy from Noah and his children.

And this was the more easy, because the first division of the world among the three sons of Noah, was followed by another partition amongst their posterity, in the year of the world 1758; a division which gave them a just title of possession to that part of the earth where they resided: in defence of which, it seems probable that the war of Chedalomer (mentioned the xiith of Genesis) was undertaken, the family of Cham having invaded the land of Canaan, which was part of the inheritance of Shem, as we shall make appear elsewhere.

The third and last thing is, That it was not easy to impose a forgery upon those times, because their lives were yet of a great extent, though inferior to those who lived before the flood.

To these we may add this further consideration, that as the jealousy which was between the family of Seth and Cain was a great means to preserve inviolably the important truths of the creation and first promise; a like jealousy now being roused amongst the sons of Noah, Cham being accused of his own father in the person of Canaan, and the same being propagated to their posterity, it could not but effectually contribute to refuse these important truths from oblivion, and particularly the promise of the Messiah, conceived in these words, The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

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(r) De Dea Syra, p. 1060.
In a word, we may not only, in reference to the matter in hand, take notice of what Lucian relates concerning the religion of the Assyrians (s), which did so lively preserve the memory of the deluge, and of what was done to Noah by his son Cham, when he scoffed at the nakedness of his father (t); but also, that the God of the Sichemites was called Baalbrith, whose symbol was the figure of the privy parts of a man, which seems a manifest allusion to their descent from the family of Cham, the Sichemites being some of the posterity of Canaan.

It is also very natural to conceive, first of all, that it was from those old pretensions that the Canaanites took occasion to profane the most holy things with such shameful ideas.

Secondly, That it was in detestation of these ideas, that God ordered the killing of the priests of Baal. And,

Thirdly, That it was for the same reason, that the Jews were commanded to destroy them utterly.

Fourthly, This was also the reason why the Israelites were so often desirous of imitating their crimes.

In the fifth place, as we see that upon the like account the Moabites and Ammonites took Chemosh for their god, and that the women of those nations were very zealous to propagate their religion, of which we have an instance in Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, so God was also willing to inspire his people with horror and detestation for their religion or any alliance with them.

Lastly, as there does appear a very great conformity and resemblance between the first birth of the world from the first chaos, and its being born again after the deluge; between Adam the first man, and Noah the second; and between the jealousies sprung up in both their families upon the account of the promise of the Messiah; so this conformity could not but very naturally contribute to preserve the memory of those ancient events which Noah and his children had delivered to their posterity with all the care which is taken to preserve the tradition of the fundamentals of religion.

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C H A P. XV.

That we find the Family of Abraham, and his Posterity till Jacob, fully persuaded of those Truths.

It is no less easy to conceive how the distinct knowledge of these truths was in process of time handed down to Jacob and his posterity. This I shall briefly explain.

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(s) Judg. viii. 23. & ix. 8. Talm. Hier. fol. ii. col. 4. & gloss. in b. l. & Avodzara, c. iii. fol. 43. col. 1.
(t) De Dea Syr. p. 1069.
I need not take notice here, that the religion practised by Abraham and his posterity, suppose those matters as constantly owned and known. It cannot be denied, but that Lot, having followed Terah and Abraham when God called the latter out of Chaldea, might thence suppose, that this heavenly call did separate and distinguish him from the rest of the posterity of Shem, and gave him a right, as well as Abraham, to pretend to the privilege of fulfilling the promise of the Messiah, or at least to see it fulfilled in his posterity. This we may infer from the incest of Lot's daughters: their crime, which in another view appears very monstrous, doth clearly prove, that they were strongly prevailed with this hope, which their father had raised in them.

I know that some interpreters suppose (u), that they were moved to commit this incest from a pious intention of preserving mankind, as imagining to themselves, that as the deluge had drowned all men, besides Noah and his family, so the flames which destroyed Sodom had consumed all mankind; which they were the more ready to believe, because they might have heard from their father, that the world one day was to perish by fire. But indeed it may be considered as proceeding from a very different motive, the Jewish doctors (x) plainly averring, that this was done by them in hopes of bringing forth the promised Redeemer.

And if we look upon this action of theirs in this view, with reference to the promise of the Messiah, which was the grand object of the hopes of all those that feared God; it is natural to conceive, that considering their father as one whom God had peculiarly chosen from among the posterity of Shem, to execute the promise of the Messiah, and seeing that their mother was changed into a statue of salt, they conceived themselves in some sort authorized to surpass their father in that manner; and the rather, because they conceived on the one hand, that none of the Canaanites (upon whom God had now begun to pour forth so hideous a vengeance, as a beginning of the execution of the curse against Cham) having any part in this chiefest of blessings, could ever marry them, after that God had so manifeely separated and called forth their father from amongst them; and on the other hand, supposing that God would dispense with the irregularity of this action, by reason of their being reduced to an extremity.

There be three circumstances which greatly confirm this my remark upon the motive of their incest.

The first is, That they are represented to us as those who had behaved themselves very chastely, in the midst of the impurities of Sodom; and that besides we find they designed no such thing, till after the death of their mother.

The other is, That we see them contriving the thing together, and that in a matter which naturally is apt to separate the greatest friends, where the motive proceeds from a spirit of uncleanness; nor indeed do we find that they continued in this incest.

The third is, That they were so far from being ashamed of an action in itself so criminal, or concealing the knowledge of it from posterity, that they gave those names to the children born of this their incest, that

(u) Lyra in Genes. xix. (x) Beris. Rab. part 23.
might perpetuate and divulge the memory of this their action, the one calling her son Moab, as much as to say, born of my father, and the other her's Benammi, a name of a like signification with the former.

This observation is very necessary, because these two sons became the heads of two great people, the Moabites and the Ammonites, whose kingdoms lasted above 1300 years, and lived on the borders of the holy land, and were jealous of Abraham and his posterity, as pretending that Abraham could not be chosen before Lot their father, who, being the son of Abraham's eldest brother, was to be considered as the first-born of Terah; and who were apt, without doubt, to take it for granted, that if God had brought Abraham out of Chaldea, and rescued him from Ur, he had in a more peculiar manner saved Lot alone from the conflagration of Sodom, by the ministration of angels; and that Abraham and Lot being equally descended from Terah, the right of accomplishing the promise did equally belong to them.

And indeed we find that in all succeeding times these thoughts did predominate with them, as may easily be made out from the history of Balaam.

We see therefore, that the Moabites, who were descended from the eldest daughter of Lot, looked upon the pretensions of the Israelites, that the Meffiah was to be born of their seed, in exclusion to all others, with great impatience; and it was for this reason that they sent for Balaam, to decide (by Divine authority) the difference between them, concerning the right or the promised blessing.

We may make very near the same reflexions upon the calling of Ruth the Moabite's, when she faith to Naomi her mother-in-law, Thy God shall be my God, and thy people shall be my people; which signifies a renouncing of the pretensions of her own people, and an acquiescing in the justice of those of the Israelites; and it was upon this occasion, that Ruth is more particularly taken notice of in the genealogy of our Saviour, as I shall have occasion to shew hereafter.

That which I have hinted concerning the intention and aim of the daughters of Lot, hath been observed before by the Jewish Rabbins, as we may see in the most ancient of their Commentaries upon these words of Genesis, chap. xix. v. 32. Come, let us make our father drink wine, &c. Upon which words, R. Tanchumah, following the footsteps of R. Samuel, makes this reflexion: That we may preserve seed of our father; it is not said, that we may preserve a son from our father, but that we may renew the posterity of our father, because (faith he) they had regard to that seed which was to proceed from a strange place; and what seed is that? It is the King Messiah.

After this observation upon this action of Lot's daughters, it can no longer rationally be doubted, but that the violent passion which Sarah had for a son, proceeded from the very same impression which made her, contrary to the inclinations of that sex, to deliver her servant into her husband's bosom, especially if we join to this the particular promise God had made to Abraham, which she could not be ignorant of.

Sarah sees herself destitute of children; and her barrenness having continued so long a time, she had no hopes of ever being a mother: what remained
remained therefore for her, but to think of adopting a son of her bondwoman? And in consideration of this, she persuades her husband, who had no inclination to any such thing by any thing that appears (at least precedent to this desire of his wife), to take her unto him. He sought the seed of God, that is, the seed which God had promised, as Malachi expresses it, Mal. ii. 15.

At least it is certain, that the Jews have taken these words of Malachi (x) in this sense for a very long time, as they do still to this day.

We may easily perceive, that this was a predominant impression throughout that whole family, if, to what we have already observed of Lot's daughters and of Sarah, we do but add the sorrow Rebecca conceived because of her barrenness, and the contentions happening between the wives of Jacob for their husband's company; without which supposal, the relation of such a matter would be a thing of no importance.

Certainly, as it would be ridiculous to suppose that so wise an historian as Moses was, should stoop to the recital of such mean and low particulars (not to speak worse of them) without aiming at something very high and considerable, so it is rational to believe that in all these relations he pointed at the promise of the Messiah, which at that time was the great object of the religion of the faithful, which God in process of time did explain by little and little more distinctly.

The jealousy also which arose between Ishmael and Isaac, is no less considerable. Ishmael was the eldest son of Abraham, and circumcised as well as Isaac; he was saved from death by the ministrv of an angel; and was the head of a great people, who from that time to this very day have always been circumcised.

It may be also of great use to take notice here, that Ishmael could not but be instigated by Abraham concerning the promise God had made to him, to which he pretended, as being the elder, and therefore mocked at the great flir was made at the weaning of Isaac, as thinking that he, being the eldest, could not be deprived of the natural right of his progeniture. At least, it is very probable, that except it had been thus, Sarah's anger (approved by God himself) would not have proved so violent, as well against Ishmael as Hagar, who flattered him in these pretensions, nor would Abraham so far have complied with it.

And forasmuch as Isaac, on the other side, was born to fulfil a particular promise, was circumcised, and saved from death by an angel; and that, besides all this, Ishmael and he had been equally educated in the practice of religion; it is impossible but that this conformity of events (which has been the cause of such lasting contests between them and their posterity) must have engaged them to inquire into the truth of the creation, and the promise of the Messiah, and into all other matters which did any way concern them.

We have a like instance, if not stronger for our purpose, in Edom and Jacob, who were both born of the same mother; but Edom being the first-born, we find the same jealousy arising between them, as before between
between Ishmael and Isaac. Sarah seemed somewhat cruel in calling out her adopted son Ishmael; and here we see that Rebecca preferred Jacob before Esau her first-born, and assisted him in robbing his elder brother of the blessing due to him of right: but without question, her design in all this was to entail this blessing on her family, by making it fall on Jacob, as being afraid (and that not without cause) that Esau, by his sins and his marriage with the Canaanites, had made himself incapable thereof.

Now as this was the occasion of a great dispute between these two Patriarchs educated in the same belief and religion, so it plainly shews us how strong a persuasion they had of the creation, and the promise of the Messiah.

And besides, it is further very remarkable,

First, That Moses represents Esau as a profane person; for which, not only this reason may be alleged, that he sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, to which birth-right the priesthood was always annexed; but we must further take notice,

That he being educated by his father in the hopes of this blessing, he seemed to laugh at it in all his actions; for first he married the daughter of Heth, by which he sufficiently intimated that he neither minded the blessing nor the curse of God; for Canaan and his posterity had in a very solemn manner been curs'd by Noah, with a particular regard to the promise of the Messiah, as I hinted before.

In the second place, he married a daughter of Ishmael, as if he intended to renew the pretensions of Ishmael against Isaac his father.

In the third place we see, that when he repented of this profane humour, he was pierced with extreme forrow for the crime he had committed, because he could not obtain pardon for it.

This jealousy and difference between Esau and Jacob, is the more considerable, because Esau was the head of a great nation, viz. the Edomites, a people circumcised as well as the Jews, jealous of the posterity of Jacob, and living upon the borders of Judea, as well as the Moabites, Ammonites, and Ishmaelites, but yet put by their hopes by that oracle, The greater people shall serve the lesser.

Were it needful to afford a greater light to these reflexions, I might here add a very natural one, from the oath which Abraham made his servant Eliezer take, when he sent him to Padan-Aram, to procure a wife for Isaac. We may easily judge that he was not willing he should marry a Canaanite, as Lot had done; and that, for fear of forfeiting his hopes, and weakening the just pretensions of Isaac to the right of accomplishing the promise, from whence the Canaanites were excluded by the prophecy delivered by Noah. But that which made Abraham to oblige his servant to swear, putting his hand under his thigh; that is, touching that part which was the subject of circumcision (y), and which bore the mark of the covenant; deferves a further consideration.

We find first of all, that the Patriarch Jacob observes the same custom, when he made his son Joseph to take an oath, that he should not bury him in Egypt.

Secondly, We find that this custom of beholding that member which received

(y) St. Jerom.
received circumcision, as a part consecrated to religion, did by little and
little take place in the land of Canaan, and gave occasion to the worship
of Baal Peor, so famous among the Moabites and Ammonites; a very sur-
prising and strange worship indeed, and yet celebrated with festivals
and hymns, and was the rise of that worship which the heathens after-
wards gave to Priapus. What I have here observed, hath been in part
acknowledged by the Jews, where they speak of the worship of Baal
Peor, and the reason which made God prescribe to the priest the use of
linen drawers, that their nakedness might not appear during the functions
of their ministry.

After all that I have now said, concerning those jealousies which Moses
relates with so much care, it seems that the soliditY of these observa-
tions cannot be disputed; especially if we consider, that it is these jea-
alousies, and these pretensions to the promise of the Messiah, that gave rise
to the custom of calling God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob: for though he might as well have been called the
God of Adam, the God of Enoch, and the God of Noah, forasmuch as
all these Patriarchs were also depositaries of the promise of the Messiah;
yet it is probable that God was called so, because of the particular pro-
mises which had been made, first to Abraham, secondly to Isaac, and lastly
to Jacob, and in opposition to the pretensions of some people near neigh-
bours to the Israelites, and jealous of their hopes: the God of Abraham,
and not of Lot, as the Ammonites and Moabites, Lot's posterity, pretended;
the God of Isaac, and not of Ishmael, as the Ishmaelites pretended; the
God of Jacob, and not of Esau, as the Edomites, who were the offspring
of Esau, pretended.

CHAP. XVI.

That this very Persuasion seems to have been kept up amongst the Posterity of
Jacob, until Moses's Time.

It is yet easier to shew, that the distinct knowledge of the creation,
and of the promise of the Messiah, did continue from Jacob to Joseph,
and so on to Moses.

The following arguments will clearly demonstrate it.

First of all, we see that Jacob (z) being possessed of the blessing, and
so depositary of the promise, obeyed Isaac's command, who forbade him
to take a wife, but out of his own family; and that accordingly he went
to Padan-Aram, to seek and get a wife amongst those of his kindred,
as Abraham had formerly sent for one of the same country for his son
Isaac.

We see, in the second place, this Patriarch imitated Lamech (a) in some
respect, by his falling into polygamy: for who can doubt but he who
was conscious to himself of having surprised, as he thought, the blessing

designed

(z) Genef. xxviii. (a) Genef. xxix.
design'd for his elder brother, did act in this occasion by the same principle which Lamech had formerly acted by? Thus we see that barren Rachel follows Sarah's example, and adopts the son of that maid-servant whom she gave to Jacob; wherein Leah followed her, and gave one of her maids to her husband: all this was evidently grounded upon the same principle which afterwards bred those difficulties betwixt Jacob's wives about the getting children by him; for it is very natural to believe, that Jacob did not conceal from his wives his advantages and hopes.

It appears that Jacob's children, which were born, for the most part, in Laban's house in Chaldea, where they had seen Abraham's native country, and thole of their own kindred, from among whom God had commanded Abraham to depart, and to go into Canaan, did entertain very lively notions of those important truths, especially after they were strengthened and confirmed by the cares and instructions of old Isaac, to whom they were brought by Jacob; and after they began to practice in Canaan the worship and religion of their own family, and to compare it with the doctrine they had learnt in Chaldea.

Those several voyages which God obliged the Patriarchs to undertake, as that of Abraham out of Ur of Chaldea, that of Jacob out of Canaan, (we ought to make the same judgment of Moses's forty years sojourning amongst the Midianites) did evidently oblige them to examine more carefully what was the tradition received in the several countries into which they travelled, and so to imprint the more deeply into their minds the belief of those important truths which were the foundation of their religion, and the sole object of the meditations of the faithful.

One sees, in short, the effects of these impressions,

1. By that custom which seems to have begun in Jacob's time, and which afterwards got the authority of a law; I mean, the custom of taking to wife one's own brother's widow, to raise him up seed.

2. The sin of Onan is represented so odious, only because by it he acted against the belief of the promise.

3. We see the same thing in the action of Thamar, Judah's daughter-in-law; for having been deceived by Judah, she, in exchange, surprized him into an ineffect, the commissign whereof, according to the observation of a Greek commentator (b), she sought to perpetuate, only because she had a vehement desire to get children out of a family which she looked upon as solely intrusted with the promise of the Messiah, and out of which he was accordingly to be born.

It is necessary to make that observation, because we ought always to remember that she was formerly a Canaanite, and that consequently she left off and renounced the impiety and idolatry of her kindred, when she embraced the religion and hopes of Jacob's family. Therefore we see that particular mention is made of her in our Saviour's genealogy, and of Ruth, who likewise gave over all the pretensions of her own people, and so forsook her religion to enter into the tribe of Judah, as well as of Bathsheba, who was wife to a Hittite; whereupon an ancient father hath very well observed (c), according to the Jewish opinion, that Shimei's revilings

(b) Thoep. in Mat. c. i.
(c) S. Hieronym. in Tradit. Heb, ad 1. Reg. 3.
revilings against David, when he went out of Jerusalem, during Absalom's rebellion, reflected upon his birth out of the posterity of Ruth the Moabitess, as the Jews even to this very day do understand it.

We may make the same reflexion upon the consideration of that implacable jealousy which Joseph's dreams raised in the minds of his brethren.

1. We may reasonably conceive, that he being the first-born of Rachel, and the wife which Jacob his father had first made love to, he had been brought up with hopes of the birth-right, as well as Isaac, who was but the second son of Abraham.

But, 2. He might besides very well suppose, that the crimes of his brethren born of Leah (whom in all likelihood he looked upon as the sole legitimate heirs, the others being born of maid-servants) did rank them with Esau, whom God had rejected. That outrageous fury which Joseph's brethren shewed against him, because they looked upon him as preferred of God by those dreams to those that were born before him, is so like that of Cain, of Lot, of Ishmael, and of Esau, that it had, in all probability, the same cause and original.

Do we not see afterwards another effect of the same jealousy in the affectation that Jacob and his family shewed in the land of Egypt, when they refused to live promiscuously with the Egyptians, which were the posterity of Ham, and begged of them a country where they might live by themselves; as we see, on the contrary, the Egyptians shewing an extreme aversion against Jacob and his family, which was of Shem's posterity?

Certainly it cannot be denied, that as this separation was an effect of the antipathy of those nations, so it might also be in some respect the consequence of Jacob and his children's pretensions upon the promise of the Messiah, the execution and accomplishment whereof they stood up for as belonging to themselves.

To all this we may add, that the persecution of the Egyptians against the Israelites obliged them to make particular reflexions upon the promise which Jacob on his death-bed made to them from God: that persecution was chiefly intended against the the male children, Pharaoh commanding the extirpation of them, because he was afraid of the Jews growing too strong for him, and of their joining with his enemies; and perhaps also, because the Jews entertaining a certain expectation of the Messiah's coming, and fo boasting and glorying of it upon all occasions, the Egyptians designed to frustrate and cut off their hope thus, by hindering the accomplishment of the promise.

However, there was no real difficulty to keep up the distinct remembrance of those important facts. Jacob died in the year of the world 2315; Joseph died in the year of the world 2428. There are then but 58 years between Joseph's death and Moses's birth: Moses might have been not only Amram his own father, who had seen Levi, but also Kohath his grandfather, who had seen Jacob.

And it is for that reason that Moses seems to have observed, that Joseph saw his own children's children (d); that is to say, the third generation.

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(d) Gen. I. 23.
One cannot imagine any circumstances more conducible than these, to the preserving the distinct knowledge of those important truths which were the foundations of religion.

CHAP. XVII.

That the Tradition which gives us an account of the Persuasion which the Ancients had of the Truth of the Creation of the World, and of the Promise of the Messiah, before Moses, cannot be suspected.

I HAVE shewed, I think, evidently enough, that both the Creation, and the Promise of the Messiah, with all the other things depending upon them, might have been known certainly by Adam and his children, and so afterwards be handed down to all his posterity till Moses's time.

From Adam to Noah there is but one man, viz. Methuselah, who joined hands with both.

From Noah to Abraham there is but one man, viz. Shem, who saw them both for a considerable time.

From Abraham to Joseph there is but one man, viz. Isaac, Joseph's grandfather.

From Joseph to Moses there is but one man, viz. Amram, who might have seen Joseph long enough.

Those characters of time which Moses hath so carefully observed, do plainly evidence that the creation, and the promise of the Messiah, might be distinctly known: for if we suppose a continued succession of Adam's offspring, it was not easy to impose upon men in that matter; and that, because every one of those who were contemporaries with Moses, being able to run up his own pedigree as far as the flood, nay, even up to Adam, by as compendious a way as Moses could do his own, they would have treated those with the utmost degree of scorn, who should have attempted to forge any thing contrary to what was publicly and universally known; and so it was equally impossible, that the truth of things so important as the creation and the promise of the Messiah were, should be unknown.

Besides, I think I have plainly shewed, that many actions recorded by Moses, though very strange in themselves, and which the Atheists look upon as absurd and ridiculous, have proceeded from no other principle than from the strong persuasion of the truth of those facts, according as, in a long series of ages, every one of the ancients, following his own humour and prejudices, framed to himself a particular idea differing from the true sense of the promise of the Messiah.

It cannot reasonably be objected, that all this is only grounded upon uncertain authority of tradition; for though I grant that tradition, as to facts of another nature, be dubious and uncertain, and not to be too
too much relied upon in matter of belief, yet this hath such very particular characters as keep up its own authority.

First, it supposeth a small number of persons from Adam to Moses, who put it in writing.

Secondly, it supposeth, that those who have preserved this tradition, lived very long, and for the most part for many centuries of years.

Thirdly, it relates to such facts as every one is desirous to be rightly informed of, and which he is particularly concerned to examine, as relating to his own private interest, because they are the principles of his actions, and the rules of his conduct both in civil and religious matters.

Fourthly, it supposeth such real marks as served to keep it up; such as, the pains of child-bearing, the paradise before the flood, the duration of the ark after the flood.

Fifthly, it supposeth a public service and worship, whose celebration is repeated fifty-two times a year, that the remembrance of it should be preserved by all posterity.

Sixthly, it was preserved entire by passing from father to son; and we know that fathers or mothers do not naturally engage in a design of deceiving their children.

Seventhly, it supposeth strange controversies betwixt brothers, the elder having almost been excluded, and the younger, as Abel, Seth, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, chosen to accomplish the promise of the Messiah, which bred great jealousies, and tended much to preserve those ideas of the truth.

Lastly, it supposeth great contests betwixt whole nations, who all strove one with another for the advantage of being the heirs of the promise, and depositaries of those verities; as the Moabites, for instance, the Ammonites, the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and the Jews: each of them pretending to a preference before the others, by God himself, and so making it a matter of credit and honour to themselves. All these characters contribute to the distinct preservation of the knowledge of any truth.

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CHAP. XVIII.

An Explication of Moses's Way of Writing; where it is showed, that in writing the Book of Genesis he mentioned nothing but what was then generally known.

This is a truth which at first I took for granted, and afterwards proved it, the reasons whereof I explained particularly as I went on. But it ought to be fixed as solidly as the matter will bear, because it often happens, that those who do not foresee the consequences which may be drawn from the contrary opinion, do contradict it before they are aware of it; and that too, under pretence of exalting the Divine authority.

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authority of the book of Genesis: which gives occasion to the Atheists to look upon it no otherwise than as learned men do on the greatest part of legends.

The prophetical spirit acts in two manners.

The first is, by way of revelation, in respect of those things the prophet hath no knowledge of. Thus the Evangelists St. John had foretold those events which we read of in the Revelations: for those events being all hidden under the shadows of futurity, it was impossible for him to have foretold them, unless the spirit of God had immediately revealed them to him.

The second is, by way of direction, in respect of those things with which the Prophets was himself acquainted, either because he was an eye-witness of them himself, or because he learnt them from those who were so.

Now this direction of the spirit consists in the guiding the Prophet so as that he may write of his subject, just as it was either spoken or done; Thus the Evangelists St. Matthew and St. John drew up an abridgment of those sermons of our Saviour which they had heard, and of those miracles which they had seen.

And thus St. Luke and St. Mark have written of those things which they had heard from those that were eye-witnesses of them, as St. Luke particularly tells us.

Now I affirm, that when Moses wrote the book of Genesis, he had only the second sort of prophetical influences, and not the first; although in our disputes against Atheists, to convince them by arguments from matters of fact, we may consider him only as an historian, who might have written his book without any other particular direction, and might have preferred it in the memory of those ancient events which were then generally known.

Now, what side foever Divines may take in their disputes against the Atheists, I may easily establish my assertion: first, because it is not necessary to suppose an entire revelation, where tradition being distinct enough, is sufficient to preserve a clear remembrance of all those facts.

Now it cannot be denied, but that the tradition concerning the creation and the promise of the Messiah was of this nature, especially if we consider the little extent of it, and the immediate succession of Moses's ancestors, down to himself.

Secondly, if Abraham's and Jacob's travels through so many places were, as I have observed already, very useful to give them a further view of the common belief of all the several nations descended from Noah, and of their agreement in this tradition, it were unjust to suppose that Moses's forty years sojourning in the country of Midian, and that too when he was forty years old, and consequently had that ripeness of age and judgment as is fittest for such observations, did not serve to acquaint him with the several passages he records of Abraham, as well as of the several divisions of his posterity.

Thirdly, we may observe in the book of Genesis a way of writing very different from that which we see in the greatest part of Exodus, and in the following books; for whereas God speaks to him in those latter books, which he always did vivo voce. (And the Jews have wisely observed,
observed, that herein consisted Moses's advantage above the other Pro-
phets, to whom God was used to speak only in dreams and visions.) He
uses commonly those words, And the Lord spake unto me. He marks out
the place where God spoke to him, as well as the time and occasion of
God's speaking to him, which he does not in his book of Genesis.

Fourthly, the book of Genesis is not divided into several revelations,
as all prophesies are, wherein the several returns of the holy Spirit of
God are all exactly set down; which was absolutely necessary, not only
to ease the reader, who might be tired if he was to carry a long series of
predictions in his mind at once, as if it were only one single vision or
revelation, but also to condescend to the nature of the minds of men:
for, according to the rules of probability, we cannot suppose them to be
filled with so many differing ideas at the same time, but a great confu-
sion must necessarily follow.

But supposing that these observations should be thought insufficient,
yet those that follow will seem capable of convincing the minds of all.
There are in the book of Genesis certain characters of its being written in
that way which I speak of. First, one needs only just look into that
book, and he will see that the ancientest facts, which are those of which
we most desire a particular account, are there described in a very short and
concise manner. The history of 1650 years is all contained in eight chap-
ters; there are no actions described therein with more circumstances
than only some few of the most important, the remembrance whereof
was still fresh amongst them. The history of Lamech's polygamy, and
the murders of which he was guilty, is there set down so compendiously,
that it is very obscure.

Secondly, one sees that he speaks more copiously of all that had been
transacted near his time: he explains and mentions all the particulars
and circumstances thereof. He speaks so shortly of Melchisedech, that it
is doubted to this day whether he was not the Patriarch Shem, or some
other faithful worshipper of the true God settled in the land of Canaan;
whereas he sets down at length all the particulars of the history of Abra-
ham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, whose last oracles, which he spoke on his
death-bed, he carefully records.

Thirdly, he describes with the same exactness all the genealogies of
the Edomites, their several tribes, and the names of their heads and
captains, &c. as when he speaks of those of the people of Israel, which
indeed he could easily do, having lived forty years of his life amongst
those nations, as well as he had other forty years amongst the Israelites.

Those who maintain the contrary opinion, must of necessity suppose,
first, That tradition is of no use at all to preserve the idea of any illus-
trious action.

Secondly, That in Moses's time there were none who knew any partic-
ulars of the history of the flood, &c. of the tower of Babel, of the di-
vision of tongues; though we see plainly, both by the nature of the facts
themselves, in which all nations were concerned, and by Moses his
description, that the generality of mankind were sufficiently instru-
cted in them already.

Thirdly, It must be supposed that Moses hath set down the manner
how
how that tradition was infallibly preserved so carefully to no purpose, though he took notice of all the circumstances necessary for that effect.

Fourthly, They must suppose that Moses, whilst he sojourned in the land of Midian, heard nothing either of their original and pedigree, nor yet of the other neighbouring nations who were descended from Abraham, although all these nations valued themselves upon their being descended from that Patriarch, and kept up their several pedigrees, by which they could trace their original with the same care as the Israelites did theirs, because they had the same pretensions that the Israelites had.

Lastly, We must absolutely take away the authority of the oracles recorded by Moses in Genesis. These oracles promise to Abraham the possession of the land of Canaan for his posterity, and threaten the Canaanites with several curses. Jacob by his will bequeathed Sichem to the tribe of Joseph: he expressly marks out the country which one of the tribes was to possess; he gives a description of the character and rank of every tribe. The accomplishment of those oracles, though never so exact and admirable, is of no manner of consequence, if we suppose that these particular predictions were absolutely unknown in Abraham's family; whereas their accomplishment, which he carefully describes from time to time, is the most solid demonstration which can be desired, to establish the divinity of those revelations, as well as of Moses his other books.

C H A P. XIX.

An Answer to an Objection which may be drawn from the Histories of the Egyptians and Chaldeans, concerning the Antiquity of the World.

What I have already represented is sufficient to prove that Moses writ nothing in the book of Genesis, but what was then generally known by all the world. And I know nothing that can be objected with any probability, but what we read in the most ancient authors concerning the Egyptian and Chaldean history, and in the modern ones concerning that of China. We must then examine both the one and the other with attention, that we may leave no difficulties in so important a subject.

All that the Atheists can object against the history of Moses, concerning the epocha of the creation of the world as he had fixed it, is what Diodorus Siculus relates, that in the time of Alexander the Great there were some Egyptians that reckoned up three and twenty thousand years from the reign of the sun to Alexander's time, and that those who reckoned least, yet reckoned somewhat more than ten thousand years; which account exceeds the antiquity which Moses ascribes to the world in the book of Genesis, by many ages, where he represents the creation as a fact which happened some few years more than two thousand five hundred before
before he wrote that book. How then did Moses write of things universally acknowledged by all the world? And they may here further aggravate what the fame Diodorus hath observed, that the history of the Egyptians was not written like that of the Greeks; amongst whom, those who came first wrote their own histories, every man according to his own private humour, which caufed that great variety amongst their historians: whereas amongst the Egyptians none wrote but by public authority, the priests alone having that particular employment referred for them, to write their histories in their several generations.

This objection is easily confuted in two words: in short, how could the Egyptians have always had men to write their histories by public authority in all their succeeding generations, seeing there were, as Diodorus observes, fuch strange and vast divisions amongst themselves? If there were but two or three ages difference, more or lefs, nobody would look upon it as a material exception against the history of such a long series of time; but who can imagine that those men who differ no lefs than thirteen thousand years in their accounts of the duration of the fame interval of time, had yet certain histories upon which these things were founded?

This shews sufficiently, that as Varro, the greatest scholar the Romans ever had, hath divided antiquity into fabulous and historical, which he begins from the first Olympiad, leaving all which went before to the fabulous part, fo we must of necessity make the fame distinction in the matter of the antiquities of Egypt.

But I intend to do something more, and to confider this Egyptian history with a little more attention; out of which, I think, I may draw good arguments to confute the vanity of those passages in it oppofed to Moses, and to confirm the authority of his book of Genesis, and the truth of the chiefest transactions recorded in it.

I shall not at present take notice, that although the Egyptians, about their latter times, have maintained that the elements were eternal, yet they have sufficiently acknowledged that the world had a beginning, feeing they make no mention of any thing before their thirty Dynasties, which in all did at the moft amount to no more than 36525 years.

Neither do I think necessary to mention here that they have sufficiently acknowledged the beginning of mankind, feeing they held that men were first born in Egypt; although they endeavoured to make good their pretentions by that fottifh assertion of the easy production of frogs out of the mud of their fens, as the fame Diodorus tells us.

But there are three things which I must here take notice of, because they do most certainly decide the question.

The firft is, That by that long reign which they ascribe to their gods and heroes, there is nothing else meant but the motion of the stars, and nothing like a real kingdom. That prodigious number of years does not relate to the duration of the world, as if it had subsifted fo long; but to the return of the sun, and the moon, and the five other planets, and of the heavens, to the fame point from whence, according to the opinion of the Egyptians, they firft began their course: in a word, it is only the great astronomical year, about which, as Aristotle tells us, the ancients have had fo many different opinions, and the Egyptians have fo little
little agreed, as the history of their antiquities, related by Diodorus, plainly shews. One thing evidently proves what I here allledge, which is, that they have reckoned up but fifteen Dynasties to Jupiter, the last of the heroes, that is to say, but fifteen persons to Jupiter, who is Ham the third son of Noah.

This comes very near Moses's calculation, who reckoneth Noah as the tenth man from Adam: for it is very likely that those ignorant people, after a long process of time, have joined Cain and Abel with Shem and Japhet, and Mizraim the son of Ham, which makes up the sixteen Dynasties; except we choose to say that the Egyptians thought fit to join the seven generations of Cain to those before the flood, which comes very near to the same account. All this, according to the fantastical notions of those ancient people who deified the first men, and gave them afterwards the names of some stars, to impress upon their posterity a greater veneration for them; and in particular, according to the groundless imagination of the Egyptians, who were resolved to maintain that the first men were formed in their own country. And in short we find that those Dynasties for the most part, if we except those of Vulcan and Jupiter, and of the sun, have been but of a very short continuance, and even shorter than that which Moses ascribes to the lives of the ancient Patriarchs, which we have already set down.

The second thing that is observable in the confutation of this false antiquity, if one would take what the Egyptians have related of their Dynasties before Menes, and Jupiter the last of their heroes, in a historical sense, is, that there are still sufficient marks of the newness of the world, as Moses hath described it, in the remaining fragments of the true Egyptian history.

First, We see that Egypt hath constantly carried the name of Ham amongst the Gentiles, as well as in the holy Scriptures. It was called so in Plutarch's time: the Egyptian Thebes was called Hammon No Ezech. 30. which is the name of the Egyptian Jupiter, as the heathen authors Herodotus and Plutarch testify. Now it is visible that all this was for no other reason but because Egypt had fallen to the share of Ham, Noah's third son, who settled there, and whose posterity did afterwards people Africa, and gave it their several names, as Moses particularly observes.

Secondly, One sees that Egypt hath more particularly borne the name of Mizraim, which it bears still, and which was given to it, in respect of one of its parts, because of Mizraim the son of Ham. And it would be ridiculous for one to imagine that those characters given by Moses, had been allowed of in the world, except he had had good grounds to describe their original in the same manner as he hath already done.

Thirdly, One sees that all the Dynasties of Egypt, that is to say, all the several branches of the kings who have reigned over the several parts of Egypt, did all acknowledge Menes for their common founder.

This Menes being the same with that Mizraim of Moses, as I shall shew hereafter; it is visible that the Egyptians, who in all likelihood have ascribed to Menes what they might more justly have ascribed to Jupiter Hammon, because they would distinguish their kings from heroes, have exactly followed the ideas of Moses, in representing one as the common
mon father of all the several branches of kings who divided Egypt amongst themselves.

Fourthly, One sees that the invention of the arts most necessary to human life have been attributed either to Menes the first king of Egypt, or to his successors. It was this Menes, or one of his successors, who invented laws, letters, astronomy, music, wrestling, physic, hieroglyphics, anatomy, and architecture. All this plainly shows that the Egyptians had been mistaken, if they had ascribed to the world as great an antiquity as one would think they did, by the vast extent of time which they ascribed to the Dynasties of their gods and heroes. How could the world have continued above thirty thousand years without those arts which are so necessary for the convenience of human life? How could men not have found out, during such a prodigious succession of ages, those arts, the invention whereof the Egyptians do ascribe to their first king, or to one or two of his successors, during a very short interval of time?

Fifthly, One sees in the history of Egypt the same decay in religion that Moses speaks of (e). The ancients unanimously agree that the Egyptians had at first neither statues nor images in their temples, which perfectly agrees with what Moses tells us of the times after the flood: but they tell us also, that the Egyptians afterwards made some statues, and consecrated in their temples the figures of great numbers of animals. Some are of opinion, and that probably enough, that this came from the belief which they entertained afterwards of the transmigration of souls into other animals, an opinion which they thought did necessarily flow from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

Sixthly, However, one sees in the sixth place, that as Moses represents Nimrod, one of Ham's posterity, as the founder of an empire in Assyria, where he formed the manners of the inhabitants according to the platform of the Egyptian principles, so the ancients have observed, that the famous Assyrian Belus came out of Egypt; and it is natural to conceive, that there he planted idolatry, which began even before Abraham's time (f); if it be true, as the Jews observe, that the tower of Babel was a temple, wherein an idol was consecrated to worship him. At least, that conjecture hath a very solid ground, if we consider the idolatry of the Babylonians towards this Bel, whom they worshipped as a god, according to the Pagans custom of adoring the founders of kingdoms, after their decease, as gods.

The third thing we are here to take notice of, contains a demonstration of the truth of the book Genesis, if that which is recorded in it concerning the time of the flood, be compared with the Dynasties of the Egyptian kings. I will not say that those Egyptians who had any knowledge of the flood, did exactly mark out the time of it, as Moses doth; but I believe I may be able to shew out of their common opinions, something very near equivalent.

They are all agreed that Menes was the first king of Egypt, and lived about fourteen hundred years before the famous Solostis, as Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus do both relate it: now, who should this king of Egypt

(e) Herod. lib. ii. cap. 4. Lucian de Dea Syr.
(f) Pausan. in Meffen. p. 261.
Egypt be, whom some call Sefanchois, unless he is the same with Shiſhak whom the Scripture speaks of in the history of Rehoboam (g), even the same famous conqueror who took Jerusalem in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign? If one calculates the time from the flood to the fifth year of Rehoboam, he will find that this Menes, the first king of Egypt, is no other than the Ham of Moses; and on the other side, that there is very little difference, in respect to that interval of time, betwixt the chronology of the Egyptians and that of the Scriptures. Thus the Egyptian account confirms Moses's narrative, and the authority of the holy writers, who are very particular in stating the times of every thing: whereas the Egyptians, taking all in great, could never arrive at that exactness.

This observation is of very great use, to shew the certainty of Moses's chronology according to the Hebrew text; for that of the Septuagint reckons up above two thousand years from the flood to Sesostris; whereas the Egyptians did reckon up but a little above fourteen hundred years from Menes, the first king of Egypt, to Sesostris.

There is less difficulty to answer the objection which may be made against the book of Genesis, from the pretended antiquity of the Chaldeans. The same Diodorus Siculo (b) who faith that the Egyptians professed so great an antiquity of the world, tells us also that the Chaldeans believed it eternal, and that they boasted, in Alexander's time, that they had learned astronomy by tradition, from their ancestors, who had all successively made it their study for four hundred seventy-two thousand years together. But there is nothing vainer than these pretences.

I shall not stand to shew here the folly of their opinions about the eternity of the world: if Aristotle seems to have authorized it, yet it is enough to confute that opinion, to consider, that it is repugnant to the common notion of all the nations of the world; so that Democritus himself, who pretended that the world was made by chance, yet durst not oppose the common and general opinion of the world's being new, though he had the boldness to reject the author of it, and that action by which it was created.

Neither do I intend to be prolix here in confuting the supposition of the Chaldeans, about their ancestors following the study of astrology for 472000 years successively: the impossibility of the thing in itself is apparent by the certainty of the flood, which was acknowledged by all those nations of whom we have any antiquities, though never so little considerable, in Pagan authors.

But I shall make two observations, whereof one shews the folly of the Chaldean hypothesis, and the other doth invincibly establish the authority of the book of Genesis, if it be compared with what we know for certain, and in the Chaldean history.

The first is, That the most ancient authors are of opinion, that the Chaldeans are descended from the Egyptians, who looked upon them as a colony of their own. Diodorus Siculus faith, that the Egyptians maintained that they had sent out several colonies into several parts of the world; that Bethus the son of Neptune and Lybia, had conducted one into Babylon, and that having fixed it near Euphrates, he established some priests among them.

(g) I. Kings xiv. 26.
them according to the Egyptian custom, who were free from all public charges and offices, whom the Babylonians do call Chaldeans, and who, according to the example of the Egyptian priests, philosophers, and astrologers, did apply themselves to the observation of the stars. Hefius and Pausanias say the same with Diadorus (i).

Now, one need only examine here, what the Egyptians do say about the invention of astrology, which they ascribe to Menes, that is to say, to Ham, or to Mizraim, who lived after the flood, thereby to discover the foolish vanity of the Chaldeans.

It is plain that the Chaldeans grew so vain, by the growth of so considerable an empire as theirs was, that they would be no longer beholding to the Egyptian astrologers, whom all other nations have looked upon as the first inventors of that science, to the inventing and perfecting of which, all men know that the Egyptian climate, where the sky is always free from clouds, did very much contribute.

And it is very considerable, that both the Chaldeans and the Egyptians began their year with the same month, according to Censorinus's observation, c. xxi. de Die Nat.

I know very well, the ancient heathens were mistaken when they pretended that the Chaldeans went out of Egypt, as a plantation: there is, no doubt, a kind of illusion in this their opinion; but yet the ground and origin of it is uncontrollable, because the Chaldeans are descended from Cush, Ham's eldest son, as Moses tells, Gen. x. Therefore, though we should grant that the Chaldeans were the first inventors of astrology, yet this would always be certain, that it was found out only since Ham's time, whom the Egyptians did look upon as the last of their heroes, or as the first of their kings.

The other observation which ought to be well minded here, is taken out of the true and genuine Chaldean antiquities. One may prove by the astronomical demonstrations of the Chaldeans, which the people of Israel was altogether unacquainted with, that Moses followed a calculation which was then generally known.

Aristotle, the first Grecian that ever taught the eternity of the world, contrary to Moses's history, is the man who furnishes us with it. He took care to send over into Greece the astronomical observations of the Chaldeans (k), by which it appeared that Babylon was taken by Alexander about 1903 years after its foundation. Now that calculation agrees exactly with that of Moses, who gives us the description of the tower of Babel (l), and explains the original of the name of that city, which was built some ages after, by the confusion of tongues which then happened. And truly, it would be very admirable, that the heavens in their motions should have entered into a confederacy with Moses, to justify a chronology invented by him in sport, without keeping to any rules, but writing by chance, and without any certain principle.

CHAP. XX.

An Answer to the Objection which may be drawn out of the History of China, against the Mosaic Hypothesis, concerning the Newness of the World.

I COME now to the other objection which may be made against Moses's calculation, according to the Hebrew text, as we have it now. It is drawn from the History of China, whose uninterrupted series runs up the succession of their emperors to Fohius, who reigned about four hundred years before the flood. Some learned men have already made use of that argument, to discredit the Mosaic chronology according to the Hebrew text, and to cry up the calculation of the Septuagint, which exceeds that of the Hebrew text in the history before the flood, by 800 years, and above 700 in the history from the flood to Moses. This objection appears very strong to those who read in the history of Martinus, that there is not the least interruption in the catalogue of the kings of China from Fohius; that the history of their actions is so certain, having always been written by a public authority, that no man can reasonably entertain any doubt about it; and the missionaries in China have thought that there was no other way to reconcile the Mosaic chronology with the Chinese, but in making use of the Septuagint's account; and wherein they agree with all the Asiatic Christians, and even those in Europe, who follow the Septuagint in their reckoning up the years of the world, for the most part; though St. Hierome's translation, which follows the Hebrew text exactly, is received in the west.

But, after all, there is little difficulty in answering this objection; and we may hereupon easily satisfy those who do not dispute only for disputing false, but are ready to examine this question with that equity which is requisite in the examination of all questions of that nature.

I confess, ingenuously, that this history, which is one of the most ancient in the world, hath many illustrious characters of certainty, especially if we give credit to all that Martinus relates of it.

First, it marks out exactly the series and succession of all the kings of China, from the very beginning and original of that nation.

Secondly, it records in what year of each cycle of three score years every king began his reign, and did such or such an action.

Thirdly, it relates some Astronomical observations, older than any that have been made by the most ancient astronomers in other nations.

Fourthly, it was written by a public authority, and by such authors as lived in the time when the things which they record were transacted; the immediate successor to the empire taking always care, that the history of his predecessor should be written.

Nay, to all this we must add, that the Chinese's way of writing, making no use of letters, but of hieroglyphics, may have prevented these alterations which might otherwise have been made in their history; the whole
whole life of a man being hardly sufficient to attain to the perfect knowledge of a tongue which hath above three-score thousand figures, which must be all learnt before a man can be able only to read and write.

But, besides that, all this depends upon the sole authority of Martinius; nobody else beside him having given us as yet any opportunities of examining those ancient monuments of China. We may find out of this very history some strong proofs to confirm that of Moses, and so easily resolve the difficulties which may be raised out of it, against the book of Genesis.

First, F. Martinius observes, that the common opinion of the Chinese is, that the world had a beginning; and though there be some of them of Epicurus's opinion, yet there was never any amongst them that was for the eternity of the world, but since the incarnation of Christ, and the introduction of idolatry amongst them.

Secondly, he tells us, that they commonly acknowledge a God, whom they call Xangti, which is not the name, but the epithet of God, this word signifying suprem[e] governor of heaven and earth.

Thirdly, he faith that they acknowledge a first man, brought forth out of the chaos, in one night in the spring; which opinion some amongst them have made intricate, by the addition of their own fables.

Fourthly, he shews that sacrifices have been in use amongst them.

Fifthly, that they believe a certainty of punishments and rewards, after this life, for vice and virtue.

Sixthly, that they believe the existence of good and bad angels.

Seventhly, that they assign to some of them the protection of cities and provinces, and pay them great veneration at the instalment of their magistrates.

Eighthly, that they acknowledge them to be incorporeal beings, and that it is but of late that they have erected and consecrated statues to them.

And lastly, that they have a very great knowledge of the flood, which in their account happened about 3500 years before Jesus Christ.

Here are, we see, many truths which are the grounds of religion, and which were known to them; from whence we may easily judge, in comparing those truths with the history of Moses, that the ancient Chinese did agree with all other nations, in the believing the first principles of religion laid down by Moses.

We may likewise observe, that those antiquities of China, for the most part, are as like those recorded by Moses, as a tradition (which cannot but have received many alterations during such an interval of time) can be like to an exact narrative of matters of fact drawn up by an author who knew very well what he writ.

First, it appears that what they say concerning the thirteen successors of the first man, named Puincus, all descended from him, is agreeable enough to the history of Genesis, which sets down the successive Patriarchs from father to son: all the difference is, that the Chinese, by a foolish ambition of appropriating all to themselves, maintain that those thirteen kings were all in China.

Vol. I. 273  Secondly,
Secondly, what they tell us of the world being civilized under the second of those kings, called Thienhaung, after the death of the great dragon that had disturbed heaven and earth, agrees very well with the history of Seth, who began to form mankind to a right notion of the worship of God, when he separated them from Cain's family.

Thirdly, it is very probable that when the Chinese have reckoned up thirteen kings lineally descended from the first man and his successors, they have included in that number Cain and Abel, who, though they were both the sons of the first man, yet were not reckoned up by Moses; because his scope was only to give an account of the lineal descent of Adam's posterity by Seth.

They believe that under Ginkbohang there was a kind of golden age, the earth being then fruitful to admiration; and that under his successors men being then extremely simple, and altogether ignorant of the several arts necessary to human life, as of characters and letters, one Sujus, to supply the want of them, contrived a way of keeping up the memory of things, by tying several sorts of knots upon a cord.

All which sufficiently evinces, that the belief of the world's being lately created, according to Moses's description, was as much received by the ancient people of China as by all other nations.

And here it is further observable, That the Chinese themselves, according to Martinius's account, do suspect all the historical records of their empire, before king Fohius, looking upon them as false and ridiculous: and indeed the people of that country, before Fohius, living like brute beasts, without any settled governments, laws, or arts, this alone is enough to confute those amongst the Chinese who maintain nowadays, that the duration of the world before Confucius, who lived about 500 years before Jesus Christ, was of no less than three millions two hundred threescore and seven thousand years; for hereby it clearly appears, that they have foolishly affected to surpass the Chaldeans in their vanity, who, believing the eternity of the world, pretended, in order both to prove their antiquity, and to give credit to their astrological observations, that astrology had been exercised amongst them for 472000 years before Alexander's entering into Asia.

After all, it is certain, that their calculation of 3000 years, from Fohius to Jesus Christ, is only incompatible with Moses's chronology, according to the Hebrew text, and not at all with that of the Septuagint.

But moreover, what can be more palpably fabulous than the whole history of Fohius, whom the Chinese suppose to have begun his reign 2952 years before Jesus Christ? First, he is called the Son of Heaven, because they say, he had a mother and no father; and that his mother conceived him by the banks of a lake near the town Lantieu, where, as she was walking, she saw the footsteps of a man upon the sand, and was at the same time surrounded on a sudden with a rainbow.

Secondly, the situation of that town, which is in the west of China, does demonstrate that the first inhabitants of China came either from the western parts of the world, and that consequently they were of Shem's posterity, according to Moses's account in the tenth of Genesis.

Thirdly, although there be perhaps no incongruity in their ascribing to him the study of astronomy, and the invention of several institutions necessary
necessary to human society, as laws, &c. yet what they add, that he was the first inventor of several figures, which he had seen upon the back of a dragon, sufficiently shews, that either the whole history is but a fable, or that he was a cheat, and imposed upon the simplicity of ignorant people.

What probability is there (seeing it is supposed China was then all over infested and overgrown with barbarism) that in his time it should be recorded in writing. 1. That he invented, instead of those knots before mentioned, the hieroglyphics, which are almost as obscure; 2. That men were then distinguished from women by the difference of their garments; 3. That marriages were then fixed and regulated, which before were as promiscuous amongst men as amongst beasts?

What they say of his being the author of a musical instrument of 36 chords, shews evidently the falsehood of the story; for there is nothing more improbable, than to suppose that he should arrive to such perfection of improvement in music as that comes to, when that art had but very lately been invented. It is all that men could attain unto, after they have long improved this art, the beginnings whereof, without doubt, as of all other arts, were very rough and imperfect.

Surely the Egyptians were more reasonable when they attributed the invention of the lyre with three strings to Mercury, Saturn’s secretary, who is the same with Noah.

The history of China takes notice that the beginning of husbandry and physic was under Fobius’s successor; it does not mention whether he was his son, or no; but it only gives an account of the first war, wherein he was routed by a petty king, one of his subjects, who succeeded him in the empire.

And what is most singular in that record, is, that therein is ascribed to that usurer, 1. the invention of the cycle of 60 years, which serves to fix their chronology; 2. the method of regulating weights and measures; 3. that it was by his means and encouragement that some of his contemporary subjects found out the sphere, arithmetic, laws, judicial astrology, several musical instruments, the art of dying and of coinage, the joiners and carpenters trade, so far as to make boats and bridges. They pretend that he never died, but that he was translated alive into that place which the Chinese do assign for eternal happiness. It is Pliny’s (m) observation, that this way and custom of deifying the first inventors of arts necessary to human life, is very ancient; but if it be an old custom, it is also a pregnant sign of the ignorance that reigned amongst those ancient people that used it. Therefore we may as justly suspect the history of the Chinese, amongst whom it is in use, as the Egyptian accounts, which were much of the same nature in Alexander’s time, as we are informed by Diodorus Siculus. The posterity or the successors of those famous men have always affected in process of time, by such means, to immortalize their names, to the end they might raise up themselves and their families as well to power and authority, as to honour and veneration, above all other men with whom they conversed.

But, however, we may reasonably conjecture that those several passages recorded

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recorded in that history, having, for the greatest part of them, a great conformity with the transactions related in Meses's history, which was not unknown to the Chaldeans, with whom the Chinese had communication and correspondence, all those pretences and claims of theirs to the invention of these arts, is an honour which they have borrowed from others, to lend it to the founders of their empire; just as the Egyptians have appropriated to their first kings, some arts which were found out by the Patriarchs before the flood; or as the Greeks have made their first princes the first inventors of those very arts, the invention of which the Egyptians ascribed to their first kings.

And this reflexion will appear the more probable and natural, if we consider what they relate, that under the fourth successor of Fohius there arose an impostor, famous by his delusions, who endeavoured to alter the religion of the Chinese, and to bring in idolatry amongst them; which brought great misfortunes upon China. For hereby it is evident, that the Chinese in their history have disguised, and so appropriated to themselves, some passages which relate to Nimrod's time, since the original of idolatry is to be referred to the time of building of the tower of Babel, which was intended for an idol temple, if we will believe what passes for a received opinion amongst the Jews.

Chuenhious is said to have been the restorer of the worship of one God, and to have annexed the priesthood to the kingly power; and to have regulated the Calendar; and to have found out the ephemerides of the five planets, after an entire conjunction of those five planets, before the day of the conjunction of the sun with the moon; and to have fixed to that day, the beginning of the year, which agrees with our beginning the year in January.

But yet it is to be observed,

1. That, notwithstanding this pretended astronomical observation, there have been several alterations made of the beginning of the year according to the fancy and pleasure of several emperors, which shews that there was no constant rule observed in that country.

2. That Martinius seems to have approved of the calculation of this conjunction of five planets in Aquarius, to accommodate the false astrological prejudice of the Chinese with that of several authors, who, looking upon the flood as a natural event, have groundlessly imagined that it was brought to pass by the virtue and influence of such a conjunction, and that it was a certain sign of a flood. It is this foolish and whimsical fancy which hath made some Grecians preposterously sedulous in seeking out that dreadful year, the winter whereof was to drown the world with a flood, and the summer to burn it with a general conflagration, as Conforinus * and Arifotle † have observed it. It is a judicious remark which Origanus ‖ hath made upon the observations of those astrologers who, from the conjunction of the planets in humid signs, use to foretell prodigious rains; for he shews that there is nothing more groundless and uncertain than such observations: and he gives a famous and remarkable instance of that uncertainty to the eternal shame of astrology, which is this; John Staffer, as Cardan tells us, having observed such a conjunc-

* Confl. de die nat. c. 18.
† Arij. l. 1. meteor. c. 14.
‖ Tom. 1. ephemer. p. 481.
tion of all the planets in Pisces, in the year 1524, foretold there should come a general flood; whereas several people being afraid, retired to the tops of high mountains, but without any cause, for there was never seen a greater serenity of weather.

3. Martinius was certainly mistaken, when he ascribed to Chuenhious the regulating the ephemerides of the five lesser planets; seeing there are no such ephemerides in China, according to all the relations we have of that country; nor yet any of the sun and moon, so exact as we have in Europe: a pregnant demonstration of which is, that the missionary Jesuits have been raised up to the dignity of the chiefest Mandarins in China, only because their skill and learning in astronomy was found to exceed that of any the most learned men amongst the Chinese, by many degrees.

These things I thought fit to observe, to shew that there is nothing in the history of China, which they so much cry up, that can any ways invalidate the authority of Moses's accounts in his book of Genesis, but what rather confirms it, if it be considered with attention.

It was not without reason that I have supposed that the memory of those ancient transactions was conveyed, though confusedly, to the Chinese: we have already intimated one of those probable means of conveyance of this tradition, by their commerce with the Chaldeans, who were well informed of the greatest part of those several transactions, and who had great intercourse with the remotest nations of Asia, towards the east. To this we may add another argument, yet more certain and sure; which is, the continual commerce that always had been betwixt the Indies and China, and the communication which the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries of the Red Sea have always had with all the eastern nations in the world: for it is plain that this commerce gave a great opportunity of communicating to those eastern nations, the knowledge of all those passages which were known to the Chaldeans; just as the like commerce with the western nations of the world proved a means of conveying to them the knowledge of the most part of the same things, which in process of time became the ground of the most ancient fables amongst the Greeks, among whom those fables made up the best part of their divinity.

But, besides all this, we may mention here another very likely means of conveyance, viz. the commerce of the Chinese with the Tartars, among whom the Jews of the ten tribes were dispersed and settled, within a short time after their captivity in Assyria; for as those Jews had with them the books of Moses, so they early gave a great insight and knowledge in ancient history to those nations that have appropriated it to themselves, as may be made out by comparing their fabulous history with those books of Moses, which contain in effect all that relates to the original of those nations.

But whatever judgment may be made of those aforementioned means of conveying the ancient tradition to the Chinese, I think that I have good ground to affirm,

1. That the historians that have written the lives of the first emperors of China were not contemporaries with those emperors, and that consequently
consequently they have not recorded things so well known, as it was suppos'd.

2. That the fables intermixed in their histories do sufficiently evi-
dence the easy and credulous temper of those authors, which takes
away from them all credit and belief.

3. That the greatest care of those authors was to persuade the world
of the pretended antiquity of their nation, and so to raise the honour and
reputation of it by glorious stories and fables.

4. That their affectation, in giving us an account of astronomy
and judiciary astrology, was only to bring into credit and reputation
those arts, the end and scope of which is to impose upon simple men;
which is a ridiculous affectation, and such as hath exposed the
Chaldeans and Egyptians to the just contempt and derision of all other
nations.

5. That there is amongst them a diversity of opinions contrary to
one another, about their antiquity; just as there were some amongst
the Egyptians who reckoned up 23000 years from the reign of the Sun
to Alexander, when some others reckoned but a little above 10000
years.

6. That the Chinese, according to one of their own opinions, must
say that the earth was without almost any inhabitants for 30000 years
together, and above; whereas we see that in the space of five or six
thousand years it is become inhabited as we see it; and that, within a
little more, it will be so overstocked, as that it will not be able to yield
provisions enough for all its inhabitants, as a learned Englishman hath
proved it by a mathematical demonstration; which shews that
the Chinese wanted certain grounds to go upon, in several accounts
which they give of many transactions, and in the relating of which
they are besides most confident.

Lastly, that therefore what is reported, that these Chinese authors did
all write with public allowance for every king's decease, might indeed
be so about the latter times, as it was practifed in Egypt; but that it is
as absolutely false, that the Chinese had ever in former times such pub-
lic historians, and as it is false that the Egyptians had formerly any
such, although they were as confident to say they had in Alexander's
time, as the Chinese are now.

But this, I think, is sufficient for the clearing of that matter. We
must now answer the last objection of Atheists against the authority of
the book of Genesis.

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C H A P. XXI.

Wherein the last Objection of Atheists is answered.

'As I intend to clear all the difficulties which may arise about this
important matter, in the minds of those that shall peruse these
observations; I think myself obliged to prevent and resolve the only
plausible
plausible objection I know remaining, after all what I have said upon this subject.

Perhaps some will be apt to reply here, that they indeed confess Moses to be the author of Genesis, and that, if that book had really been supposed fictitious, it could never have gone under his name, nor be received as his in after ages; but that yet all this does not prove sufficiently the truth of those transactions recorded in that book; because Moses may have forced upon the people of Israel the belief of them, by those laws that he enacted amongst them, by which it was death for any man to dare to contest the truth of anything he had written in his books. This, I think, is all that the most contentious Atheists can think of, to undermine the authority of Moses's history.

But this objection is easily answered, for it confutes itself. For,

First, it supposes the truth of these great miracles by which God established Moses the head and captain of the people of Israel; which miracles are every whit as hard to believe, as the several accounts of other things which we read of in the book of Genesis.

We find accordingly, amongst the heathens themselves, many monuments of those miracles done by the ministry of Moses, when he brought the Israelites out of Egypt; as I intend to shew in my observations upon the other four books of Moses.

Secondly, they must at least suppose that Moses hath given a true account of several passages, in which he could not impose upon other nations, which did not acknowledge his authority; as, for example, all that relates to the building of the ark, the greatest piece of architecture that was then in the world; and to the raising of the tower of Babel, the greatest building that ever was, and part of which is yet extant; for all these things were as so many witnesses of the truth of those transactions which he related.

Thirdly, they must likewise suppose that he hath related several other passages as exactly as he did those; as, for example, that of the division of tongues, which is an appendix of the history of the tower of Babel; that of the destruction of Sodom; the original of the neighbouring nations of Canaan, that of the Jews, of the Moabites, of the Ammonites, of the Ishmaelites, and Edomites: for it is ridiculous to conceive that this lawgiver should ever hope to persuade other nations to believe any false stories about matters so well and so generally known as those which amongst themselves.

Fourthly, they must suppose further, that he hath given a true account of the original of the Israelites, whose head and governor he was. How great and absolute foever the authority of Moses might be, it is ridiculous to imagine that ever he would have derived the original of the Israelites from any other than from their true ancestors. This appears the more necessary, in that we see, by the accounts he gives of things and pedigrees in Genesis, that he wrote that book, especially from the history of Abraham on to the end of it, only to shew the rights and just pretensions of the Israelites upon the land of Canaan.

Fifthly, they must yet further acknowledge, whether they will or not, the truth of the accounts he gives, concerning the original of the pretensions and divisions which were kept up amongst the twelve tribes of Israel.
Israel: now these pretensions having no other ground than the oracles which are related in his history, they sufficiently prove the authority of those oracles, against all the pretensions and objections of the Atheists.

What violence soever they may pretend that Moses might use to force an implicit belief of his history and blind obedience to his laws, yet no man of common sense and reason can ever think that he would have filled the accounts he gives of things of that nature, with lies, or that, if he had done it, he could ever have expected that his false accounts of them should ever have been credited by the neighbouring nations, or even by his own subjects.

But without urging here several other absurdities, which plainly shew that there is no distinction to be found betwixt the accounts of things which Moses recites as publicly known, and those which he relates of his own head, and private knowledge; there being, as I have already shewed, betwixt all those several accounts, such a natural coherence and necessary concatenation, that they cannot be divided from one another, without destroying the whole frame of his history; I say, that it is impossible that the law by which he makes it death for any one to conteft the truth of his narration, should make the sincerity of it suspected.

I do not urge here, that there is an evident absurdity to suppose that Moses would ever have related together all those transactions, as the grounds of religion, if they had been absolutely unknown in the world before him.

Neither do I mention here, that suppose Moses had been so imprudent as to attempt such an undertaking, yet there is no reason to believe that a whole nation, and that a very numerous one, would have long persevered in a profession forced upon them by mere violence and tyranny.

Nor do I think it necessary to observe here, that the people of Israel were neither so patient, nor so easily persuaded by Moses, nor yet so submissive to him, as these objectors do imagine.

That is plain, and apparent enough from all their seditions and conspiracies against him.

Nor do I judge it necessary to observe here what is plain enough of itself, viz. that Moses had no successor any ways concerned to countenance and defend these pretended fictions and fables of his history. Jeshua, his immediate successor, was of another tribe; and so were all the succeeding governors of Israel, until the Maccabees came.

But what I think deserves best to be observed here, is, that after Moses and Jeshua's decease the people of Israel was brought under the subjection of the Canaanites, and consequently freed from the terror of that law of Moses's making, by which it was death for any one to conteft the authority of his laws, and the truth of all his writings: there is but a little more than forty years interval betwixt the conquest of Canaan by Jeshua, and the bondage of the Israelites under the neighbouring nations. Had it not been a fit time then, to cast off the yoke of Moses's laws, and to publish the pretended lies and impostures of his history? Was not the comparison which the Israelites could easily make betwixt the Mosaic writings, and the tradition generally received in the country of their captivity, a natural and ready means to undeceive them?

Yet, notwithstanding all this, we see that they obstinately entertain the belief
belief of the several transactions recorded by Moses, and stand firmly to all their pretensions: nay, we see them have recourse to the remedy of repentance which Moses preferred them to use in those sad misfortunes which he foretold should befall them, and out of which he promised, at the same time, that God would miraculously deliver them; which indeed was done accordingly, even fourteen times within less than four hundred years, as is manifest from the book of Judges.

Can there then be a more pregnant argument, that if Moses made it death, by one of his sanctions, for any of the Israelites to contest the truth either of his writings, or of his oracles and miracles, it was not to force the belief of them without examination, but rather only to prevent the corruption of that people, and their mingling and confounding themselves with the heathens, which God intended to hinder on purpose, because he would have the Messiah to be born, according to his promise, out of that nation; which to effect, he thought fit, in his infinite wisdom, to employ the rigour of some capital laws, to keep that people unmixed and distinguished from all other nations of the world, till the Messiah was born?

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C H A P. XXII.

The Consequences of what we have proved in our foregoing Observations upon the Book of Genesis.

These several observations which I have made upon the Book of Genesis, are all, I think, very natural and easy; and, if I am not mistaken, sufficient to prove solidly the truth of Moses's account, of the creation of the world, and of the promise of the Messiah, which is the foundation of the Christian religion.

The conclusion that I draw out of the premises is, that,

First, I affirm, that Moses, that famous Hebrew who was designed to be the heir of Pharaoh's daughter, is the true and sole author of the book of Genesis.

Secondly, I maintain, that this being once granted, he could not, according to his way of writing, record those important transactions he relates, otherwise than they really came to pass.

Thirdly, I maintain, that though he had not been an eye-witness of the creation of the world, yet he hath made the description of it according to such an authentic tradition as cannot be reasonably doubted of, because it was then the universal tradition, not only of the Moabites, of the Ammonites, of the Ishmaelites, and of the Edomites, who were all of Shem's posterity, and amongst whom he had been travelling for forty years together; but also of the Egyptians, of his own people, and, in a word, of all men then living in the world.

Fourthly, I maintain, that he never was found fault with, nor contradicted, till true reason and sense, if I may say so, was lost and banished from
from amongst mankind, till the Egyptians, for example, they who used before to look upon the Greeks as mere children and ideots, were fallen into so great a stupidity and depravation of sense, as to believe and maintain that men were first born in Egypt, because, forsooth, frogs did naturally, as they thought, breed out of their muddy fens and marshes.

Fifthly, I maintain, that for many ages after Moses nobody did ever publicly declare for the eternity of the world, nor yet for its fortuitous production. These opinions are mere absurdities and chimeras, brought forth into the world by the Chaldeans and Greeks, only about Alexander’s time, or perhaps an hundred years before him, i.e. about eleven or twelve hundred years after Moses's decease.

Sixthly, I maintain, that seeing there is no particular time to be found wherein the reading of the law was interrupted and discontinued for any considerable time amongst the Jews; seeing it continues till to this very hour amongst them every sabbath-day, in the several places of the world wherein they are dispersed; and seeing besides, that it is certain that this law, which enjoins the observation of the sabbath, in remembrance of the creation, could never be imposed upon them, without their perceiving and declaring presently the novelty and supposition of that account, and consequently of the book wherein it is related;—seeing all this is certain, I do positively maintain, that the truth of the creation can never be better proved, than it is by the book of Genesis, because in it Moses hath followed the tradition of all the ages that preceded him, and only recorded in writing, what was then generally known of all men in the world; and that, in a time when every man was able to run his own pedigree up to Adam.

Lastly, I maintain, that as the certainty of the creation cannot reasonably be doubted of, without rejecting at the same time all those proofs from facts which I have brought to strengthen my assertion, so there is all the reason in the world to entertain the belief of it, as a matter of fact which is indisputable; as being related by the most ancient historian, confirmed by the most ancient tradition, believed by the most ancient people of the world, who did not only believe it, but also had always had, according to God’s command, the memory of it celebrated amongst them and their ancestors, in all their generations, fifty-two times in a year, from the very beginning of the world.
PREFACE.

WHEN I began at first these Reflexions upon the book of Genesis, I designed only to demonstrate the certainty of the creation of the first man, and so to shew, by arguments from matters of fact, that neither the creation of the world, nor yet the promise of the Messiah, which God made to man after his sin, can reasonably be disputed or doubted of.

I designed, after that, to establish the truth of Christ's resurrection, by such another undeniable argument, viz. by shewing that the apostles were eye-witnesses of it, and instituted a solemn day in every week to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of it, amongst men, from their time down to the end of the world. And this I thought was sufficient to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion: for as the Jews, by the continual celebration of the sabbath every week, could easily run back to the creation of the world, which was the occasion of the institution of the sabbath, so the Christians may, by the weekly observation of the Lord's day, prove Christ's resurrection, which occasioned the institution of the Lord's day. If we consider the thing in itself, there is no less absurdity to dispute our Saviour's resurrection, than the creation of the first man.

Now if this argument holds, as there can be no easier, so neither can there be a stronger proof of the truth of the Christian religion; for, provided we be once well assured of the certainty of Christ's resurrection, we must acknowledge him to be the true Messiah, and consequently embrace his religion.

But it seems, in the heat of meditation, I was insensibly carried further in my observations upon the promise of the Messiah, than I thought at first to be. Therefore, instead of passing over, as I proposed in the beginning, to the proof of Christ's resurrection, which is a solid and compendious way of demonstrating the truth of his religion, I find myself engaged, according to my present method, to continue to make the like Reflexions upon the other Books of Holy Scripture, that I may yet more fully demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, whom God promised to man immediately after his sin.

And this I intend to shew so plainly, as will make it evident that God hath really accomplished his first designs, and exactly performed all his promises relating to the Messiah, according to the first ideas he gave of his coming, to the ancient Patriarchs,
First, then, I design to trace up the method that God was pleased to use, to make the Messiah known without mistake, whenever he should come into the world.

Secondly, I will make some Reflexions upon the several notions he gave of him long before, in his oracles, to characterise his person, his offices, his actions, his sufferings, his glory, &c.

Last of all, I will shew that we have all this whole project and design exactly accomplished in the history of the Gospel, as it was written by Christ's disciples. Now, as this method which God hath particularly chosen to make the Messiah known, appears also in the other Books of Moses; so I think it will not be amiss for me particularly to view and examine these Books, that I may have occasion to illustrate several things in them which deserve a particular attention, especially when they are considered together, and as it were at one view.

For the prophecies being thus considered together in their connexion and progress, do more plainly evidence God's design, and may better convince or confound the Jews. Therefore I intend accordingly to consider those oracles with attention, and to join them together, that so they may in their conjunction cast forth the brighter beams of light, to the conviction of all infidels who may happen to peruse this book.

For I am persuaded that, after the perusal of my observations in it, an ordinary attention in the reading of the Gospel will be sufficient to convince any man that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, which is all I intend to prove, as the conclusion of this Treatise.

Now as the examination of the Patriarchs religion according to the account Moses hath given us of it in his book of Genesis, hath taken up the first part of it; so I design to examine in this second part the Israelites religion, and to follow in my search the account which Moses gives of it in his other four Books.

And as, to effect this, it is very important to establish beforehand the authority of those four Books; so I intend to shew, first of all, that Moses is the true author of them, and that they have intrinsic characters of undeniable certainty.

Then, secondly, it will be natural for me to shew, that Moses, in the writing of them, had the promise of the Messiah in view, as particularly promised of God to the Patriarchs of his own nation, and as being consequent to the principal, if not the sole object of their hope.

Thirdly, I intend to shew, that if we seriously examine Moses's laws, we shall find in them such a method observed, as is both very agreeable to the manifestation of God's design in Genesis, and very worthy of his wisdom, especially if we consider what he was pleased to reveal unto us, of his intentions, by the Prophets who followed Moses.
REFLEXIONS
UPON THE FOUR LAST
BOOKS OF MOSES,
TO
ESTABLISH THE TRUTH
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

That it cannot reasonably be doubted, but that Moses is the Author of
Exodus, and of the three other following Books.

THIS is a truth which may be grounded upon several solid argu-
ments.

I might observe, That Moses hath always been acknowledged, by the
very heathens themselves, not only to be the most ancient historian, but
also the most ancient legislator in the world.

I might likewise observe, That there is a particular connexion betwixt
the book of Genesis and the other books of Moses, as well in regard of the
general design of their author, as of the matters treated of in them. For
example, we see that the greatest part of the laws and transactions which
we find written and recorded there, derive their original from those
transactions and passages that we read of in Genesis. Thus we may plainly
discern
discern that the pretension of the Israelites upon the land of Canaan, was grounded upon the promise that God made to Abraham to give it to His posterity, in the fourth generation. Thus we may see that the Amalekites could have no other reason to make war against the Israelites, than the old alliance that was formerly made betwixt Amalek and the Canaanites, which without doubt engaged his posterity to be the first opposers of the establishment of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. Thus we see that the seditions of the Israelites against Moses, under Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, did proceed from the order of the birth of the children of Israel, as it is set down in Genesis, because the eldest, thinking themselves wronged of their birthright, thought they might justly rebel against Moses in order to recover it.

But I hasten to things more material than these. And, first, it is here observable, that those books were not only religiously kept in every family of Israel, but that they were also once solemnly deposited in the tabernacle as a public record, and that by Moses himself, a little before his death, that they might be a testimony against that people, as we read it Deuteronomy xxxi. 26.

Secondly, it cannot be denied that Moses did strictly charge both Joshua and the heads of the people to read them frequently and carefully, for it is expressly said so, Joshua i. 8. Nay, we see, about 500 years after, the holy man David, who had made, during his life, the supreme felicity of a man to confit in the reading of the law of God day and night (n)—we see, I say, that holy man give on his death-bed the same charge to Solomon, I. Kings.

Thirdly, moreover, it is certain that there were many laws and sentences contained in those books, which are the foundation of the history of succeeding times; and this is the reason why we read nothing in the book of Joshua concerning the several blessings and curses which were to be pronounced upon the mounts Ebal and Gerizim, because the form of them was to be borrowed from the books of Moses, which were public and authentic. The same reflexion may be made upon the law of the first-fruits, and upon the prayer which was to be made upon the tithes of the third year; as likewise upon many other laws.

Fourthly, it is certain that those books were read over every seventh year, according to the injunction of that law which we find in Deuteronomy xxxi. 10, 11. which was commanded to be done for the instruction of posterity, as it is intimated in the thirteenth verse of the same chapter. Whereupon it may not be preposterous to consider here God's methods, to prevent all forgery and imposition in this matter.

We see that it was, during the longevity of human life, a constant and universal custom amongst all the Patriarchs, to Moses's time, to put (when they lay on their death-beds) their posterity in mind of the most important truths, and of the fundamental articles of religion; because, as all admonitions and exhortations made at such a time are always looked upon as sincere, so they seldom fail of being favourably confirued and better entertained than they would be at any other time. We have, as instances of this ancient custom, the examples of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Joseph, &c. who in that, I make no doubt, followed the custom

(n) Psal. i.
four last Books of Moses.

Ch. I.

custom of their pious ancestors, who, in all likelihood, derived it from Adam himself. That custom, we see, was of an admirable use to perpetuate the memory of illustrious transactions: what was then spoken by those pious venerable men, was a kind of a public sermon, because it was delivered before those numerous families which met then all together about the bed of their common head and father; and that, upon such an occasion as did extraordinarily excite their attention.

To this custom succeeded another, which was, that when the greatest captains and judges of the people of Israel were sensible of their approaching death, then they usually called the people together, to give them such exhortations, reproofs, and admonitions, as they judged most proper, either for their encouragement, or for their reformation; nay, and that even in some occasions many of them have affected to have their speeches made public, and deposited in the tabernacle: thus did Moses and Joshua, and the greatest number of the Judges, and Samuel, and Solomon, &c.

We know that the books of Moses were formerly read every sabbath-day, as St. James doth attest it in Acts xv. And though there be no express command about it in Moses's writings, yet we find there something equivalent to it, in the strict charge given by him to all the people, to be continually conversant in his books, and to instruct their families at all times in the laws and doctrines delivered in them; for it is plain, that if the Israelites were bound by that command of Moses to read his books every day, they were more particularly obliged, by the same command, to read them on the sabbath-day, which was made a day of rest by God, particularly on purpose that all men might the better attend on that day to the reading and meditating God's laws, and the performing all other religious duties.

We know besides that those books were continually explained both by the doctors of the law, and the Levites, who were on purpose dispersed through the whole land of Canaan, that they might the better attend and perform the duties of their ministry.

We see that Moses in his writings hath exactly kept a kind of journal, which cannot easily receive any alteration. If we read hereupon what relates to the sojournings of the Israelites, and the several removals of their tents in the desert, we shall be easily convinced by the very form and style of those books, as we have them now, that they were formerly publicly received, and were exactly transcribed out of the original, and that, if in process of time they suffered any alteration, it was only as to some appendixes or postscripts inserted by Efra, or some other Prophet, by way of explication.

We see in those books a history written without disguise or partiality, exact in relating all circumstances, of places, times, and persons, even in the narration of things of small importance for the main drift of the author; there are, besides, some passages recorded in them, which any author who lived after Moses's time would certainly have left out, if for no other reason, yet at least to abolish the memory of some actions dishonourable to some great families, and whole tribes of Israel.

Again, we read in them the songs and other public monuments which
which were made upon extraordinary occasions, to preserve the memory of them the better.

I have but three observations more to make here, and then I have done with this chapter.

The first is, that those books have been constantly quoted by all the authors amongst that people who followed Moses, and that their quotations do exactly agree with the text of those books, as we have them now; which is a certain sign, as well of the sincerity, as of the antiquity of that author. They were as much esteemed in Israel as in Judah, both people did observe them as their law: the Prophets that arose from time to time, did always, and upon all occasions, acknowledge and maintain their authority.

Thus we find in the book of Joshua, quoted out of them, what relates to the curses and blessings, to the prophecies, and divisions of the land of Canaan amongst the tribes of Israel. The whole history of the thirteen judges whom God raised up amongst the people, is nothing, in general, but an account of the accomplishment of that promise which God hath formerly made to Moses, to raise up from among that people such men, in the time of their afflictions and captivities, as would be the assertors of their liberty.

We see there, in particular, the execution of Moses's order concerning Caleb, and of that law in Deuteronomy which prescribes the manner of dismissing from the army those that are fearful and faint-hearted, and of that other concerning the Nazarites (o), &c.

Thus we see, that the rules and laws prescribed in those books continued in force in the time of Ruth, David's great grandmother, that appears plainly by their observation of those laws which enjoined the next kin'sman to take to wife the widow of his deceased relation, and to redeem his inheritance. As for David and Solomon, they are continually alluding to something or other delivered in those books: Nehemiah quotes them in Chap. xiii. of his book, and that was in the year of the world 3563; and so does Malachi in the Chapters iv. and v. of his prophecy, in the year 3580.

The second observation, which is very material, is, that the author of those books hath inserted in them an express prohibition of adding any thing to them, as we see it Deuteronomy iv. 2.

It is then impossible, seeing that the whole people of the Jews have always acknowledged the Divine authority of those books, that they should ever have attempted the alteration of any thing in them.

Nay, we see, not without wonder, that after the greatest part of the ten tribes of Israel were transported into Assyria, those that were sent from Assyria to inhabit their country, did receive that law, and that their posterity have kept it all along to this day, as uncorrupted as the Jews, although they continue their mortal enemies, and have been exposed to all the changes and revolutions that can befall a nation, during the long interval of 2400 years.

The third observation, which deserves a singular attention, is, that notwithstanding the great and many corruptions which the commonwealth of Israel fell into, yet these books have still been kept up in the
fame form that we have them now: it appears out of the history of Josiah, related 2 Kings xxiii. 21. that after the book of the law, of Moses's own writing, was found in the temple, the king commanded all the people to keep the pasover unto the Lord, as it is written in the book of this covenant: now we have the institution of the pasover, Exod. xii. which shews that Josiah, by the book of this covenant, meant the books of Moses, such as we have them nowadays, and such as they were when Moses deposited them into the sanctuary.

It is important to consider well all that is related in the forementioned chapter of II. Kings; for we may gather out of it that it was according to the directions of this law that they began to reform all the superstitions and idolatries which had been introduced in their religion, and countenanced by the royal authority, from Solomon's time to Josiah: this chapter relates and commends the proceeding of Josiah, only in opposition to the ill government of his predecessors, and to the public monuments of their superstitions, which he abolished in obedience to God's laws, contained in the books of Moses.

However, it is certain, that it was no easy matter to impose herein upon posterity.

For, first, the transactions recorded in the books of Moses did not only relate to the people of Israel, but also to most of the neighbouring nations.

Secondly, the memory of them continued so lively and universal, that, almost 1500 years after Moses, the names of those magicians spoken of, Exod. vii. 11. were as yet known, not only amongst the Jews, as we see it by an express passage of St. Paul, who speaks of them, and mentioneth their names, 2 Tim. iii. 8. but also among the heathens, as both Pliny and Numenius do attest it (p).

I point only at those general proofs at present, because I have already made use of them, and shewed their force in my observations upon Genesis, and because I intend to repeat and improve some of them hereafter in this treatise. But now, in order to follow my present design, I must come to the more particular consideration of the things contained in these books, which will much conduce to the confirmation of the same truth.

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CHAP. II.

That both the Character of Moses's Person, and the Nature of the Things he relates, have always made Men read his Books with Attention.

The subject of some books is such, as that alone would recommend them to the attention of any reader, though their author had no reputation in the world; but when, besides the importance of Vol. I. their

their subject, the author of them is famous and of great repute, then, to
be sure, they never fail to be read with serious attention, and preferred
with as great a care. The books of Moses have both these advantages,
so that they cannot reasonably be suspected of the least alteration or
forgery.

The first character that we discover in these books, at the first viewing
of them, is the great singularity and admirable diversity of their style,
and of the matters they treat of.

We do not see that other legislators did ever affect to act the parts of
historians; no, they content themselves with their absolute power to
make laws, without giving any reason for the function of them; therefore we see that there is commonly nothing more dry and sapless than
all their regulations, about both civil and religious matters.

But Moses, we see, hath followed a more reasonable and more satisfactory method: all his regulations are grounded upon the great transac
tions which he relates; he enacts no law of any consequence, but he
intimates to the Jews, at the same time, the reasons which challenge
their obedience, and makes them by that means reflect both upon the
several mercies of God bestowed upon them, and call to mind the great
miracles they had been eye-witnesses of.

I confess, indeed, that the use and scope of some of his regulations
is very abstruse, especially now that we are ignorant of the several hea-
then customs which God designed to abolish from among that people
newly come out of Egypt, where during their captivity they had com-
plied and accustomed themselves in a great measure to the rites and
religion of their masters the Egyptians. But yet, how abstruse soever the
design of some of those laws may now appear to be, we have good
ground to affirm, that the general scope of them all was, to keep that
people from idolatry in distinguishing them from all other nations, as
also to quicken their desires and expectations of the Messiah, the promi
of whose coming had been made by God in the very beginning of the
world, and renewed several times to the heads of their nation.

However, we see in the books of those laws, religion and policy so
interwoven together, that the latter seems to subserve only by the support
and assistance of the former; which is contrary to the custom of human
legislators, who do not so much regard the establishment of religion, as
the preservation and welfare of the state and commonwealth.

If any Jew had a mind to be informed about the tradition of his an-
cessors, and the transactions of old, Moses hath preferred it with such
care, with so many marks of fidelity, and so clear and plain, that there is
no other history besides his, that can give any satisfactory information
about the original of things; all the fables of the heathens, which yet
make up the most ancient tradition they have, being nothing else but a
corruption and depravation of the several truths that Moses relates in his
history.

If any Jew desired to see the beginnings of that commonwealth of
which he was a member, Moses gives an accurate account of them.

If any Jew desired to know the original of mankind, or what was
the true happiness of man, and what he ought to do, in order to be a par-
taker
taker of that happiness, *Moses* teaches all that with great evidence and exactness.

If any Jew had a mind to know the occasion of those songs that were so much in fashion among those of his nation, he might easily satisfy his curiosity, by reading *Moses*’s history.

If any Jew desired to know what fort of exhortations they were, which the Founder both of their religion and commonwealth had formerly made to their fore-fathers, *Moses* relates a great many of them in his books.

If any Jew had a mind to receive instruction about the original and cause of those temporal blessings he enjoyed in the land of Canaan, which God had possessed his nation of, after the expulsion of those people that had been the inhabitants of it for many ages, *Moses* gives as good account of all that, as can be desired.

If any Jew had a mind to know the original of the several calamities that befell his nation on several occasions, *Moses* acquainted them both with the cause and remedy of all their afflictions.

Lastly, if the Jews desired to be informed of the future condition of their commonwealth in after ages, *Moses* foretells it in so particular and clear a manner, that they might look upon his prophecies, not as certain prophecies only, but as a plain history of future events, begun and traced out before their accomplishment.

All this is so much the more considerable, to oblige us to read the books of *Moses* with care, that we may justly observe three things in his person, which as they raise him above all common authors, so they cannot but strengthen the belief, and increase the esteem and veneration, which we ought to have for his history.

The first is, that whereas all men are careful to conceal their own infirmities, and whatever is dishonourable to their families, *Moses* on the contrary seems to have affected to record all the things that could blemish the memory of his ancestors, and derogate to his own reputation. He blemishes Jacob’s memory, by his relating how he preferred Joseph, the son of his beloved wife, to Reuben his eldest, whom he unjustly deprived of his birthright, in favour of the other; which injustice is expressly forbidden by one of *Moses*’s laws.

Thus he lays an eternal blot and reproach upon the memory of Levi, the head of his own family, when he mentions his cruelty and violence against the Sichemites, and the dispersion of his posterity amongst the other tribes of Israel.

Nay, what is more, he vilifies his own birth, by forbidding any marriage betwixt an aunt and her nephew, seeing he relates that he himself was born of Jacob and both aunt and wife to his father Amram; he describes his own incredulity with all the ingenuity imaginable, when he represents the several miracles which God wrought by him; he seems to speak of himself, only to lay open his own failings and sins. Such a sincerity and impartiality, we know, confirms and increases mightily the authority of any author.

The second thing is, that *Moses*, not regarding the advantage and honour of his own family, left the government of Israel to Joshua, one of the tribe of Ephraim, and so reduced his own children and their posterity.
rity to the low condition of the rest of the Levites, who were of an inferior rank to that of priests; for we do not see that they ever after renewed the pretensions which they might otherwise have had to succeed Moses. Now, such neglect of his family shews that Moses’s principles were raised much above the ordinary pitch of the generality of law-givers, who were absolute and supreme over their people.

The third thing observable here is, that Moses had no share in the conquest of the land of Canaan; it all was subdued after his death: nay, it was that conquest that fixed and settled the commonwealth of Israel, which was before unsettled, and as it were ambulatory in the desert. Now, how could such a singular design, as Moses describes in his law, be put in execution by any other than by him that formed it? It was Joshua that made this conquest of the land of Canaan, and possessed the Jews of it. Now, to be sure, if that people had not been then fully persuaded of the Divine authority of Moses’s law, they would never have failed, after so great an alteration, to make use of their power and liberty in throwing off the troublesome yoke of his laws; nor yet would Joshua, and all his successors in the government, ever have maintained the authority of those laws, if they had not looked upon Moses, not only as an extraordinary man, but also as one particularly commissioned by God to make that body of laws for the regulating of his people.

We read, in those books, of Moses’s dying in the mountains of Moab: now, that being supposed, how is it possible, that if the people of Israel had not been fully convinced that God himself gave their law to Moses with all the circumstances mentioned by him, they would have continued to keep up such a ridiculous and ill-grounded conceit? If he had really by his tyrannical authority forced the Israelites into a compliance to his laws during his life, why did they not, as soon as he was dead, with the fear of his authority, shake off the yoke of his laws, and all respect for his memory?

One thing we may remark as very surprising in the relation of that legislator’s death, which is, that his body was not found after his death.

For we do not see that that people, which otherwise kept up and carried about with so much care, the bones of Joseph and his brethren, in order to bury and deposit them in the sepulchres of their ancestors (for both Joseph and his brethren were interred in Judæa), did ever build a tomb to their law-giver, or so much as pretend to shew his sepulchre.

Josephus was of opinion that Moses wrote himself the account of his own death, for fear the Jews should ever imagine, and so give out, that God had taken him up into heaven. I see, I confess, no solidity in that conjecture of his; but yet it may give us occasion to make a reflexion hereupon, I think, more natural and easy, which is, that God had a mind, as Joshua intimates it, to confirm the many characters of divinity that appeared in the law of Moses, by taking away from before the eyes of the Jews his corpse, which they would certainly, if they had not been so prevented, have kept with more care than those of all their patriarchs and kings. The description of the manner of Moses’s death, shews evidently that he was not only in great esteem during his life, but that even
even his death did much conduce to the increase of it, and to make men look upon him as one gloriously raised up above the common condition of men, and in a manner not obnoxious to the infirmities and miseries incident to human nature. But after these general reflexions, I must come to those that are more particular.

CHAP. III.

That the Truth of the Miracles related by Moses cannot reasonably be doubted of.

WHOEVER will examine with attention the four last books of Moses, shall find in them several passages recorded, which deserve a particular consideration.

As, first of all, the miraculous birth, the extraordinary education, the heroical courage, and the Divine call and commission of Moses, and the several miracles which he wrought in Egypt, to bring the Israelites out of it, and lead them to the borders of Canaan.

Then, secondly, all the moral, ceremonial, and political laws, which Moses gave to that people from God.

And, lastly, Moses’s prophecies concerning their future condition, their victories, their captivities, their transportations, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the coming of the Messiah, and the dispersion of their whole nation,

All which passages have as evident and authentic proofs of their certainty, as things of that nature are capable of.

Let us first begin with the narration of the miracles recorded in the beginning of Exodus.

Wherein we see, that after Moses had represented the death of Joseph, and of all the generation that came down with Jacob into Egypt, he writes his own history, and represents himself as another Noah, saved out of the waters, to save and deliver that holy family.

The whole relation which he makes of all those particulars, is very strange and extraordinary; but yet his circumcision, and the instruction of his mother, to whom he was given by the daughter of Pharaoh, to be nurtured up; and the conversation of that princess, who had adopted him, and made herself a profelyte, as the Jews endeavour to prove from 1 Chron. iv. 18 (q); and his education in the court of Egypt, and his acquaintance with all the grandees of that court; did concur together to acquaint him with that remarkable preservation of his person, and persuade him of the certainty of it.

For how could Moses either impose, or be imposed upon, in that matter? Was not that barbarous cruelty of the Egyptians by which they compelled the Jews, about the time of Moses’s birth, to throw their children

(q) Talk. in h. l. ex Vajikra Rab.
Reflexions upon the

Ch. III.

...iren into the river Nilus, notoriously known of all men? Were not the public buildings, and strong cities, viz. Python and Rameses, so called from the name of king Rameses Miamum, standing in the sight of all men? And was it not publicly known by all the world, that the poor Israelites were the slaves and drudges who were made use of to erect those buildings?

Nor either could the manner of his education be unknown to him, nor yet to any of the Hebrews; for we do not join here to Moses's narration, what Josephus relates of his person, of his feats in Meroe, and of his marrying an Ethiopian princess, &c.

As Moses's miracles were done in the presence of the Egyptians and Jews, so they testify that he had really received his calling and commission from God in the desert; and that, just in the manner as he describes it himself.

Now, no man can dispute the truth of those miracles, if he but minds the following considerations.

First, it cannot be denied that the people of Israel was brought out of Egypt by Moses. Their law, which the present Jews do still observe, speaks every where of that famous action of his; there was never any man disputed the certainty of that achievement. All ancient authors make mention of it; Manethon (r) gives an account of the time, of the manner, and of many other principal circumstances of that exploit.

Trogus Pompeius, Justinus, and Tacitus, do also speak of it. Only Tacitus does groundlessly, I suppose, of his own head, relate, that the Jews were expelled out of Egypt, because of their leprosy: I say groundlessly, for it is known that on the contrary leprosy was a common distemper amongst the Egyptians, and that they infected the Israelites with it; so that there is no likelihood they should be expelled by the Egyptians for a distemper that they got from them.

We know, besides, that the law of Moses which calls the leprosy the distemper of Egypt, did banish the lepers out of the congregation of the people; and then the nature of David's curses against Joab, because of his murdering Abner, shews sufficiently that the leprosy was looked upon by the Jews as a distemper most commonly sent immediately from God. Nay, Trogus Pompeius (s) himself observes that the magicians caused Moses, with the people of Israel, to be expelled, because they themselves were struck with a kind of scab and itch; and that they were afraid left the contagion of it should infect the whole kingdom of Egypt (t).

And here I must not forget the mentioning the testimony of Numenius, a Pythagorean philosopher, who relates that both Jannes and Jambres were chosen by the Egyptians, to oppose Moses, and hinder the effects of his miracles and prayers, which had brought down many grievous plagues upon Egypt, just about the time of the Jews banishment out of that country.

But secondly, if the leprosy which the Israelites brought from Egypt,
be an indisputable proof of their sojourning there; it is as certain, that the going out of that mixed multitude of Egyptians, who so far espoused the Israelites interest, as to leave and forsake Egypt, their own country, to accompany them, could have no other cause or pretence than the miracles of Moses, whereof they had been eye-witnesses; so that the posterity of those Egyptians that were thus incorporated into the body of the people of Israel, were in after ages so many witnesses of the truth of those miracles which formerly persuaded their fathers to join with Moses, and so to share fortune with the Hebrews.

Thirdly, it is certain, that the Jews could not so much as mention any of the miracles which they pretended were done formerly for the deliverance of their fathers, without exposing themselves to the scorn of all the world, if all those miracles, and their deliverance, had not been certainly and generally known to the Egyptians, and to all the neighbouring nations, by whom they were often subdued and brought into subjection after the decease of Moses and Joshua.

To all these reflexions we may add, that the commemoration of the Israelites going out of Egypt, with all the miracles wrought by Moses, was renewed yearly, not only by the solemnizing the feast of the passover, which the Israelites did constantly keep to the time of their dispersion, and which they do still keep in all parts of the world, but also by two very sensible ways.

The first whereof, was the separation which God made of the tribe of Levi, in order to consecrate it to his service, instead of the first-born of the people of Israel, whom he had spared and preserved in Egypt, with great solemnity, in regard both of men and beasts, as we read, Numb. iii. so that every Levite was as a living memorial of that great miracle, wrought at the Israelites going out of Egypt.

And the second was the law concerning the redemption of every first-born, both of men and unclean beasts (u); which is observed to this hour among the Jews. It is clear and evident, that there is in all those laws, a deep impression of those several great miracles which compelled Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

Lastly, it is very observable here, that the memory of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, wrought, as by many miracles, so especially by the death of the first-born of Egypt, which was the occasion of the institution of the passover, continued amongst the Egyptians till after Jesus Christ: for till then they used to mark with red their sheep, their trees, their houses, and lands, the day before the passover, as any one may see in Eiphanius; which custom could proceed from no other cause, than from the Egyptians fear of the like plague and mortality that was once inflicted upon their forefathers, and from their hope of preventing it by such a kind of talisman whereby they thought Moses had formerly saved the Israelites harmless from that great plague, only by sprinkling the blood of the lamb of the passover on the upper door-post of their houses.

(u) Numb. xviii. 16.
C H A P. IV.

A Continuation of the Proofs of the Truth of the Miracles wrought by Moses.

These arguments might be thought sufficient for the evincing the truth of these miracles which Moses relates; but yet something more may be added.

As those stupendous miracles by which the famous deliverance of the Israelites was effected, could not be doubted of by those who had been eye-witnesses of them; so they were afterwards confirmed by several other miracles, which, being as great, and almost of the same kind, continued for many years in the sight of the whole people of Israel.

God made a pillar of fire, and of a cloud, attend upon the Israelites, to guide them, the one by day, and the other by night. He divided the Red Sea, to open a passage through it for his people; the memory whereof (faith Eusebius) was preferred to his time, by those of Memphis: the Israelites took the spoils of the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea, as they were pursuing them: they made a long upon the occasion of that wonderful deliverance; they were fed with manna, a kind of heavenly and miraculous food; they drank of that brook of water that was following them wherever they went. All those miracles, with many others, continued for forty years together without any interruption, and do therefore firmly establish the truth of those other miracles which Moses relates, because there were none of them wherein the people could be imposed upon by any trick or illusion, and of the truth whereof every one could not satisfy himself, by his own experience.

I do not speak now of several public monuments of those miracles; as, for example, the rod of Aaron which blossomed in a night; the manna which was kept in the tabernacle; the brazen serpent, which, having continued to Hezekiah's time, was broken down by him, only because the people offered incense to it.

From all which it must be acknowledged, that there was in the whole series of the Jewish history, both many pregnant evidences of the truth of the first miracles, and a constant series of miracles which, having been foretold by Moses, did the better confirm the truth of those which he relates as done by him on purpose to vindicate and defend the liberty and honour of the people of Israel.

Because I did just now intimate that the memory of the Jewish deliverance did continue for many ages after amongst the Egyptians, I think myself obliged to add here some arguments, to prove that neither such a transgression as that was, nor yet any of the like nature and importance, could ever be forgotten in the land of Canaan.

There is nothing that in outward appearance seems more ridiculous, than what is related concerning the Gibeonites coming to Joshua's camp; their equipage shewed that they had a mind to persuade the Israelites that they

they came from a far country. The treaty which they extorted from Jofhua by fraud, is very singular.

And there can be nothing more remarkable than their subsistence amongst the people of Israel, notwithstanding that they were of the number of those nations which God had commanded to be destroyed; and their being defined, by Jofhua's appointment, to carry the wood and the water necessary for the service of the tabernacle, from whence they were denominated Nethinims, and thereby for ever after distinguished from the Israelites.

But after all, there could be nothing more agreeable to God's wisdom, than the preservation of that people amongst the Israelites. Their fathers were the witnesses of Moses and Jofhua's miracles. Those miracles obliged them to seek the alliance of the Hebrews, and to cheat them into it by a fraudulent treaty, because they despaired of compassing their design by any other means. Therefore their subsisting amongst the Jews, and their servile office which exposed them to the eyes of the whole nation, could not choose but be of an extraordinary use, to make that people preserve and cherish up the memory of those glorious actions which every Gideon had perpetually before his eyes.

The same remark may be made upon the continuing of Rahab's family amongst the Israelites, after the destruction of Jericho.

It is certain that the Jews have always believed, that, besides those first miracles related by Moses, many others have been done since for their sakes, both to possess them of the land of Canaan, and to keep or restore them to the possession of it: nay, of those latter miracles many are very like unto the former; as, for example, the death of 185000 men in the army of Sennacherib; the returning of the shadow backwards ten degrees upon the sun-dial of Abaz; the wonderful preservation of the whole nation by the means of Esther, which was the occasion of the institution of the feast of Purim amongst them; and several other miraculous transactions related in the Jewish authors, of which I will only name three, which did preserve the memory of the greatest and most important miracles related by Moses.

The first is the continual miracle of the Urim and Thummim of the high-priest, which by its frequency did confirm the truth of Moses's relation concerning the several apparitions of God, in order to lead his people, and to give them laws.

The second is the miracle of every seventh year (1), during which, though the people of Israel did neither sow nor reap, God, according to his promise, did supply them with plenty of provisions, by making every sixth year extraordinarily plentiful. Now this miracle was a kind of a memorial of that other great miracle whereby God did feed his people with manna for forty years together in the desert, still doubling the proportion of manna every sixth day.

In effect, as that law which commanded a sabbath of rest unto the land every seventh year, was constantly observed, which would never have been done long if that people had not always been fully convinced, by their own experience, of its divinity; and again, as that miracle was so publicly known, that God by his Prophets did often threaten the

(1) Levit. xxv.
The Jews to deprive them of the fertility of the sixth year, because of their transgressing the sabbath; so it is plain, that no man can reasonably doubt, or dispute the truth of that continual miracle which that law both supposeth and promiseth.

The third is the miracle of a continual protection during the time of those great solemn feasts in which the people were obliged by God's command to attend his service in the tabernacle or at Jerusalem. For this law requiring attendance from all the Jews of the age of twenty and upwards, it engaged them to leave the frontiers of their country naked and destitute of men, and so exposed to the inroads of their enemies; but at the same time it gave them occasion to experience the same Divine protection which, as they had read in Moses's writings, their fathers had formerly so often experienced against all their enemies.

It is certain that there was never any commonwealth in the world which had any such fundamental law; the danger to which a country is exposed by the observation of it, is too visible not to be avoided. Therefore the Jews, to be sure, would never have acknowledged that law to be Divine, nor yet submitted to it, if they had not been secure of God's protection to prevent all the mischiefs and inconveniences that might arise from their observation of that law: so that, supposeth they had been at first so stupid and unwary as to receive it from Moses, yet they would never have observed it so constantly and so long, if they had not had a constant trial of God's protection on all occasions, and if they had not looked upon it as a necessary consequence and accomplishment of the promises which he had made both to them and their fathers.

However, it is certain, that it was the will of God that the Jews should altogether rely upon that miraculous protection of his: nay, the disfrusting of it was so offensive to him, that he inflicted an exemplary punishment upon David, for an action which, thought innocent of itself in a prince, did yet directly contradict that trust which the Israelites were bound to set upon God's protection; for when David caused the people to be numbered, God sent a pestilence amongst his people, which abated his pride, and thus taught him effectually to rely more upon God for the future, than upon the multitude of his people.

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C H A P. V.

That Moses's Description of the Manner of God's giving him his Laws, is evidently true.

It is also equally easy to shew the truth of Moses's description of the manner of the promulgation of God's law in the desert, and of the several parts of it, moral, political, ceremonial.

I shall not stand to consider here the admirable equity, and most absolute perfection of the moral law, and shew that it could have no other author
author but God alone; neither will I urge, in this place, the extra-
ordinary care God had to regulate the most minute ceremonies, that
there might be nothing left undetermined in all the acts of religion; as
also the great and Divine wisdom that is discernible in all those cer-
emonial laws, which, besides their useful opposition to the then Pagan
customs, do most of them either mind men of their duty, or represent
and typify the things that were to come to pafs under the Gospel.

In short, I will not aggravate any farther the consideration of the ad-
mirable wisdom that appears every where in the whole body of the poli-
tical laws which God gave to the Jews, to settle them into a firm and
solid form of government; that wisdom is such, and so visible, that it
plainly demonstrates the divinity of them to any man that will but com-
pare the whole body of them, and their absolute perfection, with the
defects of all human laws, and the several changes and alterations they
have received from time to time.

But I shall lay aside these remarks, and choose to come to those that
do not require so much learning, nor so great an intention of thought.

The first of which is, that the moral law was given in the sight and
hearing of all the people of Israel, and that the promulgation of it, upon
mount Sinai, was accompanied with extraordinary marks of glory, and
made only after many previous purifications prescribed to the whole
congregation in order to receive it.

It is true, indeed, the ceremonial laws which were annexed to it, were
not delivered to the people with so much pomp and majesty; but as
they were also given in the same desert, and in the presence of the elders
of the people assembled together near the tabernacle, after they had ear-
nestly intreated Moses that God would no more speak to them himself,
it is evident that they are no less authentic than the moral law: there-
fore we see that they were accordingly received by that people, notwith-
standing the troubles, expences, avocations, straights, and hardships,
which they might meet with by it.

Now is it in the least probable, that if this people had not been con-
vincéd that Moses did really familiarly converse with God for forty days
and forty nights upon mount Sinai, they would foolishly, without any
cause, of a sudden have submitted to such a troublesome yoke of laws,
many whereof were opposite both to their opinions and ancient customs?

It is well known, for example, what jealousy there was all along
amongst the tribes of Israel, even from the time of their ancestors; yet we
do not see that in those laws there is any notice taken of it, or regard
had to it, but that on the contrary they seem to foment that spirit of
division, when they deprive Reuben of his birthright, in favour of Joseph's
potttery, and of the priesthood in favour of Levi, and of the kingdom in
favour of Judah.

Nay, we see, that even after Moses had composed the difference that
was once betwixt the tribe of Levi and the followers of Corah, Dathan,
and Abiram, they were hardly brought to acquiesce to his decision; and
how could he then possibly have raised his own tribe, the tribe of Levi,
to such prerogatives, and to such a plentiful condition above all the other
tribes, as he did, by assigning the first fruits and offerings to the Levites
and
Reflexions upon the

and priests—how could he, I say, have done that without meeting with some opposition from the rest of the people, except they had all been convinced, by the miracle that God wrought to decide that question, when it was disputed, that he himself was the author of that constitution?

Thus we read, that long after, when king Uzziah boldly presumed to act against Mofes's law, Numb. xxv. and to assume himself the dignity of priesthood, and to do the functions of it, he presently received the punishment due to his presumption; so that, being struck with a sudden leprosy, he was confined to his dying day. Is it any ways probable that a prince, especially of his temper, would have submitted to such a confinement, and meekly resigned his crown to his son, if that punishment inflicted upon him had not fully convinced him of the divinity of that law which he had transgressed and violated by his temerity and presumption?

The third reflexion is, that the greatest part of those laws being intended by God to inspire his people with an irreconcilable aversion against all those nations amongst whom they were going to settle, they were so framed, as not only to be opposite to the laws and customs of Egypt, from whence they came, but also to those received amongst the Hivites, Ammorites, and other nations, of whose countries they were going to possess themselves.

Thus we find in the xviiith of Leviticus, laws against all incestuous marriages, which, without doubt, were ordinary amongst the Canaanites and Egyptians, who therein followed the examples of the ancient Patriarchs, who married within those forbidden degrees: there we find also the sacrifices to Moloch forbidden, the practice whereof, those nations, in all likelihood, defended by the example of Abraham's sacrifice.

Now, it cannot reasonably be thought that a whole nation would of a sudden receive such laws as deprived them of a liberty and freedom they had always hitherto enjoyed, and condemn of their own accord those sacrifices that had the fairest pretence of religion imaginable, and to use many ceremonies contrary to those received amongst them, if they had not a strong and extraordinary motive for so doing.

There is another thing, besides, that challenges our consideration, viz. the exact description which God gave to Mofes of the tabernacle, of the several parts of the ceremonial worship which was to be performed in that sacred place, and of the manner how this tabernacle, with all its appurtenances, utensils, and ornaments, was finished.

For as this tabernacle was then the center of the whole Jewish religion, (as the temple was afterwards by succeeding to it) so it was a solemn proof of the divinity of Mofes's laws, and of the worship that was performed there.

Is it conceivable, that a whole nation should contribute to the building of it, should see it consecrated, and taken to pieces, and set together again every day, and should read all the particulars relating to its construction, and not discern whether there was any truth and reality in all that was told them concerning the religion which their governor fixed in that place wherein he pretended many revelations were made?

CHAP. VI.
CHAP. VI.

Some other Proofs that confirm Moses's Description of the Manner how the Law was given and promulgated.

BUT if it is so easy to establish the divinity of the Law of Moses, by shewing the truth of the matter effect, according to the manner of God's promulgation, as Moses relates it, we may further collect the truth of it, by joining these following reflexions to those already made in the foregoing chapters.

Certainly if Moses had been the first founder of a kingdom, and had been succeeded in it by his own children and posterity for many generations one after another, we might perhaps have had some grounds to suspect that his successors, consulting their own interest and honour, would have been very glad to persuade their subjects, that the first founder of their kingdom had some communication with God, and that it was from him he received the laws and constitutions which he gave them concerning civil and religious matters.

But it is observable, that Moses was so far from investing his own children with the supreme authority after himself, that he translated it into another tribe, and constituted Joshua, of the tribe of Ephraim, for his successor in the government: as for his posterity, he took little care of it, but reduced it to a rank inferior to that of Aaron's family, which he preferred to the most honourable functions of the priesthood, leaving to his own the meanest and most inconsiderable employments: all which shews evidently that none of those who came after Moses were moved, by any private interest of their own, to defend the truth and authority of his laws and writings, but only by the certain knowledge they had, that they were all divine.

Neither ought we to omit to consider here the manner how Moses decides beforehand such questions, and determines such controversies, as could not be raised but after the conquest of Canaan, which was made by his successor only after his death; and how those laws were constantly observed in all the succeeding generations of that people, and submitted unto by the very judges and kings themselves; though there be nothing more common than for a conqueror, such as Joshua was, to admit of no other fundamental laws in that state he is the founder of, than those which he is the author of. Nothing is more usual, than for statesmen to affect the expounding the conduct of their predecessors, especially when the form of government is altered, and from democratical, or aristocratical, is changed into monarchical, as it happened amongst the Israelites. How then could Moses's laws still keep up their authority in all changes and revolutions? How comes it to pass, that in all the succeessions of judges and kings, there was never any of them attempted to suspend or annul Moses's laws, much less to enact and give any others contrary to them?

Again,
Again, how came it to pass, that, in all the divisions and facts which that nation fell into, there was never any Jews endeavour'd, with any success, to undeceive the rest of his own people, so as to make them shake off the troublesome yoke of Moses's laws? No doubt, only because the generality of that nation never disputed the divine origin and authority of them.

It were an easy thing to demonstrate, by the whole series of the Jewish history, that all those laws which in Moses's writings are inlaid one within another, and represented as occasion'd by several transactions related there, have all been equally received of the Jews, and have all been put together in a body by themselves before Moses's death, as it may be proved out of the xxxist of Deuteronomy.

It appears, that those laws were public, and in great esteem amongst that people to whom God gave them, upon whom he laid an indispensible obligation to read them every day, and to consult them upon every emergent business.

It appears, that they were known equally of all degrees of men, sexes, and ages, which were all obliged to pay obedience to them upon pain of death.

It appears, that those laws were not only publicly kept in the tabernacle, but also privately read in every family.

We see that a whole tribe, viz. the tribe of Levi, was appointed by God to explain them; and in order to that, they were dispersed through-out the whole land of Canaan, and exempted from the cares and troubles that necessarily attend husbandry, by the plentiful provision of tithes and offerings that was allotted to them.

We see that God obliged all Jews to read and meditate upon them continually, especially every sabbath-day.

Nay, and we see moreover, that God every seventh year would have them read publicly in a more solemn manner, before the whole congregation of that people, who during that year were obliged to rest from all their ordinary labours and employments, and so had nothing else to do, all that while, but to read the law, to examine it, and to meditate upon it.

Lastly, it appears, that those laws were yet the more solemn and authentic, because they obliged the Jews to celebrate three such feasts as were to be publicly kept by the whole nation, and consequently apt to refresh their memories, and put them in mind, thrice a year, not only of the surprising miracles that God had done them, but also of the manner how he gave and promulgated his laws; the miracles giving rise to the laws, and those laws being themselves a means of preserving the memory of those miracles, because of the frequent commemoration of them which was therein enjoined.

Now these things being so, let every one judge, whether the truth of Moses's account of God's giving, and promulgating by his means, that body of laws which he hath inlerted in Exodus, and the following books, can possibly, or at least reasonably, be disputed, or doubted of. But I come now to consider the oracles recorded in Moses's writings, in order to demonstrate the truth and divinity of them.
That there is no just Exception can be against Moses's History, in what relates to the Oracles which he hath recorded in his Books.

THERE are several sorts of Oracles in Exodus, and the other three following Books.

First, there are some whereof the accomplishment did soon follow the prediction.

The deliverance of the Jews out of the Egyptian bondage is of that number; Moses does promise and foretel it; nay, and he executed it himself: and all the people to whom it was promised and foretold, were themselves witnesses of the accomplishment of that prophecy; and it was that accomplishment which established the divinity of his commission.

So is the other prophecy concerning the conquest of the land of Canaan, and the several divisions that were to be made of it amongst all the tribes of Israel, Moses foretelling exactly what lot every one should have, and giving, besides, a description of the country that every tribe was to inhabit.

Those that were born in the desert were witnesses both of the prediction and the execution of it, although it was by the casting of lots that all the tribes got their several partitions.

But, secondly, there are some other oracles in Moses's books, the accomplishment whereof was not to follow the prediction till after a long interval of time.

Such are the prophecies that foretel the future subjection of the Israelites to the Canaanites, and the several deliverances out of that subjection, which God was to effect by the hands of judges, whom he was to raise up for that purpose.

Such again are the prophecies which relate to the future change of their commonwealth into a kingly government.

Thirdly, and lastly, we see that Moses foretells all the accidents, changes, and revolutions, that were to befall the Jews, as long as their state should stand: at least, we see that his predictions are very plain, concerning their several captivities and removals, and their return into the holy land; as also the sieges of Samaria and Jerusalem; and the irrecoverable dispersion of the whole nation, which we see at present.

But whatever difference there may otherwise be betwixt all these predictions, we may say, that every one of them hath as pregnant proofs of its certainty and truth, as any thing of that nature is capable of.

For first, as to the first sort of predictions, the accomplishment whereof Moses relates himself,

It plainly appears, that his account cannot in the least be suspected of imposture; because he wrote it amongst a whole nation, which could not possibly be imposed upon in that case, seeing he supposes, and takes
it for granted, all along in his relation, that those predictions were beforehand publicly and generally known of all the people.

As for the accomplishment of the second sort of prophecies, we have the relation of it in such other books as were written after Moses's death, as in the books of Joshua, of Judges, and several others, which relate the accomplishment of them, as of prophecies written many years, and even some ages before, by Moses.

Besides, to this we may add, that the account which we find in those books, concerning the accomplishment of Moses's prophecies, is inter-woven with such histories as suppose, without any affectation, that his prophecies, as well as his writings, were in the hands of all the world, and distinctly known by every Jew.

And what is further observable, is, that the Jews have always had Moses's books in such an esteem, because of these several illustrious prophecies that are contained in them, that they have always looked upon him as the most excellent of all their prophets. They affirm, this very day, that the other prophets had commonly no other knowledge of future events than that which was communicated to them by dreams and visions; whereas Moses had it by an immediate revelation of God himself, who used to speak to him face to face, without any enthusiasm, when he was perfectly awake.

Now, how could ever the Jews have been so strongly presumpfied of that high opinion both of Moses and his predictions, if we suppose that they never saw the accomplishment of any of them?

That would certainly be as strange an illusion as ever was: for it is besides observable, that those prophecies of his were not written by themselves, and kept secret from the generality of the people; but that they were inserted into the several speeches which he made to all the people some time before his death; and which are written, and kept together in the same volume, to be a standing monument, both of his prophecies, and of his ministrv among the Jews.

Now there is a vast difference betwixt a book that is all made up of prophecies, and so kept secret, and seldom read, as the books of the Sybils were, and a book wherein the prophecies it contains are inter-woven with a history wherein there is so great a variety of matters, as draws to it and fixes the attention of every reader, and wherein they are mingled with a whole body of political and ceremonial laws, and intermixed with the accounts which Moses gives of all the great transactions which gave the occasion to so many several revelations and prophecies recorded in his books.

I am persuaded that it is impossible for any man to make those reflexions upon the opinion which the Jews entertained of Moses's prerogative, and upon the manner that his prophecies, so much reverenced amongst them, were exactly accomplished, and not be convinced of their Divine authority.
CHAP. VIII.

That the Testimony of the Jews is a constant Proof of the Truth of the Oracles related by Moses.

But left any body should think it strange that I should build the truth of Moses's prophecies upon the testimony of the Jews, I will restrain its authority of it within just and certain bounds.

First, although the Jews bear witness, in their sacred books, that the greatest part of Moses's prophecies are already fulfilled, yet they say some are not; as, for instance, those which relate to the Messiah's coming. But their obstinate blindness is not a just prejudice against such an important truth; to be convinced of which, we need only to compare Moses's words with the actions of Jesus Christ.

Thus, for what relates to the destruction of Jerusalem, we need only compare Moses's prophecy of it, with the description of Josephus, their own historian, hath made of the fame in his history of the siege and ruin of that city, and of the dilipation of all the nations of the Jews.

But without the Jews testimony, in what regards the accomplishment of those prophecies whereof the execution was deferred for a very long time, it is easy to convince any the most incredulous man of their truth and divinity, if he please but to make this one reflexion, which is, that when Moses relates amongst the oracles of the Patriarch Jacob, a particular prophecy concerning the Messiah's coming, and when he mentions that of Balaam concerning the rising of that Divine star, he subjoins also at the same time that concerning the vocation of the Gentiles to the faith, and brings it in as a certain sign and consequence of the Messiah's being come into the world.

Now, if we examine the meaning of Moses's predictions about the vocation of the Gentiles, which the Prophets that came after him did better explain and illustrate, we shall be apt from thence to conclude, that he in effect foretold that God in the days of the Messiah would follow quite another method than that which he had used before until the time of Moses, viz.

That whereas God might seem to restrain then the privilege of his covenant, to one people alone; which was in effect to restrain the honour of the Messiah's birth to one sole nation of the world, to one sole tribe of that nation, to one sole family of that tribe, to one sole branch of that family, and so to one sole person of that branch; he would (after the Messiah's coming) take a contrary method, and call all men to salvation unto him.

Now that being supposed, the truth of all Moses's prophecies cannot be questioned. And whatever the Jews opinion be concerning the accomplishment of some of them, it is sufficient for us, that they have carefully and faithfully preferred the books wherein those prophecies which we see so exactly fulfilled, are contained.

For we cannot reasonably suspect Moses, or any other Jew, of forging
the prophecies which foretold the calling of the Gentiles: not Moses, seeing all his laws do tend (as I shal shew hereafter more at large) to establish that restriuction I was just now speaking of, which was to con-
tinue to the Messiah's coming: not the Jews, seeing that none of them can still endure to hear of the removal of that restriuction, by the calling of the Gentiles; and that they are all possessed with such a spirit of envy and jealousy against all other nations, that they perfectly hate and abom-
inate them. But besides, we cannot desire a better, nor a more au-
thentic accomplishment of those oracles, which are so opposite to the Jewish principles and prejudices, than that which we ourselves are wit-
nesse of.

The same reflexion belongs to the other prophecies of Moses concerning the total diffipation of the Jewish state; as also to the dreadful ac-
complishment of them in our days. The most resolved obstinacy can suggesst but one objection in this matter, which is, that either the Chris-
tians or the Jews have falsified Moses's writings, and inserted those pro-
phecies which we now find there, concerning the vocation of the Gen-
tiles, and the dispersion of the Jews, after those things were come to pafs.

But first, the books of Moses, which both Christians and Jews have, are written in Hebrew, and penned in such a style as evidences their antiquity, and as would be inimitable now.

Secondly, that these books have been all translated into Greek, al-
most 300 years before Jesus Christ, and about 350 years before the de-
struution of Jerusalem. Neither the Jews, nor yet the Christians, were any longer sole masters of them, when the heathens had them also in their hands.

Besides, those who were converted to Christianity from Judaism and Heathenism, did not only find these prophecies of Moses in the hands of Jews and Heathens, long before the conversion of the Gentiles, and the destruction of Jerusalem, but did also make use of them to evince against the Jews, that the Messiah was already come.

Thus, I think, I have sufficiently demonstrated the truth and divinity of all Moses's prophecies which we find in Exodus and the following books.

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CHAP. IX.

That it appears, by the Nature of his Relations, that Moses had the Messiah in View when he wrote the Book of Genesis.

I HAVE shewed, in my former reflexions upon Genesis, that those who lived before Moses's time, had a distinct knowledge that God would certainly raise up a deliverer amongst them, although they were not certain of the manner of his appearance; and I have besides, I think, sufficiently
sufficiently proved, that the various ideas which the ancients entertained of him upon the first promise made by God of his coming, were the occasion of several criminal actions committed by the Patriarchs; and by those of other nations who had the same pretensions with them.

I am now to prove that Moses himself had the same knowledge, and lived in the same expectation with the ancients that preceded him. It is of more importance to be shewn, and that henceforth nobody may wonder, if I pretend that the greatest part of the laws he gave to the Jews, both in reference to civil and religious matters, and the greatest part of his prophecies, as also those others mentioned by Prophets that lived after him in that Jewish commonwealth, do all suppose a distinct relation to the promised Messiah.

And to make this evident, I beg leave to offer to the reader’s consideration some general reflexions upon Moses’s history in Genesis.

First, it cannot be denied that Moses was one of the greatest and wisest historians that ever was: there cannot be a greater design, nor a more difficult task than his was, to write the history of 2400 years: he gives an account of the creation of the world in general; and in particular, of that of a man, of his sin, of the promise God made him after the fall, of the flood, of the original of all the nations that were in his time.

His way and manner of writing is also very extraordinary: the majesty of his style is tempered with an admirable plainness; he describes all sorts of passions, to the life; he is admirable in his characters of the men he speaks of, and of God himself. To be convinced of this, let any man read his description of Abraham’s sacrifice, and of the several passages Joseph and his brethren were moved and affected with, when he made himself known to them. Besides all that, we may observe two very surprising things in the book of Genesis.

The first is, that Moses recites there such things as seem to be unworthy to be taken notice of, by so grave and wise a historian as he was: he gives, for instance, an exact and particular account of all the circumstances of Abraham’s purchase of the cave of Machpelah, for a burial-place for his wife; he sets down all the particulars of the incest of Judah with Tamar; and he relates the manner how Leah with her sons mandrakes obtained leave of Rachel to enjoy her husband for one night, with a surprising exactness.

The other is, that Moses records a whole series of horrible crimes, which seem to be so many blemishes and odious reflexions upon the memory of those whose history he writes.

Now it is not reasonable to suppose that Moses, being so prudent as he is confessed to be, could have been so injudicious as to choose and pick out such passages and actions as are in themselves either trivial and of no moment, or horrible and odious, to fill up with them a book wherein he gives a description of the creation of the world, where he sets down the oracles of God at every turn.

It is natural therefore to judge, that he had some particular prospect in his eyes, which could be no other than that of the promise, which alone justifies his recital of trivial things, and of crimes, in such a serious history as his is.

I shall
I shall not repeat here what I have already observed upon the crimes which he relates in Genesis; I add only, that he had the same design and prospect in his narration of such small and inconsiderable transactions.

Thus, by his account of the purchase of the cave of Machpelah, his intention was to shew how God intended, by this sepulchre, to affix Abraham, and his posterity after him, to the land of Canaan: his scope and prospect was the fame when he records the burial of Rachel at Ephrathah.

As for the crimes Moses relates, I have before proved, that he designed thereby to shew how all the faithful before his time had their minds altogether taken up with the thoughts and hopes of the accomplishment of the promise: and herein, we may say, the wisdom of Moses is very conspicuous and discernible in the choice he made of those actions, to perpetuate the memory of the excessive desire which the ancients had to accomplish the promise.

And let no man object here, that it is very strange to see, that during so many ages the promise of the Messiah occasioned no other than wicked actions; for as it appears, by all circumstances, that those crimes related by Moses were committed in different times, and long after one another, so it is plain that he hath recorded those actions on purpose to shew what impression the true knowledge of the promise of the Messiah made upon the mind of those that had it in its perfection and integrity.

If Moses had inserted in this book of Genesis any long discourse as made by Adam about that matter upon a sabbath-day, or if he had given us a relation of what such an one as Seth, or Enoch, or Sem, used to teach concerning that promise in their religious assemblies; it is certain, that, besides the inconvenience of a tedious repetition which he must have made of the same things in every particular account he gives of the several generations that preceded him, he could never have persuaded his readers so well as he may do now.

First, men would have been apt to suspect that those speeches upon the promise of the Messiah were of his own making, and like those set harangues we find in Xenophon or Livy.

Secondly, the crimes that were committed, to get thereby some advantage: as, for instance, the murder of a king committed by his heir, and successor to the crown, shews in the murderer a much greater ambition, and affectation of the throne, and supposes in him a distinct and clear knowledge of his rights and pretensions to the empire.
CHAP. X.

That the same Persuasion appears throughout the whole Conduct of Moses, until his Death.

BUT it is not only by those and the like reflexions which may be made upon the choice Moses hath made of the things which he recites, that we may gather that he had always the promisc of the Messiah in view; for he being descended from Abraham, there is no doubt but that, from his youth up, he was brought up in the religion, and consequently in the hopes, of that Patriarch.

But moreover we have reason to think, that the idea of this promise of the Messiah was much more lively and strong in that family, ever since Jacob on his death-bed had foretold and promised to Judah, that it was out of his tribe he was to be born. As for Joseph, to whom that promise might have been applied by the children of Israel, because of his power and glory in Egypt; the Egyptian persecution that followed some time after his decease, resolved all scruples and mistakes that might otherwise have been entertained in that matter, and so convinced all those poor sufferers, that their Messiah was as yet to come.

To all these strong presumptions, whereby we may guess what the thoughts of Moses might be concerning the promise of the Messiah, we may add the consideration both of his words and actions, which do very plainly establish the same truth.

St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews (z), mentions two particular actions of Moses, which, as they challenge our admiration, so they deserve our serious consideration, because they clearly, I think, evidence that Moses was fully persuaded of the future accomplishment of that promise.

The first is, that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of fin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the compensation of the reward. From whence could a resolution so opposite to the ordinary prudence and natural inclinations of other men proceed in him, if it was not, as St. Paul observes it, from a very extraordinary source, viz. from that strong persuasion which he had, that how calamitous soever the then present condition of the people of God might be, yet God had chosen it therein to accomplish that great promise which was the joy of all their ancestors from Adam down to them, the remembrance whereof he renewed, by illustrating those oracles which Jacob pronounced upon his death-bed?

The other is, that Moses always adhered to that miserable people, and stood by them in all their calamities and pressures. It is true, he left them, and retired once into Midian, to save his life, and avoid the king's indignation; but he returned to them into Egypt, as soon he had received his

(z) Heb. xi,
his commission from God, to deliver them out of their misery and bondage: now he shewed again, by so doing, that he had a certain knowledge of that great promise of God made to that people, and a full assurance and persuasion of its future accomplishment.

Moses informs us indeed, how he refused at first the commission God gave him to deliver his people from the Egyptian slavery, and how he excused himself upon his own incapacity, and being unfit for so a great an undertaking: but yet he makes at the same time so visible an allusion to the prophecy concerning the Shiloh (i. e. sent), O my Lord (said he, to God) send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send, that he could hardly express and declare his mind about it more plainly.

But we shall be the better convinced of his allusion to the sending of the Shiloh, if we reflect upon Moses's being of the tribe of Levi, of which God had pronounced nothing concerning the future accomplishment of the promise; he could not be ignorant of his being himself excluded of that privilege; and that, after all, what glory soever the miraculous preservation and illustrious beginnings of his life might seem to pretend and promise to him, yet he could not expect to rise much higher than Joseph had done before him, although he would resume the former post to which his adoption by Pharaoh's daughter had once raised him.

We see that Moses continued always of the same mind, and entertained still the same notion and hopes of the promise of the Messiah, even after God had revealed to him, that the time of his appearing into the world was not yet come: this, I say, we see by his speech to the people of Israel, related in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, The Lord thy God (faith he to them) will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him you shall hearken: he does not say a priest, or a king, though the Messiah was to be both; but he faith, a Prophet to teach them not to mistake any of their priests or kings for the Messiah, but to expect and regard less, in his person, the external honour of Aaron's family, and the worldly grandeur of kings, than the privilege of Divine inspiration, which was absolutely necessary to him as the founder of the true religion.

C H A P. XI.

That Balaam's Prophecy, which Moses relates, is a further Argument of the same Persuasion in him.

As we ought to shew that Moses had a very clear and distinct knowledge of this promise, so, I think, it will not be amiss to make here a particular reflexion upon what he relates Num. xxiii.

The Moabites being descended from Lot's eldest daughter, it is very natural to conceive, that Balac their king was so desirous to have the Israelites
Israélites cursed from God, and by one of his prophets only, because he
designed thereby to secure himself of the divine blessing; or, which is the
same thing, of the privilege of the accomplishment of the promise, to
which he thought he had a just claim and pretension by his being one of
Lot's posterity.

And this observation upon Balaam's pretension and action, is the more
just and well grounded, because the notion of the curse which he in-
tended to have had pronounced against the Israélites is directly opposite
to the terms of the promise which God made to Abraham, In thy seed shall
all the nations of the earth be blessed; which words, as I observed before,
do import a direct opposition to Lot's pretension.

Now all this being supposed, one needs only consider the terms of the
prophecy spoken by Balaam in favour of Jacob, to see that Moses hath
related it, only to shew,

First, that although those neighbouring nations to Judea had degener-
ated, and corrupted themselves much by their communication with
Ham's posterity, yet they preferred a strong, though confused notion of
their ancestors pretensions, and acted according to that prejudice of
themselves in all matters and occurrences of great moment.

Secondly, that it might be an authentic determination of all the se-
veral contents and pretensions which had divided the posterity of Terah
until that time.

It is like a definitive sentence; first, in favour of Abraham, against the
Moabites and Ammonites, who were descended from Lot; secondly, in
favour of Isaac, against the pretension of the Ismaélites, descended from
Ismael; thirdly, in favour of Jacob, against the pretension of the Edom-
ites, descended from Esau.

For when he foretells that there shall come a star out of Jacob, he
decides the three forementioned controversies; Jacob having been pre-
ferred to Esau, Isaac to Ismael, and Abraham to Lot. Now Jacob could
not be preferred to the Moabites, but he must be so too to the Ammonites,
Ismaélites, and Edomites.

This prophecy, as any one may see, is absolutely necessary, because
it resolves all the questions and controversies which did excite so many
jealousies amongst all those neighbouring nations.

This oracle of Balaam is yet the more remarkable, because, that not-
withstanding it was pronounced at the entry into Canaan, the poftessing
and inhabiting of which country was one of the chiefest characters of the
Israélites distinction from all other nations, yet in it Balaam makes a very
distinct mention of the future calling of the Gentiles to the faith; he
calls them the children of Seth, to intimate that in the time of the Mes-
fiah, the restriction made and observed by God before that time, was
then to cease, and that there should be no more distinction betwixt the
Jews and Gentiles, who were all the children of Noah, and all equally
defended from Seth by him, because then all nations were to be called
to the communion of the Messiah.

I know that some, by the children of Seth, understand the inhabitants
of a certain town in the country of Moab, mentioned in the xvth of
Isaiab, according to the Septuagint.
But the Arabian interpreter of the Samaritans (a) brings very good arguments to prove, that that place of Scripture is to be understood of the Messiah, and shews that he is called the head of the children of Seth, because Seth was the head and common father of all men since the flood, and at the same time of all the faithful before the flood; and that those words of Genesis iv. 26. Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord, relate to Seth, and not to Enoch, as it is commonly believed. 

Besides, this prophecy by these words, I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh, determines that the birth of the Messiah was not near, but was referred for a further time.

Lastly, it is a very singular thing, that this oracle should be represented to us as coming out of the mouth of a Prophet who was chosen by God out of the family of Abrahams; because the author of it decides these important questions and differences, without any visible partiality, and without being biaffed by the pretensions of his birth.

Now there are three things in it which clearly prove that it could not be unknown to Moses.

The first is, that immediately after this prophecy, which was as public and well known amongst the Moabites as any prophecy could be; after the tedious preparation, and the many difficulties which Balaam made to come to Balac; after the many ceremonies and mysteries which he used upon that occasion; and notwithstanding the great and panic terror of the Moabites, at the approach of the Israelites; nay, and notwithstanding the express threats and ominous prophecies of Balaam against that people; notwithstanding all this, I say, we see the daughters of Moab imitating the carnal prudence of Lot's daughters, and courting the alliance of the Israelites, as if they had had a mind to make themselves amends in that way for the loss and wrong they had suffered by the sentence which Balaam pronounced in favour of Israel.

We see, I say, that Moses, immediately after he had related the prophecies of Balaam, tells us, that the daughters of Moab invited the people of Israel to the sacrifices of their gods, and that the people of Israel accepted of the invitation, and accordingly feasted, and began then to defile themselves with the daughters of Moab.

Now, that such a thing should happen presently after Balaam had uttered his prophecy, shews evidently that there was some relation betwixt those two transactions. And this may be further made out, from the manner and nature of the punishment which God inflicted upon the Israelites for their criminal commerce with the Moabites; although the pretence of it might be grounded upon the design which the daughters of Moab had formed, according to the principles of their education, to share in the accomplishment of the promise, by their conceiving and getting children by those whom Balaam's prophecy had invested with the right and privilege of accomplishing that promise.

The second is, that accordingly, about two hundred years after Moses, we see that Ruth the Moabitish left her own country, to settle and live at Bethlehem, and affected besides to marry there again one of the tribe of Judah, no doubt because she had got in her own country a certain knowledge

(a) Abusaid, MS, in the French King's library, note 4. upon Gen. iv. 26.
knowledge of that famous oracle, which afterwards made her easily yield to the counsels, and receive instructions both of her mother-in-law and of her own husband, who was of the tribe of Judah, and, no doubt, had the book of Moses, wherein were inferred both the prophecy of Jacob in favour of Judah, and that of Balaam in favour of the Israelites against the Moabites.

The third is, that the Jews have now for several ages constantly maintained, that Simeon's curies against David (b), which afterwards he called maledictionem peffinam, contained an upbraiding reflexion as well upon the meannefs of his birth, as being descended from a Moabites, as upon his adultery, &c. This is related by St. Jerome, or some other ancient author, who writ that discourse, de traditionibus Hebraeorum, upon the second chapter of the third book of Kings. This Jewish interpretation would be very probable, if that was but true what Rabbi Solomon faith upon the second chapter of the first book of Kings, v. 19. that when we read there that Solomon caused a feast to be fet for the king's mother, we ought to understand it of Ruth the Moabitess, and not of Bathsheba. We know the Jews ascribe a much longer life to Zarah, the daughter of Asher, one of Jacob's sons; for they are still of the same opinion as they were in St. Hierome's time, that she was yet alive in David's time.

Nobody can condemn this reflexion upon Ruth, if he will but consider, that her faith having been so rewarded, that the Messiah came out of her posterity, she is particularly made mention of in his genealogy; and that on the other hand her history hath been preserved amongst the other books of the Old Testament, as a kind of precription, not only against the Moabites pretensions, long before condemned by Balaam's prophecy, but also against those of the Israelites and Edomites, who had no better claim to the promise than the Moabites, having no other than that of a general call, and of their birthright before Jacob's posterity.

CHAP. XII.

That one may see also, in Moses's Law, plain Footsteps of God's Design, in distinguishing these from whom he would have the Messiah to be born.

IT was altogether necessary for the execution of my design, to estabish well the authority of Moses's books, upon which I intend to make some reflexions: it was likewise necessary to shew, as I think I have done sufficiently, that Moses was perfectly acquainted with God's promise concerning the Messiah. Therefore, I believe, I may now come to shew, that both Moses, and those that came after him, had all an eye upon the Messiah in their chiefest regulations.

But to give a greater insight and understanding into the things that I am to say, I think it may not be amifs to remind the reader, and to lay before him once more, the several characters of God's conduct in

(b) I. Kings ii. 8.
that matter, that he may be the better able to judge of the whole series of his design.

I have heretofore shewed, that Moses's intention was to establish two things in the book of Genesis.

The one, that all men have derived their original from Adam, whom God created.

The other, that man having sinned, God promised to re-instate him by one of his own posterity.

The first of these was then solidly proved by a plain matter of fact, when I shewed that such a tradition as Moses relates about the creation of the world, cannot reasonably be doubted of.

As for what concerns the other, viz. the promise of the Messiah, which was the chiefest object of man's hope and comfort, I have also shewed, I think, that the notion and expectation of it was very strong and lively, and the original cause of all the extraordinary actions recorded by Moses.

But as this promise was not to be fulfilled for many ages, so God made it only in very general terms, and had still referred to himself the revelation for after ages, as he thought fit, both as to the manner and time of its accomplishment. It is therefore absolutely necessary that we should consider also how God preferred all along the distinct knowledge of it amongst men.

Now, in reading my reflexions upon Genesis, one must needs have observed that God, even in those early times of the world, did restrain the privilege of accomplishing that promise by little and little to some particular men; till at last he openly declared, that he had settled it in the tribe of Judah, as we read in Gen. xlix.

Thus we see, that God in the very beginning of the world restrained that prerogative to Seth's family, and excluded Cain's from it; then afterwards, of all Seth's family, he restrained it to Noah alone and his family; then, of Noah's family, to Shem alone; then, afterwards, of all Shem's posterity, to Abraham alone; then, of Abraham's sons, to Isaac alone; and of Isaac's, to Jacob alone, whose son Judah was alone invested with that privilege, and all his brethren excluded.

It is moreover observable, that in those seven forementioned restrictions which God made, he seems to have affected to prefer the youngest to the eldest; as it is evident in his choice, if not of Noah, and Shem, who was elder than the other sons, yet certainly in that of Seth, who was younger than Cain; of Abraham, who was the youngest of Terah's sons; of Isaac, who was younger than Ishmael; of Jacob, who was younger than Esau; and of Judah, who was one of the youngest of Leah's sons.

So likewise, if the reader would judge of God's design by the event alone, he might justly conclude that God, by this affected choice, intended to raise continual jealousies betwixt the eldest (who pretended that the privilege of accomplishing the promise did belong to them because of their birthright) against their youngest brothers, whom they saw preferred by God's immediate choice.

One may also further add, that God seems to have strengthened these jealousies, by introducing sometimes a sort of conformity amongst the pretenders
pretenders to the execution of this promise: thus, for instance, as Abraham had two children, so Lot had two; as Jacob had twelve sons, so Esau had also twelve: and sometimes one may find, that those particular persons who are preferred, are charged with very severe accusations.

Now, after all these general reflexions, it is natural for us to consider, what care God hath upon all occasions particularly taken to distinguish and protect those whom he had invested with the right of accomplishing the promise, that their state and succession might never be uncertain.

It was this design, no doubt, which obliged God to make Seth the depository of his service and worship, that he might thereby save Noah from the flood, and so procure to Shem his father's blessing.

It was for this reason that he called Abraham out of his own country, and made him travel from place to place, to make him thereby famous in the world, and to invite men by that means to inquire after his profession, his hopes, and his religion.

Again, it was for this that he obliged this Patriarch to the practice of circumcision, which was a real distinction, and an indelible character; and that he likewise confined him to a certain place, by fixing him in some sort to the cave of Machpelah, which he had purchased of the children of Hamor.

Lastly, it was for that reason that God would have the posterity of Jacob distinguished from all other nations of the world, and that he prohibited all alliance with them, as also all imitations of the customs and religious ceremonies practised amongst them.

Now all this being supposed, I say, that whether we consider the end and principal design of Moses's laws, or whether we examine his several prophecies, which do particularly characterise the Messiah, we shall find that God did all along continue in his first design of distinction, and consequently of keeping up the jealousies of those that had any pretensions to the privilege of accomplishing the promise; or, which is all one, that he hath prosecuted the same design to Jesus Christ's time, in whom Christians do maintain that the first promise was accomplished, God having then, and not till then, both put an end to all those differences and distinctions, which were only intended to make the Messiah the better known, and the more certainly discerned at his coming, and then to cease; just as scaffolds are taken away as soon as the building is finished; and having also on the other hand rectified the principles from which flowed that spirit of jealousy, amongst those who had the same pretension.

We see, that accordingly God excluded all other nations from the right of accomplishing this promise.

We see, that even in the family of Judah, who was himself the youngest of the first set of Leah's children, he restrained the execution of it to the youngest brothers.

We see, that he raised occasions of jealousies, even amongst the tribes of Israel.

In a word, we see, that of all those means which can distinguish any one people from all other nations of the world, or one tribe from twelve, one family from all other families of the same tribe, and one particular person
person from all the rest of his family, none were omitted, but (on the contrary) all made use of by God, to follow this his first design.

This I intend firmly to establish, by examining the thing gradually from Mofes's time, (by whose ministry God enacted and published those laws by the means whereof he intended the Messiah might certainly be known) to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we believe that the promise was accomplished.

C H A P. XIII.

That the Manner of God's promulgating his Law amongst the Israelites, did much conduce to the distinguishing them from all other Nations.

I DO not barely design here at first to observe the several resemblances which are observable betwixt the things related by Mofes in Genesis, and those which one finds in the following books.

Neither will I merely establish here that, as Jacob's going down into Egypt with all his children, and the protection they all received there, from Joseph, did serve to fulfill the prediction which God made of that event by Joseph's dreams, so we may say in general, that the sending of Mofes, his miracles, and his whole ministry to the time of his death, when he intrusted Joshua with the conduct of the Jews, were a literal accomplishment of the first part of the promise which God had formerly made to Abraham, to deliver the fourth generation of his posterity out of the captivity which it was to fall into, and then to bring it into the land of Canaan to possess it.

Moses indeed represents that people, according to the tenor of the prophecy, as groaning under the hard pressure of a cruel captivity in Egypt, when Joseph and his eminent services were both forgotten.

Afterwards, he tells us how they were miraculously delivered out of that captivity.

And then, lastly, he informs us, that after he had carried them through many difficulties in the wilderness, he brought them at last to the very borders of Canaan, and so left them ready to conquer and possess it, according to God's promises, and their pretensions grounded upon those promises which had been so often repeated to them ever since Abraham's time.

Joshua, Mofes's successor, and in all likelihood the author of the description of his death, is he that accomplished the other part of God's promise to Abraham, by introducing the Israelites into Canaan, and actually posessing them of it: so there is nothing can be imagined more precise in this whole matter.

But it is not all this only that renders both the person and ministry of Mofes so glorious: there are several other things in Exodus, and his other following books, which do much better deserve our consideration.
Those books contain, as I have already observed, an exact history of all that God did, in order to give a certain form to the commonwealth of Israel, a fixed place, and a particular service; that is, in order to follow his great design of having the Messiah known without mistake, whenever he should be born among the Jews: and this is my chiefest aim in the reflections upon Exodus and the other books of Moses.

First, we might say in general, that the observance of the Sabbath, and the use of circumcision, did distinguish the Jews; but yet, I have shewed, that the sabbath was a law common to all nations in the world, and that circumcision on the other hand was common both to the Israelites and Edomites: and this will oblige us to make some particular observations upon that matter; and we must consider how God took care to distinguish that people, by giving them his law.

It is in general evident, that the care which God took to give the moral law to that whole people, did eminently distinguish them from all other nations, whom he permitted to walk in their own ways, as St. Paul expresseth it: to be sure, it shews them that he resolved to fix them to himself, and to hinder them from following both the idolatries of other nations, and those inundations of vice which ruin all societies.

And, without doubt, the surprising pomp which accompanied the promulgation of God's law, and which was recorded by his order, before those that had been the eye-witnesses of it, did much contribute to persuade them that God had a particular regard and kindness for their nation, and that he honoured them with his particular guidance.

We may make the same observation upon God's giving them a political law, and upon the care that he was also pleased to take of regulating their civil government, and preventing the difficulties which are commonly occasioned by such accidents as cannot be foreseen by any human legislators, which cause great revolutions and changes in all governments; all which shew sufficiently, that his design was to raise them up to, and to maintain them in as great prosperity and welfare, as possibly could be procured to a nation by perfect laws, and a well constituted government: even the many ceremonies which God gave them, are a further demonstration of God's design to distinguish them from other nations.

It seems not to have been God's intention at first to lay upon them such numbers of ceremonies; for it was only after the commission of the fin of the golden calf, that God laid upon them that heavy and troublesome yoke, on purpose to employ all their time, and to keep them from falling into idolatry again. But, however, Tanchumna (c), a famous Jewish author, observes, that there was nothing left in the world, but what God took care to give the Israelites some laws about: as, for instance, if any Jew went out to plough, he was forbidden to do it with an ox and an ass; if to sow, he was forbidden to sow his field with several kinds of seed; if to reap, he was forbidden to reap the whole crop: if any one went about to bake bread, he was commanded to take out of his dough, so much as to make a cake thereof to consecrate it; if any one did sacrifice any animal, he was charged to give away to the priest, the right shoulder of it, with both the cheeks and inwards; when any one found out

(c) Tanch. in Pent. fol. 228. col. 3.
out a nest of birds, he was obliged to let the old one fly away; if any one went a hunting, he was to shed the blood of his game, and then to cover it with duff; when any one had planted any fruit-trees, he was to count the first thereof as uncircumcised for the three first years; when any one found a sepulchre, even there certain cautions were prescribed; if any one shaved himself, he was forbidden to *mar the corners of his beard*; when any one built a house, he was to take care there should be rails, and *mezuzoth* made, to prevent all danger; they were obliged to put particular threads in their garments: and there are many other things which were apparently commanded to distinguish the *Jews*, by obliging them to the practice of these, and such other laws as took up all their time. But if we may say, in general, that the whole scope of the ceremonial law was to employ the *Jews*, we may yet more justly say, that it was in particular intended by God to inspire into his people a horror against all idolatrous practices, and an aversion against all commerce with idolaters; and this may be further discerned, if we examine those laws in particular.

One sees this perfectly by the manner of God’s pronouncing some meats unclean, and his forbidding to eat the flesh of some animals; for we may find that the greatest part of these animals were worshipped amongst the heathens. Thus the more learned amongst the *Jews* prove that the goat and the ram were of that number; but if, no doubt, were all the animals which were usually offered in sacrifice to God, as particularly the bull. Now there is nothing which alienates two nations from one another more, than when one of them eats or sacrifices that which the other makes the object of his religion.

One of the most learned authors that ever the *Jews* had, hath diligently observed, that God gave many ceremonial laws directly contrary to those rites which the *Zobij* used in their superstitions; and a learned English Doctor (d) hath lately proved it very largely, as to the ceremonies which God commanded to be used in the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, and in the manner of their building of the altar, and of their going up to it; in the prohibition of feething a kid in his mother’s milk, and of offering honey in their sacrifices; in the prohibition of their forcing their children to pass through the fire to *Meloch*; in the law which prohibited their eating blood, and rounding the corners of their heads, and making any marks in their flesh; and in I do not know how many other laws of that nature, the design of whose institution is not so evident now, since the rites of all those ancient idolaters are utterly abolished, and but imperfectly recorded in some ancient authors.

Thus we see, that we need only make a very little reflexion upon God’s conduct, in giving all his laws to the *Israeites*, thereby to judge, that the main scope of those laws was to put a bar betwixt the people of *Israel* and all other idolatrous nations, which should be a visible and a constant distinction, till the Messiah should be born, who was to make all those marks of discrimination to cease entirely.

(d) *Spencer de Leg. Mef. lib. 2.*
We have seen, in general, that God, by giving his law to the Israelites, intended to discriminate them from all other nations of the world, and in particular from those nations which had shewed themselves to be jealous of that distinction; I mean from the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Ishmaelites, and the Edomites, as I shall hereafter shew.

I have likewise observed that God, by his conduct, and his oracles, did also excite a spirit of jealousy amongst several pretenders to the promise. I come now to shew that God hath followed the same design in his law, and that he hath made use of that jealousy as of another means to make that people, which he had separated from all other nations, keep up always amongst themselves a lively notion and expectation of the Messiah.

Perhaps the reader may think that these reflexions may interrupt the series of the observations I have undertaken to make upon Moses's law: but besides that I shall resume them presently, so one may easily discern, that these two remarks concerning the spirit of distinction, and the spirit of jealousy, kept up in the bosom of this people, ought to be well considered by those that desire to know the genius of God's laws, and the original causes of all the transactions related by Moses, and by the other sacred authors, who acted in pursuance of that design which appears in those laws which Moses gave to the people of Israel.

I begin with two general reflexions, which I think are very useful in the explanation of God's conduct upon this occasion.

Two things, as I have already observed, have conducted to keep up that jealousy whereof Moses has given so many instances in the book of Genesis.

The first is, the preference which God hath commonly given to the younger brothers before the elder.

The second is, the choice which God hath made of such particular persons as appeared absolutely unworthy of God's choice.

So that here one sees a continual series in the Jewish history written by Moses, and by the Prophets, who made the same observations upon that model which Moses had given them.

First of all, the tribe of Judah is preferred before all the other tribes of Israel, and particularly before the tribe of Reuben, which afterwards occasioned the insurrection of some Reubenites in their sedition against Moses, wherein Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, perished; just as God's preferring Abel offended Cain, and as Joseph's brethren conspired together to put him to death, because of his dreams, which foretold his greatness and their fall.

Secondly, one sees that Phares, Judah's youngest son, is preferred not only before all the other children of Judah, but even before Zerah,
the eldest of the twins which Judah had by Thamar; just as Jacob was preferred before his brother Esau, though they were twins, and Esau born the first of the two.

One sees afterwards, that God having chosen Jesse of all the posterity of Phares, David, the youngest of all his sons, was preferred before his brethren, when God was pleased to translate the kingdom to the tribe of Judah, and to the family of Jesse; just as we saw before, in the election of the first king whom the Israelites desired to be set over them, that he was chosen by lot, by an extraordinary effect of providence, out of the tribe of Benjamin, though the youngest of all Jacob's children.

Thus one sees that Solomon, the youngest of David's children, was preferred before his brothers, and that the fame Solomon built the temple of God in the tribe of Benjamin, though he himself was of the tribe of Judah.

We still afterwards see that the Messiah was descended from David, by Nathan, son to one of David's younger children, and by Rahab, Zorababel's youngest son, from whom the Blessed Virgin drew her original.

The second remark is about the care God hath taken, by his choice of some particular persons to accomplish the promise, to furnish those with pretences and objections, who might be interested to oppose the restrictions which God had made in favour of their equals; for as they served to keep up a jealousy amongst all the pretenders to the promise, so they also served to preserve a distinct knowledge of it, and to make them inquire more diligently after it.

In short, as we see that the Israelites might upbraid Sarah both with her frequent rapes, and with her cruelty to Agar and Israel; as the Egyptians might upbraid Jacob's posterity with Rebecca's supplanting their father Esau, and cheating him of his blessing; so likewise we may observe that God not only chose Thamar to have the Messiah descend from her, but also would have her inceft with her father-in-law recorded. What! might all the other tribes of Israel say, were there then no honest women in Israel, that the Messiah's ancestors must descend from those that were born of an incestuous commerce? What probability is there that God should choose the tribe of Judah? Had not all the other children of Judah a fairer pretension to this privilege, than Phares could have? And might not their posterity revive against the posterity of Phares that severe law against bastard children which we read of Deut. xxiii.

God chose in the like manner Ruth the Moabitess, and had her history written, and his choice recorded, as if he had intended to prepare an excuse for those of the Israelites who afterwards would refuse to submit to David. What probability is there, might they say, that God would have the Messiah to be born of a Moabitess, seeing it was by his order that Moses caused all those Israelites to be put to death, who after the pronunciation of Balaam's prophecy held any commerce with the daughters of Moab? Was there any likelihood that such a thing could be possible, especially seeing there was a law which God would have to be inserted in Deuteronomy, which excluded the Moabites from the possibility of ever being admitted into the people of God. But at least, was not this
this choice of Ruth the Moabitess, a fair cause of jealousy to all the other families of Judah?

God caused the adultery of Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, to be carefully recorded, as it were on purpose to excuse the rebellion of those who afterwards sided with Jeroboam, against Rehoboam and his authority.

Is it probable (might these rebels say) that God would have chosen that bloody cruel man David, that adulterer, that he and Bathsheba should beget the Messiah together?

Had Jesse no other children besides David? And if David must needs have been the man, why should Solomon, born of Bathsheba, be preferred before all his brothers?

There are three things considerable in this matter.

The first is, that God having given to Joshua the conduct of the Israelites, after he had formerly raised Joseph so much above his brethren by his advancement in Egypt, and given to his tribe two portions of the land of Canaan, he permitted that Jeroboam should rise up against Rehoboam, Solomon's son; and not only so, but should likewise, according to the prophecy related Gen. xxviii. 17. build a temple at Bethel, as being jealous against Solomon, who built one upon Mount Moriah, according to the prophecy we find in Genesis xxvii. 14.

The second is, that this separation gave a fair pretence to raise the reputation of the prophecies which Jacob uttered upon his death-bed in favour of Joseph; which prophecies ran in terms so very high, that they not only gave colour to Jeroboam's pretensions to the kingdom, but did also lead the ten tribes into an expectation that the Messiah should be born, not in the tribe of Judah, as Jacob had expressly foretold, Genesis xliv. but in the tribe of Ephraim, according to the constant custom of God's preferring the younger sons of a family before the elder, in the matter of this promise.

The third is, that even the greatest part of the two loyal tribes received at last the interpretation which the other ten made of that prophecy. At least, it appears, that many of the Jews have endeavoured to prove that the Messiah should come from the tribe of Ephraim, by interpreting several prophecies that way, which, according to their account and their prejudices, were expressed in such terms as could not be understood of him that was to be born in the tribe of Judah, and out of the royal family of David.
That Circumcision was a Means of distinguishing the Israelites from other Nations.

BUT I must now resume my observations upon Moses's laws. Circumcision was, without question, one of the first and most sensible means whereby God did distinguish Jacob's posterity from all other people. I will therefore begin with it.

First, the very signification of the word circumcision, implies a real and corporeal distinction: even Tacitus understood it so, when he faith, Circumcidere genitalia institutae Judaei ut diversitate noscentur (c). But besides, by it God's covenant was, as it were, printed and engraved in the very flesh of all Abraham's posterity.

God has explained it thus himself in several places; and one may affirm, that this was very agreeable to God's design, which was, as we have intimated before, to hinder that people, from which the Messiah was to be born, from mingling with the other nations of the world, which would have made the pedigree of the Messiah suspect, or at least much more difficult to be traced.

I will not relate here, the several notions of divines about the use of that ceremony, but only content myself to make two very natural reflexions upon it.

The first of which is, that it was particularly in respect of the Messiah, that God would have that mark made upon that part of man's body which is the least indifferent to generation. As the Messiah was to come into the world by generation, according to the words of the first prophecy concerning him, and also according to the further revelations of God to Abraham about that promise, so God could do nothing more agreeable to the idea the Israelites had of the Messiah, and of his birth, than to distinguish them, by a relation to that blessed seed which he promised them: as God designed, without all question, by that means to oblige the Jews to remember the first promise made to mankind; so, no doubt, he intended by it to fix their minds upon the consideration of that favour he had shewed to them as well as to Abraham, to distinguish them from all the people of the earth, that the deliverer of the world might be born in their commonwealth, and from one of their posterity.

The second reflexion is, that it was the same prospect to the Messiah, which made God condemn those to death, who should either remain uncircumcised themselves, or leave their children so.

Is it not a very surprising thing, that so much rigour and severity should be used in exacting the observance of a ceremony which was merely indifferent in its nature, and had no moral goodness in itself? But thereby it appears the more evidently, that God designed that the use of circumcision, by which he distinguished Abraham's posterity from all

(x) Hist.l. 2.
all other nations of the world, should be a kind of immovable bar, to hinder the Jews from mingling with all strangers.

Indeed there are three things which may be objected against these reflections.

The first is, that it does not appear that this ceremony was counted such a proper sign of distinction, seeing the use of it hath been sometimes intermitted; as, for instance, when the whole nation of the Jews left it off for forty years in the wilderness.

The second is, that if the chiefest end of circumcision was to distinguish that people, with design to make the Messiah known, there was no need that that yoke should be laid upon all the Jews, but only upon the family from which he was to descend, or at the most upon the tribe wherein that family was comprised.

The third is, that circumcision was common both to Esau's and Jacob's posterity; and even used amongst the Egyptians, and the inhabitants of Colchis, as we may learn from Herodotus, and some other heathen authors.

But after all, it is an easy thing to satisfy man's mind in all these appearing difficulties. I confess that one is surprised to see that God should not oblige the Jews to be circumcised in the wilderness; for which several reasons are given.

First, that God, being displeased with that generation, would not allow that they should be honoured with this token of his covenant: others say, that their journeying in the wilderness gave them a dispensation from the observance of that ceremony. But we may give a better, I think, and more natural account of that matter, if we do but follow the idea which occasioned my second reflection.

The going forth of some Egyptians with the Israelites out of Egypt, was a type of the calling of the Gentiles, as I will shew somewhere else: it was then necessary, that as all ceremonies, and circumcision in particular, were then to be abolished, to take away all distinction from among Seth's posterity, so the use of circumcision should at that time be suspended.

However, God would not have the suspension of that ceremony to continue till they were entered into the land of Canaan.

First, to prevent the intruding of some Canaanites into the body of the Hebrews.

Secondly, to the end that these Israelites who were to enter into Canaan, being as well uncircumcised as the Egyptians children, and being all made afterwards equal by circumcision, should have no occasion to upbraid them with their different original.

The second objection may as easily be answered: one might think at first, that indeed the Messiah had been more easily known at his coming, if the use of circumcision had been enjoined only to the family, or at most to the tribe, from which he was to descend; but besides that it had exposed that family, or that tribe, to great perfections, it had certainly much diminished that spirit of jealousy which was kept up by the conformity of the several pretenders, which on the other hand was of mighty use to preserve a distinct idea of the Messiah, and a desire of his coming.
As for the first objection, there is no difficulty in it: it is true, some Jewish interpreters imagine, that Joseph took occasion to prescribe the use of circumcision to the Egyptians, after Pharaoh had commanded his people to do whatsoever Joseph should bid them to do: but that conjecture is groundless; for it appears that the Egyptians who went out of Egypt with Moses, were not circumcised. It is true, that nation did, some ages after Moses, take up the ceremony of circumcision; and it is very likely that it was some Egyptian colony which introduced the use of it into Colchis: but the observance of that sole ceremony amongst those nations could cause no confusion, because none of them pretended to derive their original from Abraham, but had, as historians obverse, quite different reasons from those which the Jews had for their practice of circumcision.

As for the Ismaelites and Edomites, the greatest part of the Jews are of opinion, that God did discriminate their circumcision from the circumcision which was practised by those nations, by his institution of what they call the perigra after the circumcision; which they endeavour to prove by a passage in Joshua, wherein it is said, that God ordered Joshua to circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. But others of them laugh at that criticism, because it appears that those words do relate to the second solemn circumcision which that people did observe after their deliverance out of Egypt: therefore, without running to this answer, one needs only follow the idea we have already made use of, which is drawn from God's design of keeping up a spirit of jealousy, by some conformity betwixt the circumcision practised by the Jews, and the ceremonies used amongst those rival nations.

Why then were some of the neighbouring nations of Canaan descended from Abraham, circumcised? As, for example, the Ismaelites in Arabia, who were circumcised at thirteen years of age; the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, viz. the Midianites, who were in the country of Moab, and the Edomites, descended from Esau, who did all practise circumcision.

Certainly, it is evident, that as God set the Israelites in the midst of all those nations, who by virtue of their ancestors birthright, or some other pretensions, put in their claim with the Jews to the execution of the promise, on purpose to excite the attention of this people who were surrounded with these rivals, so he did for the same reason permit that the Ismaelites, the Midianites, and Edomites, should practice the ceremony of circumcision, almost in the same manner that the Israelites did.

But that we may the better apprehend the force of this reflexion, we need only consider the jealousy which is caused amongst the several sects of Christians, by the conformity of sacraments; which is so far from uniting them with one another, as it might justly be expected, that on the contrary, one may say, that this conformity in some things alienates them from one another, and breeds reciprocal jealousies amongst their several parties, especially when they come to reflect upon the other controverted articles that cause the separation.

Moreover, it is reasonable to consider that God had provided a sufficient distinction betwixt that people and other nations, by giving them many
many other laws, which had no other visible use than that of discrimination; as, for instance, the three great feasts which the Jews were obliged to keep.

The feast of the passover was the memorial of the accomplishment of God's promise to Abraham to deliver his posterity out of the country wherein they were to be in bondage after 430 years; and consequently could not be observed by the Ismaelites, nor by the Edomites, who had never been captives in, nor delivered out of Egypt, in the fourth generation.

The Pentecost was a public monument of the promulgation of the law, and all its parts, amongst the children of Israel, and consequently peculiar to that nation.

Thus the feast of tabernacles preserved the memory of that solemn action of the Israelites continuance for forty years in the desert.

It were needless, after such remarkable distinctions, to observe here, (which yet was certainly designed for that end) that God took care to distinguish that people by some injunctions, which they were to observe, in the fashion of their clothes, of their beard, of their philaeteries, of their mezouzoth, of their thaleth, of their zizith, and many the like things, the observance of all which served to hinder any confusion of the people of Israel with their neighbours.

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**CHAP. XVI.**

*That the Law of Moses engaged the Jews to the Study of their Genealogies, that they might certainly know that of the Messiah.*

**BUT** if God took care to distinguish his people from all other nations by such an indelible mark, in the practice whereof there was no fear of any trick; seeing no man would circumcise himself without thinking upon it more than once, as the history of the Sichemites assures us; so one sees, that he took as great a care to divide them into tribes, and the tribes into families, that they might subdivide and continue in a kind of a separation from one another, although they were at first but one single family, and one single nation.

Now to what purpose, I pray, were all those distinctions, if they had not been designed to manifest the Messiah at his coming?

We see then, that they could have no other use; for, as God had decreed that the Messiah should be born out of the tribe of Judah, so it was necessary that the several genealogies of that tribe should be very publicly known.

And therefore one sees that God secured this, not only with all necessary care, but even with a caution greater than could have been reasonably desired.

He engages all the tribes of Israel to preserve with a kind of affection,
Reflexions upon the

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tion, their several genealogical tables; he neglects none of the means that might be useful to distinguish the tribe of Judah from other tribes, and the family from which the Messiah was to be descended from all the other families of the same tribe.

Indeed I am not ignorant that anciently one might see some other nations using the distinctions of tribes amongst themselves, much after the same manner as the Jews did, and that they were careful to preserve their genealogies in order to derive their original from the same common father; thus we ought to understand what we read in history of the tribes amongst the Athenians. Thus Hippocrates runs up his own pedigree to the twentieth man of his ancestors, and Herodotus mentions several instances of the same care.

But one sees that this affectation was infinitely greater among the Jews.

For we see, that they did not only rank themselves every one under the standard of their own tribe, at their going forth out of Egypt, but that God did also engage every man to know his tribe exactly; nay, he compelled them all, in a manner, to study their own pedigrees, that every one might claim, and reap the benefit of the law of Jubilee, which had the force of an entail in respect of every family, as I am now going to shew.

There are three things observable in that matter.

The first is, that it was by a superabundant precaution, that God would engage the tribes to continue distinguished from one another, and to preserve and study their several pedigrees; namely, he intended by that means to prevent the objection which might otherwise have been made, that it was impossible for a tribe, and a family in that tribe, to continue distinguished from the rest of the nation, for so many ages; for certainly, if all the tribes in that nation, and all the families in every tribe, did continue, by God’s providence, so long distinguished from one another, there is no doubt to be made, but he could preserve the single tribe of Judah, and the family of the Messiah, distinguished from all other tribes and families of the people of Israel.

The second remark is, that it was for this distinction sake, that the books of the Old Testament were filled with genealogical tables: to what purpose else had books of that importance, and which treated of such great subjects, been filled with genealogies? Moses’s books are full of them: the first book of Chronicles resumes those genealogies with all possible exactness: there is nothing more considerable in the book of Ruth, than the genealogy of David and his family.

The third remark is, that if the genealogy of the priests seem to have been better known than that of other families, by reason of their being the public ministers of religion, which seems to give the advantage of certainty of distinction to the tribe of Levi above that of Judah, in that particular; yet we find, that all the families of the whole nation took much the same care to preserve their own genealogies; to that effect, after the Babylonian captivity, some particular persons were excluded from the priestly order, to which they pretended, because they could not make out their pedigree, so likewise all were thrown out from the other tribes, that could not justify their lineal descent.

Nay,
Nay, there is something further, deserves to be taken notice of, as being very singular, in that of Judah; and one ought here to consider a mystery of God’s providence, and admire the wisdom of his conduct, in pursuing the design which Moses first sets down, and upon which one sees that the whole Jewish state was formed; for when God resolved that the Messiah should descend from the tribe of Judah, and the house of David, he made it more particularly known and distinguished than any other family in the whole nation, and for that reason he lets David upon the throne.

Every one knows, that in every kingdom the genealogy of a king, and of the royal family, is, of all others, the most publicly known. Now, if the blood-royal alone is always distinguished, how much more must it be so, when that supreme dignity is conferred upon such a family, as God had particularly chosen, to have the Messiah, who is set forth as the desire of all nations, to be born out of it! From hence I will boldly conclude, that the only end for which God raised David’s family to the throne, was because the Messiah was really to be born out of that family, reduced to a low and private condition, which Isaiah foretold, saying, That a rod should come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch grow out of his roots (f); and in another place, That he should grow up as a root out of a dry ground (g); which was very agreeable to the character of a Prophet, and to the low state of humiliation in which our Saviour was to appear in the world.

CHA P. XVII.

A Solution of some Difficulties in these Genealogies.

Indeed the dispersion of the ten tribes seems to be a very natural objection, to those who would dispute the reflexions which I have already made upon these genealogies. But after all, there is nothing in it but what confirms the more the said reflexions.

And we may say, that the entire dispersion of the whole tribe of Ephraim, and of the others which adhered to it in Jeroboam’s rebellion, is a mystery of providence which challenges our admiration, as much as the raising up that family to the throne, out of which the Messiah was to be born.

To apprehend this the better, we need only call to mind the pretensions of the tribe of Ephraim: this Ephraim was the younger brother of Manasseh; but Jacob had given him the birthright, just as Isaac before had given it to Jacob, though it did of right belong to the elder brother. Jacob had particularly blessed Ephraim, and even made it a form of blessing for after-ages, as we read in the book of Ruth, that there was one

(f) Isa. xi. (g) Isa. liii.
one made for Pharez. Jacob had given to Joseph two portions in the
land of Canaan, and Ephraim had the birthright before Manasseh, by
God's order: it was then very natural for the tribe of Ephraim, as all
tribes did apply to themselves the several privileges promised to their
respective heads, to look upon themselves as having a particular right
to God's blessing.

And they thought this right of theirs was plainly made out, as by
Joseph's dreams, so especially by the words of that prediction which Ja-
cob gave in favour of Ephraim, the words of which ran so very high,
that after such a prejudice, there might very well be a fair pretence for
the hope which the tribe of Ephraim had once to see a Messiah come out
of their tribe, as those of Judah expected one out of theirs.

If to all this we add, that Jeroboam's rebellion was authorized by a
prophetical inspiration, and by a special sign of God's approbation; and
that on the other hand he desired to propole to his people the two calves
which he set up in Dan and Bethel, as symbols of the Deity, only to
pursue the ideas of Pharaoh's dreams, which Joseph interpreted, the re-
presentation whereof did clearly shew both the greatness of Joseph, and
the particular care of God's providence over him (b); it was then na-
tural to the men of Ephraim, to feed themselves with such hopes, as
the Jews teach us they did, when, even to this very day, they speak of a
Messiah of the tribe of Ephraim.

What did God then do, to obviate these pretensions of the tribe of
Ephraim? He dispersed them, together with the other nine tribes that
submitted to the authority of its kings, and so confounded them with all
those tribes which followed their fortune, that, though there should be
still some Ephraimites in the world, yet it would be impossible for any
of them to justify his pedigree so clearly, as that any Messiah really de-
cended from that very tribe, could, by establishing his genealogy, put
his being of the tribe of Ephraim beyond all contest.

Now, according to this notion of things, it is visible (if we may be
allowed to enter into the counsels of God) that he did particularly
preserve the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, with the tribe of Judah,
which was the only tribe that was to be preferred of necessity.

First, because, as St. Paul to the Hebrews observes, there was nothing
ever said, as to the Messiah, of the tribe of Levi.

Secondly, because God would, by that means, confound the more
effectually all the claims of the tribe of Ephraim.

For, in short, if the tribe of Ephraim was invested by God with the
kingdom over nine tribes of the people of Israel, so had the tribe of
Benjamin been raised up before to the sovereignty over all Israel, over
the tribe of Judah, and even that of Ephraim itself.

If the tribe of Ephraim was descended from a younger brother, to
whom Jacob had given his blessing, in prejudice of Manasseh his elder
brother, (which is considerable, because God hath almost constantly pre-
ferred the younger before the elder) so the tribe of Benjamin was descended
from him that was both the younger brother of Joseph himself, and the
youngest of all Jacob's children; notwithstanding which, the tribe of
Benjamin

(b) Talm. in Succa, c. 5. in Gem.
Benjamin did freely yield to the tribe of Judah, and granted that the glory of giving birth to the Messiah, was wholly due to them.

Be it as it will, there are two reflexions more which must be made concerning these genealogies, which appear very natural in this place.

The first is, that both St. Matthew and St. Luke do begin their Gospel with the genealogy of the Messiah.

The other is, that some time after St. Paul condemned the study of genealogies, which was still much in use among the Jews, as vain. Why therefore is there such a different conduct amongst the disciples of the same master?

Certainly, whoever shall consider with attention the grounds which I have laid down before, must acknowledge, that both St. Matthew, and St. Luke, ought to have begun their books, as they have done, with the genealogy of the Messiah.

For, first of all, it was necessary that the descent of the Messiah from Abraham by David, should be clearly made out: it was requisite therefore that they should set down such a genealogy as was known by the whole Jewish nation: now this they have done with very great care; and the thing was so easy, and so well known, that even a blind man of the neighbourhood of Samaria, the chief city of the kings of Ephraim, did publicly call Jesus the son of David.

But, on the other side, St. Paul’s forbidding the study of genealogies, does not at all contradict the method of those two Evangelists.

In short, he pursues the very same notions: he saith, that the converted Jews applied themselves to the study of genealogies, which was then so great a part of the study of their nation: it is still practised among the Jews to that degree, that since their dispersion they gave an exact reckoning of all the Doctors and Rabbies amongst them who have preferred the tradition, and who were profelites of justice (i). What therefore was to be done in this case? He took it for granted, that God had engaged every Jew to study his own pedigree with care, for no other end but only to have that of the Messiah distinctly known whenever he should come.

But the use of these genealogies being once over, by the Messiah’s coming into the world, he observes, with reason, that it was no longer necessary to keep up the vain study of all those genealogies.

So that we see he speaks against the study of pedigrees, much upon the same grounds as in other places he inveighs against circumcision; for since the chiefest use of genealogies, as well as of circumcision, was to distinguish Abraham’s posterity from the rest of mankind, till the Messiah was come, the use of these two observations was naturally to cease after he was once come.

It is, no doubt, for the same reason, that whereas the Jews in the Apostle’s time took great care, upon all occasions, to take notice of the tribe from which they were descended, as well as to set down the names of their fathers; yet one sees that the Apostles did not all affect it. And if St. Paul mentions his being a Benjaminite, it was for a particular reason; for otherwise, as he preached down the distinction betwixt Jews

(i) Maimon. Prof. ad Iad. Chazaha.
Jews and Gentiles, so he declared himself with the same earnestness against the distinctions which were observed amongst their tribes.

C H A P. XVIII.

That the Manner whereby the Law of Moses fixed the People of Israel to the Land of Canaan, was to keep them separated from other Nations.

One of the chiefest means which God made use of to distinguish his people of Israel from the rest of mankind, was so to fix their affections upon the land of Canaan, that they should look upon it as a country which belonged to them by a particular concession from God, which derogated from the Canaanites right, to whom that country fell in the division of the earth that was made amongst the children of Noah, or which re-established the posterity of Shem in their just rights, to whom, if we may credit the ancient tradition, related by St. Epiphanius (k), this country did really belong by virtue of that division amongst the three sons of Noah, though afterwards they were driven out of it by the posterity of Ham.

Moses seems to have expressed this truth, when he saith, Gen. xii. that when Abraham came to Canaan, the Canaanite was already in the land; that is, he had already invaded it: neither can we refer what he relates in the xivth chapter, concerning the war which the kings from the east came to make against the king of Sodom and Gomorrha, to any thing else.

It was then, for this reason, that long before Moses's time, God took Abraham out of Chaldea, from amongst Shem's posterity, to bring him into Canaan amongst the Hivites, the Amorites, and other nations all equally descended from Ham, whom God had cursed.

God could have placed Abraham any where else; but he chose to bring him into a country which the posterity of Ham had seized upon already, rather than into a place possessed by the posterity of Japhet, on purpose that the jealousy might be the greater betwixt Abraham and the inhabitants of the country into which God had brought him.

Nevertheless, God did not give him at first an entire possession, but only promised him that his posterity should enjoy it, and in the mean while invested him, beforehand, with a right to it, by the purchase of a field for a burying-place, wherein his wife, himself, and his children, were buried; by which means he strongly fixed his own mind, and the hopes of his posterity.

In short, it is evident, that all the glory which Jacob found in Egypt, when he was invited thither by Joseph, did not make him forget the right which he claimed upon that land, by virtue of the sepulchre both of his father and grandfather, that was there. For Moses informs us, that he desired to be carried thither after his death, and that he did expressly require

(k) Harer. lxvi. n. 34.
quire this duty from Joseph and his other children, who paid it in so very solemn a manner, and with a mourning so very great and famous, that the name of Abel-Mizraim continued to that very place where the Canaanites saw the solemnization of that funeral by the sons of Jacob, who were attended by great numbers of Egyptians.

One sees that Jacob's children still entertained the same hope: Joseph solemnly engaged his children to carry his bones into the land of Canaan: and one may judge that the other Patriarchs were not less solicitous to require the same office at the hands of their children, as St. Stephen (1) supposes it, Acts vii. agreeably to the common opinion of the Jews: all which shews, that Abrahams posterity had their hearts set upon his sepulchre, as upon the pledge and security of God's promise, that they should be once possesed of that land where he was buried.

And as the carrying the body of Jacob into Canaan, sufficiently shewed what were the claims of the Israelites; so the same was very evident by their care in keeping themselves unmixed with the Egyptians, all the time they sojourned in Egypt. The splendor of Joseph was a natural engagement for them to settle themselves there for ever: besides, their vast increase forced them in a manner to it. For a long time the miseries which they endured, invited them to seek the alliances of the Egyptians by marriages, and to mix themselves with a people who were their masters, and so to renounce hopes which appeared to be so very ground-lesfs. They seemed to have been warranted by Joseph's example, who had married an Egyptian. However, one never finds that they tried that method. One sees on the contrary, that there was little correspondence between the Hebrews and Egyptians in their sacred things: for the Hebrews sacrificed to God the abomination of the Egyptians, that is, those very things which the Egyptians worshipped.

One sees afterwards, by the great number of flocks which they drove along with them at their going out of Egypt, that they had continued to follow the profession of their ancestors, who were shepherds, a very odious employment to the Egyptians.

One sees at last, that after the many miracles which Moses wrought in the Egyptian court, this people followed God's conduct, and went out of that country, to possess the land of Canaan, which none of them had ever seen; and yet they looked upon the obtaining it as a blessing they could not miss of.

There are several things very remarkable upon that subject.

The first is, that some Egyptians went out with the Israelites to dwell with them in the land of Canaan; which was done, not only that there might be some indubitable witnesses, from among the enemies of God, of the truth and greatness of the miracles which Moses had wrought amongst them, which also was a presage of the calling of the Gentiles to the faith, by their infirction into the body of the Jews; but also that there might be some witnesses of the extraordinary affection which the people of Israel had for the land of Canaan, and of their claims to it by virtue of God's promise, that he would put them into possession of it. For otherwise it is not a common thing that a colony of slaves should be suffered to run away, much less that they should persuade their masters to forslake their

(1) Jalkut. ex Siphre. fol. 311. col. 2.
their own country, and their settlements at home, to go and conquer another for them.

The second remark is, that God made the Jews travel for forty years in the deserts of Arabia, not only to make them forget any ties they might have had to return again into Egypt, and to accustom them to depend wholly upon Divine providence, but also to redouble their desires after the possession of this land of promise.

It was for the same reason that God forbade them so strictly either the mingling with, or the settling themselves amongst, the Midianites, though Moses had given an example by marrying Sephora; or the Edomites, or the Israelites, or the Moabites, or the Ammonites, though all those nations were descended from Terah, their common father, or from the Patriarchs.

In execution of which severe prohibition, God commanded the Jews to put all those to the sword who should make any alliance with those nations, as we have instance of it, Numb. xxiii. after the description of Balaam's prophecies.

And it could be for no other end that he so strictly charged the Israelites to cut off the Hivites, amorites, and other nations of Canaan, even to the women and little children, but in pursuance of his first design to prevent all mixture of his people with those nations, which without that extreme rigour would infallibly and insensibly have come to pass.

I know very well that God preserved the Gibeonites, by ratifying that alliance which gave leave to those people, though of the posterity of Ham, to continue amongst his own people in the land of Canaan; but though God did in effect preserve the Gibeonites amongst the Jews, yet he forced them to undergo the drudgery, and servile offices of the tabernacle, and that they might be kept, as unquestionable witnesses of the Hebrews pretentious, and of their miraculous conquest of the land of Canaan; for the continuance of that nation in the heart of the country, and their submitting to the drudgery of carrying wood and water for the use of the tabernacle, though they were at first of another religion, was, as I have observed already, a continual subject of admiration to the posterity both of the Jews and of the Gibeonites themselves.

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CHAP. XIX.

That the Law tied the people of Israel to the Land of Canaan, and by several other Means established the Distinction betwixt Tribes and Families amongst them.

ONE may say, that one of the most effectual means which God used to fix his people to the land of Canaan, was the law which he gave them to meet thrice a year, and celebrate three solemn feasts together, which
which hardly gave them leave to travel far into other countries, and engaged them, every time they met, to renew, in the public acts of their religion, the memory and the ideas of their hopes: and they conducted to this design of God in this manner.

Those feasts were celebrated at three times, which were the most commodious seasons of the year for travelling, betwixt the months of March and October: the celebration of the passover was upon the fourteenth day after the appearance of the moon in March; the pentecost was fifty days after; and the feast of the tabernacles lasted from the first to the tenth day of September.

In short, the law which obliged the Jews to assist at the celebration of those feasts, required the appearance of all the males of twenty years of age and upwards, so very rigorously, that there was no dispensation; for all (without exception) were then obliged to appear: so that, even during the dispersions of their nation, the Jews who lived out of Judea assisted always at the celebration of those three feasts with great care.

This was a visible way of keeping the tribes of Israel distinct, by giving each of them a separate portion in the land of Canaan, and by fixing them inseparably to it; as the whole nation was in like manner distinguished, by its being placed in a country entirely by itself.

We see accordingly, that God hath observed that method, by giving a law which enjoins the division of the land of Canaan to be made into as many portions as there were tribes, only excepting the tribe of Levi, because the Levites, as being the public ministers of their religion, were dispersed among the other tribes, that they might more conveniently attend to the instruction of the people.

I shall not here take notice of the miracle which was evident in that division, which was an exact accomplishment of the oracle which Jacob and Moses uttered a little before their deaths.

But I shall observe, first, that as the design of God was to divide that people into tribes, that the tribe of Judah, from which the Messiah was to be born, might be the better distinguished and known, so he would, for the same reason, allot the cave of Machpelah, the sepulchre of the Patriarchs, to the share of the tribe of Judah, as also Ephratah, the place where Rachel was buried, which was afterwards called Bethlehem, the town where David had his birth, and which was foretold by the Prophet Micah under the name of Ephratah, as the place where the Messiah should be born in the fulness of time.

We must besides take notice of two particular regulations, by which God fixed his people in the land of Canaan, and preserved a distinct idea of this first division of that country.

The first is the law of jubilee.

The second is the law of lineal retreats.

In short, by the law of the jubilee, which returned every fifty years, and by which every one that could justify his pedigree, was reintitulated in the possessions of his ancestors, God obliged that people to keep up a distinct knowledge of the first division made under Joshua (m), and which is described in that book which contains his history, much more effectually than if he had made a law for that very purpose: so that, though the

(m) Joshua xiv, &c.
the field of Ephratah had been never so often alienated, yet it always returned to the tribe of Judah, and so afterwards into David's family, because it was at first the lot of his ancestors.

This law of jubilee preserved a distinct knowledge of the several tribes and families; and it also kept up a distinct idea of their genealogies, which must be preferred entire of necessity, that they might maintain their right to the inheritance of their ancestors.

It would be to no purpose to object against this observation, that it was impossible to know certainly which tribe, and much less which family, every estate did belong to, because one sees that the first profelytes who went out with the Israelites, shared the land of Canaan together with them: for one sees on the contrary,

First, that God would not allow any of the Moabites and Ammonites to become profelytes before the tenth generation;

And secondly, that he debarred the Edomites from being admitted to make profession of Judaism before the third generation, which excluded them for ever from any possessions in the land of Canaan.

And thirdly, one ought to observe the difference betwixt an Egyptian profelyte, and a native Jew: the quality of a profelyte gave permission to an Egyptian to live amongst the Jews, and to profess their religion; but it gave him no right to possess any of their land.

And then, besides that, those Egyptian profelytes had a particular way of praying by themselves, different from that of the Jews, as the Jews still tell it (n). They could not possess any estate in land amongst them: this is so true, that it was once found necessary to make a particular regulation for the daughters of Zelophehad (o), that they might have their division, which was granted only under certain conditions, because the land was not to be divided, but amongst the males of the people of Israel.

But this is very considerable, that, by this law of the jubilee, God fixed the Jews to the land of Canaan, by giving the children a power to look upon themselves, not only as the pre Lumpive heirs of their parents, but to consider their parents only as usufructuaries, since all their possessions in land were so entailed, that the children, or right heirs of any man, could not mis of the reversion: because, whatever alienation was made, it could last but for a time, to the year of jubilee, which restored all the alienated possessions, absolutely and entirely, to the right heirs.

Now, that this law was always looked upon as a fundamental law amongst the Jews, appears clearly from the words in Leviticus (p), and from the history of Naboth, which holy man rather chose to die than to comply with the unjust desire of Ahab, who would have forced Naboth to sell his estate absolutely, notwithstanding God's express prohibition.

The exemplary vengeance which God took upon Naboth's murder, and the relation of it recorded in Scripture, is a further confirmation of this fame truth: if a king of Israel durst not at first infringe that law, if it was not violated by any other than Jephabel, who was a foreign prince; if the transgression of that law was punished in such an exemplary manner;

(n) Maffa Bicceur. c. 1. S. 4.
(p) Leviticus xxv. 23. 1 Kings xxiv.
(o) Numb. xxvii.
manner; who can doubt but that it was particularly observed in the tribe of Judah, as a fundamental law by which God tied up his people inseparably to this very country?

One needs only make some few reflexions upon those words which God makes use of, Ezek. xlv. to agree to what I say, if those reflexions which I have made already upon Naboth's murder be also added to them.

One may observe upon the same subject, that though God had several times subjected the Jews to a foreign power, yet he never suffered the whole nation to be all carried away out of Canaan at one time, nor yet to continue in captivity for the time of two whole jubilees; they were but seventy years in Babylon, which was the furthest place that they were ever carried into.

From whence we may naturally conclude, that their genealogies could not be confounded in so short a time, because many that were at the confecration of the second temple had seen the first; nor could the deficient knowledge of the several divisions of their estates be obliterated; because those of every tribe who continued still in the land, might visibly keep them up.

And we here of necessity ought to observe in the first place, what we may read in the xxxxiid chapter of Jeremiah (q), concerning the sale of a field which Jeremiah bought:

And secondly, what we read Neben. the vth, where he is troubled to see the alienation of their fields, which was a consequence of their misery:

And thirdly, the manner how that people were restored to their estates, according to the fundamental laws of their state.

Another very effectual means to fix that people to the land of Canaan, and to preserve their families there certainly without confusion, was the law of lineal retreats, which God instituted for this very purpose.

For in short, when this rule was once laid down, that upon the failure of an heir in any family, the next kinsman was the heir at law, it appears plainly, that every one was obliged, for his own interest, to inquire with diligence into the genealogical lives of his own tribe, that he might instruct himself in the state of the several families of his kindred, and of the several degrees of proximity of blood whereby they might be related, because the exact knowledge of these lifts, and of those several degrees of kindred, were absolutely necessary to make use of this right of lineal retreats.

There were two other laws which contributed also to this; one whereof regulated all that was to be done, when there were none but daughters left in a family: a famous instance of which, we have in the history of the daughters of Zelophehad, set down twice by Moses, on purpose, no doubt, that it should be the more taken notice of, as I intend to shew particularly in another place.

The other law regulated all that the next kinsman of any one that died childless, was obliged to do in respect of the relift, and of the estate of the deceased, if he intended to redeem it. One finds in the book of

\[(q) \text{Jerem. xxxii.}\]
Reflexions upon the

Ruth, an illustrious example of the execution of this law, which may be found Deuter. xxv.

Now after all this, let any one judge, whether there could be any stronger ties than these, to oblige the people of Israel to continue in the land of Canaan; and whether the division which God made of it, betwixt their several tribes and families, was not an infallible means to distinguish them certainly one from another.

CHAP. XX.

That the Laws which Moses made concerning the State of Virginity, did principally relate also to the Messiah, which holds also as to several other Laws.

HITHERTO I have shewed the care which God took to distinguish his people of Israel from all other nations of the world; and I afterwards shewed what care he took to keep the distinctions which he first set up amongst the tribes; and I afterwards explained those laws which he gave, to oblige every family in each tribe to remain distinct; and I afterwards made it manifest, that the division of the land of Canaan was a very proper means to execute this design of God.

All which shews, that God intended to make it easy for every man to distinguish the Messiah, when it should be once known that he was to be born out of the family of Jesse, as it was afterwards foretold by several express oracles.

But as there ought to be something supernatural in the birth of the Messiah, who was to be born of a Virgin, so we ought to see what care God took in his laws, that the birth of the Messiah, even in this very article, might not be a fact too difficult to be acknowledged and established.

In the first promise which God made to man in these words, That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, being joined with Isaiah's prophecy, Behold, a virgin shall conceive, &c. Is. v. vii. it is visible, that for the accomplishment of these oracles, one ought to suppose that the Messiah must be born of a virgin, as the Christians profess to believe. Why should God otherwise have taken care, to infinuate, from the very beginning of the world, that the Messiah was to be born of the seed of a woman, without mentioning any thing of a man, if he had not supposed that he should be born without the operation of a man? And why should Isaiah propose the conceiving of a virgin, as an effect wholly supernatural?

In short, God did therefore by his laws not only secure the state of virginity, that this thing might not be ambiguous when it should be accomplished, but (as we shall see here) he has by these laws made it extremely illustrious.
First, besides that, God would have the punishment of death inflicted upon them that were at any time found guilty of sins against nature, as also upon them that should be proved to have had any incestuous commerce with those that were nearly related to them, and to whom either the nearness of blood, or affinity, gave them a more free and familiar access. He moreover strictly commanded, that all prostitutes should be put to death without any mercy (r).

Secondly, he is not contented to forbid fornication and adultery in general, by condemning to death those that expressly should be convicted of it, and by awarding the same sentence against him that should happen to corrupt a contracted virgin, and the virgin herself (s); but he also hinders men, by two ways, from falling into sins of impurity; he permitted, on the one hand, a divorce where the wife did not please her husband, and on the other hand he allowed of polygamy. This toleration made that virgins, on the one side, not remaining too long unmarried, were not easily to be corrupted; and, on the other side, men were not very forward to debauch those women whom they did not intend to marry, or to keep when married; for he that was compelled to marry a virgin whom he had seduced, was expressly forbidden to put her away for ever after (t).

It is natural to observe the design of those laws amongst the people of the Jews (u). In short, the desire of issue made them marry very young; and of the men were married at eighteen years of age.

Therefore all virgins thought it a shame to be unmarried; therefore God makes them speak, in the third of Isaiah, in that manner, when seven women would marry one man, without asking any thing for diet or clothes, provided only that he would take away that reproach of living without having children. It was this desire of posterity which made the women look upon barrenness as a curse.

Again, this vehement desire of children made eunuchs to be regarded as men particularly abhorred of God, not only by the Jews, but also by the Heathens themselves (x): although afterwards they passed for holy men, because they designed to imitate what (as they were told) had happened to Noah, by his son Ham, which introduced the custom amongst the Assyrians of castrating themselves, that they might be priests.

Thirdly, God commanded, that any virgin which was betrothed to a husband, and was corrupted in her father’s house, or that was ravished without calling for help, should be punished with death (y); so that all the virgins were indispensably engaged, for fear of losing both life and honour together, to preserve their virginity with all possible care.

But here is a fourth law concerning this matter, whereby God obliged the parents of all contracted virgins to take a more than ordinary care of them, when he commands, Deut. xxii. 21. That a virgin for whom the tokens of virginity were not found, should be brought out of the door of her father’s

(s) Exod. xxii. Levit. xx. Deut. xii.
(t) Deut. xxii.
(u) Mosaic. Avoth. c. 5.
(y) Deut. xxii.

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father’s house, and there be stoned to death by the men of the city; for so her parents were, by that means, made partakers of the punishment of her crime, and their negligence was severely punished by such a shameful execution as dishonoured their whole family.

Fifthly, God submitted women to the examination of their husbands to whom they were married: nay, one would think that he intended to raise the jealousy of husbands, when he gives them leave to bring their wives to a public trial, and to punish them with death, when they did not preserve the tokens of their virginity.

It was for that reason that he commanded (a), that the parents or near relations of the young married women thus complained of, should produce upon all such occasions the tokens of the virginity of those daughters which they disposed in marriage, which was usually done with many solemn circumstances and formalities.

And here are three things which deserve to be attentively considered.

The first is, the custom that was amongst the Jews for parents never to let their virgin daughters go out their houses; which custom made them be called concealed, in opposition to those that went abroad, that is, that were prostitutes.

The second is, another custom which the just desire of preserving the virginity of their daughters against all accidents, had introduced amongst that people; which was, that all their virgins did wear a sort of fetters, which are called, in the Talmud, cevalim, which are described by the famous Mofes, the son of Maimon, in this manner: Cevalim sunt compedes in forma periscolidiis, inter quos interposuerunt catenulas, illis compedibus or-nabant se virgines, ut non inciderent paffis magno, ne contigeret ipsis damnun in virginitate tua (a). This description may be thought to be one of the foolish fancies of the modern Jews, if we did not meet with proofs of the practice of that custom in more ancient times. In short, one fees, in the third of Iftahab, that chains are reckoned up amongst other ornaments of the daughters of Israel, which God threateneth to take away from them, when he would force them to go captives into Babylon.

The third is, an ancient tradition mentioned in the Pirke Eliezer, in the sixteenth chapter, Solent Israelae digito educere virginitatem, ne incident in dubitationem vel suspicionem, juxta illud, sumat pater & mater puellae, &c.

In a word, it seems that, for fear lest these tokens of virginity should be thought to be obscure and ambiguous by their husbands, God has provided for the securing of the virginity of their young women before marriage by a miracle, the experience whereof was ordinary and common amongst so jealous a people; I mean, the waters of jealousy (b), which all women, whose carriage was suspected by their husbands, were obliged to drink, by which God did either miraculously justify them, or else he began to inflict a punishment upon them, which was so much the more dreadful and exemplary, as it proceeded from the hand of God himself. This miracle laffed to the destruction of the second temple, as the Jews themselves tell us in that title of their Talmud (c) which concerns women suspected of adultery.

However,

(a) Deut. xxii.
(b) Numb. v. Joeph. 1. 3. Antiq. p. 93.
(c) Solo, c. 9.
However, as God works no miracles without great reasons, so he here made a law, the observance whereof was very rigorous; which was, that he would not suffer any women to be married when there was the least probability that they had their courses, but that they should be separated at that time, as unclean.

The reason of this law was, because it was then almost impossible but that the lewd women might have imposed upon their husbands in the marks of their virginity, which at that time are very uncertain; not to say, that, as a politic lawgiver, he might prescribe the observance of this law, left the commonwealth of the Jews should have been overstocked with weak and sickly people.

Lastly, one sees that God himself has fastened a blot upon leprous persons, because they were supposed to have been conceived when their mothers had their courses (d): and hereupon was that law of God founded, which debarred lepers for ever from the right of coming into the congregation of his people.

One ought to make the same observation upon those that were unlawfully begotten; for they were deprived of the right of entering into the congregation; and how innocent soever they were, as to the lewdness of those who gave them their lives, yet they were thus with them made partakers of the punishment of their sin.

If one considers all these several laws attentively, one shall find, on the one hand, that several of them were of very little moment, except we suppose that God intended to secure the state of virginity by them beyond all danger; and on the other hand, one shall find that some of them are very severe about things which do not seem to deserve so terrible a rigour.

But if we consider them according to God’s design, as he hath afterwards particularly explained it, they will appear, I am confident, to be all very worthy of the wisdom of such a lawgiver.

One needs only reflect upon that method of God that I have now explained, to see that nothing can be conceived to be better managed, than this model according to the design which God himself had drawn.

One may make the same observations, and examine the same strokes of the wisdom of God, in several other precautions which he made use of to make the Messiah be perfectly distinguished according to the several characters under which he was to be proposed afterwards by the ministry of the Prophets.

One sees that the Messiah, being to be born of a virgin, was to be a first-born; and for that reason, we find many laws which distinguish in general the privileges of the first-born.

So it appears, by the xviiith of Deuteronomy, that the Messiah was to be a Prophet; and therefore God afterwards gave notice by the Prophets of all those lights which should particularly appear in him. In prospect of this, God gave, by the ministry of Moses, such characters as would distinguish the true Prophets from those who endeavoured to usurp that name.

It appears also, that because God was to communicate to the Messiah, a power

a power of working miracles (which M's intimates, by saying that he was to be a Prophet like unto him), therefore Isaiah specifies the character of those miracles in chapter xxxv. of his prophecy; and God explains, in particular, the laws concerning the blind and the lame; and for the same reason, he gives an account of all sorts of leprosy, that it might be distinctly known which was incurable.

It is easy to those who will attend to the law of M's, to see that they were subservient to this design of God, in pursuance of those prospects which we have already set down.

C H A P. XXI.

That it was the Design of God, by all these Ceremonies, and particularly by that Veneration which he inspired the Jews with, for the Tabernacle, to preserve the Ideas of the Messiah, whom he had promised, in their Minds, by distinguishing them from all other Nations.

AFTER all those observations which I have made upon the several laws that God made use of to execute his design of fixing his people to a certain place, and there to keep them separate, it is natural to judge, that the ceremonial laws which he gave them for the regulating their outward worship, were also intended for the same end. This I must shew, in respect of the holiness which God aferibes to the land of Canaan, and in respect of the whole service of the tabernacle, of its mysterious construction in all its parts; and in respect also of the raising of the material temple, afterwards, to be as it were the centre of their whole religion.

It was certainly for this purpose that he particularly consecrated several things to himself, as the first fruits, and the first-born; and that he set apart certain times, as the first day of the month, and certain solemn feasts, besides the sabbath-day, which were celebrated long before. And he also consecrated several places, as the towns of refuge; and yet more particularly, the tabernacle and the temple: but it was especially for that reason, that he had consecrated certain rites and ceremonies, certain sacrifices, both of animate and inanimate things, and certain offerings of gold and silver, perfumes, &c.

One sees that he rejected any first fruits that did not grow in the land of Canaan: one sees, that though some sacrifices were common to the Jews and their neighbours, yet he distinguished them by so many circumstances, that they were much different from the others: thus he forbids them to make use of statues before which other nations used to sacrifice at that time; and he commanded them not to sacrifice upon high places, where the heathens used to make their offerings very early in the morning, at sun-rise, which gave rise to their worship of the rising sun.

But there is nothing more discovers the design of God, than the laws by which he fixed their worship, first to the tabernacle, and afterwards
to the temple, at the places where God did particularly reside. One may say, that it was for that reason God commanded the representations of angels, and of his law, and of the manna, to be preserved here; all which, besides that they were memorial of the ancient apparitions and favours of God to that people, were express figures of God's glory, of his will, and of his miraculous power: he added also a candlestick with seven branches, a table covered with loaves, and an altar of incense, which were figures of the seven planets of this visible world, of the blessings which we enjoy by nature; and of those acknowledgments which we owe unto God for all these: he commanded also, that none should offer sacrifices in any other place except the temple.

He would not permit that any but those who were purified according to the law should enter into it; he excluded all uncircumcised persons for ever: as Moses had formerly been commanded to pull off his shoes in the desert, at his approaching to the burning bush, so every one that entered into the temple, was to enter barefoot, as a mark of that respect which had formerly been exacted of Moses.

And what other reason but that, could oblige him to give, both at the consecration of the temple, and afterwards, so many sensible marks of his presence? That cloud which was called his Glory, rested there; the Urim and Thummim, which was an oracle for that whole nation, was there; there was a daily sacrifice offered up for the whole people; there were celebrated the three solemn feasts of the passover, of pentecost, and of tabernacles: he forbade them to sacrifice any where else, and he gave frequent and illustrious oracles at that place.

One ought also to observe, that after this temple (to which all the glory of the tabernacle was transmitted) was fixed at Jerusalem, he ordered it to be such a sensible mark of his presence, that when we read the history of Israel's march in the desert, we find that the tabernacle was the image of the temple, and built after its model: so that as the tabernacle always stood in the midst of the tents of the Levites, and the Levites in the midst of the whole camp of all the tribes of Israel, who were all lifted under their proper standards; so one sees afterwards, that the temple, the Levites, and the people of Jerusalem, were places, according to their different degrees of holiness, as they were to approach to the most holy place, which was the habitation of his holiness.

Certainly, one may say, that the building up of a tabernacle, or of a temple, seems to be directly contrary to the nature of religion, according to which, God who is a spirit, will be worshipped in spirit, and in truth; so that this seems to have been quitted for a time, when he commanded the building of a tabernacle.

But really there was nothing more agreeable to the design which God had formed at first, as to that people: he intended to make it visible; and it appears that nothing could be more effectual to make it so, than the double necessity to which that whole people was reduced, to meet in a body several times every year in the same place, and to offer all their sacrifices in the tabernacle, and to be there perpetually employed in the ceremonial service, which did inseparably draw them thither, and fix them there.

The end of all those visible assemblies, was to perpetuate the knowle
ledge of the principal verities of their religion, and especially to renew perpetually the hopes of that people, as to the Messiah, who was promised to them from God.

For God having shortened the long lives which men commonly enjoyed in the beginning before they went out of Egypt, so that five or six persons could no longer preserve the tradition of 2000 years as they had done till Moses's time, God was of necessity obliged to make use of some other means to supply that defect.

He had already made use of several before; amongst which, was that which we find described Deut. xxvii. where he ordered the building of an altar with rough stones, whereupon the names of the twelve tribes, and the whole law, were to be engraved.

He afterwards followed other methods; and thus we see that Samuel, following Moses and Joshua's example, repeats before a solemn assembly of the people met at Gilgal, for the consecration of Saul, the things that came to pass during the government of Bedan or Sampson, of Jephtha and his own.

But yet the best way was to fix this people to one tabernacle, wherein we see that besides the monuments which preserved the memory of the great miracles that God had wrought at the foundation of the Jewish commonwealth, as the pot of manna, Aaron's rod that bloomed, the plates of the altar that had been made out of the censers of Corah, Danban, and their confederates—

One sees that the law, and the books of the covenant, were deposited there by God's order, and the principal transactions and deliverances that were wrought by God in the behalf of that people, were continually celebrated with hymns and other tokens of public thankfulness.

It was, no doubt, upon this account, that he caused the book of the law to be laid up there, with many ceremonies and expiations; and that he enjoined it to be read publicly in the presence of the whole congregation every seven years: one sees that he commanded that every family should read this book continually, and that all should entertain their wives and children, from their tenderest years, with the design of the law, night and day, in the country, and in the town, at all times, and in all places.

One sees that God engaged them to it, not only by an express command, but also by an indispensible necessity, because he made it death for any man to violate any of those ceremonial laws, from a principle of obstinacy: no pardon could be obtained for the transgressions committed through ignorance, before they were expiated by certain sacrifices, the forms whereof were scrupulously prescribed in the law, and which could be violated upon no account whatever.

If one considers those things, he may say that the Jews had scarce one moment free in their lives; so pressing was the necessity which lay upon them to consult the law of God, the regulations of which were so very exact and particular, that there, no actions, public or private, could happen, but what were regulated and determined by these constitutions.

If a beast was born, the owner was to examine whether it was the first-born,
first-born or no, whether it was clean or unclean, and whether it was to be redeemed, with several other things of this nature.

If a woman was big with child, there were many questions to be asked: when she came to lie-in, several very different ceremonies were practised, according as the child was first-born, or not. The law enjoined various purifications, according as the woman brought forth a son or a daughter.

God had prescribed a great number of laws for all the accidents of life; for marriages, for successions, for funerals, for mourning, for unforeseen accidents, as the death of a man that was killed without the design of his murderer; for several crimes that might be committed, in their several pollutions and sequestrations, &c.

It seems that this whole people, from the time that they came to the use of their reason, to the time of their death, was still continually obliged to keep up a correspondence with the priests and Levites, whom God had for this purpose dispersed amongst all the tribes of Israel, and to consult the law and the testimony, to be instructed in the manner of governing themselves; but particularly, they were to look upon the temple and the tabernacle as the centre of their whole religion: and how could they do this, without carrying their prospect at the same time to those great promises of the Messiah, of which the Israelites were depositaries? I say, upon those promises, which raised up so many jealousies betwixt their forefathers and the ancestors of those neighbouring nations, with whom they had always some controversy, and were to be considered as glorious and honourable to the whole nation.

CHAP. XXII.

That it appears by the Books of Moses, that this whole Model which God had framed, was to last but until the Coming of the Messiah.

But if we find in Moses's law a severe restriction in all that belongs to the execution of the promise of the Messiah (which shews that God intended to have that nation distinguished from all others, till the blest feed was come); if we find that he restrained that promise to one tribe, one town, one family, one particular individual person in that family, that they might not be to feck in a confused crowd of a whole people, made up of several millions of persons, or in a whole tribe, or even in a city filled up with several families; if, upon this account his birth was restrained to one people, one tribe, one little town, and one single family which was settled there, the Jesus could not but observe that it was God's design to break all those restrictions, and to follow quite another method, when the Messiah was once come.

For, in the first place, the first promise of the Messiah was expressed in very general terms, which mentioned a common benefit to all the sons of Adam. This promise was made before God had rejected Cain's posterity,
rity, by preferring that of Seth; it was made before the restriction was made to Noah in Seth's family, and to Shem in Noah's family.

Secondly, God, who by circumcision had distinguished Abraham and his posterity from the rest of the family of Shem, did expressly promise to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the world should be blessed. This promise was made also before God had restrained the promise to the person of Isaac in prejudice of Ishmael, and then afterwards to the person of Jacob, in the prejudice of Esau.

Thirdly, one sees this same truth yet more clearly explained out of Jacob's oracle concerning Judah, Gen. xlix. wherein Jacob expressly foretells that the Messiah should be the expectation of the nations; that is to say, the comfort, the glory, the hope, and the joy of all the nations of the universe.

As this was a capital truth, so God proposed it by Balaam, at the Israelites entering into Canaan, that they might thus understand, that all those distinctions which their separation, living in Canaan from the rest of the world, might keep up, were not always to last.

But this particular appears out of Moses's law, which allows of several sorts of proselytes, receiving some without tying them to the observance of all the ceremonies in the law; which it would never have done, if it had been absolutely necessary to be a Jew before they have a share in the benefits of the promise.

Secondly, it supposes that God was to remove that people out of Canaan into remote countries, and to disperse them, as it were, into the uttermost parts of the world, which was done by Divine Providence, only to publish the promise of the Messiah, to establish the belief in the Prophets, and to facilitate the calling of the Gentiles to the faith.

Thirdly, he declares expressly, as St. Paul observes, that he was to call his people, that which was not his people, that he might by that means provoke the people of Israel to jealousy. This notion of jealousy, mentioned by St. Paul, deserves to be taken notice of with very great care, if we reflect upon the spirit of jealousy which reigned amongst the Israelites and their neighbours.

I shall take notice in another place of the great number of oracles of David upon the same subject, although he otherwise insults upon the Moabites and Edomites, upon all occasions, and shews as much aversion and jealousy against those nations, as was possible for one that lived in a continual war with those people.

I shall also make some reflexions upon Solomon's marriage with the princesses of Tyre, of Sidon, and of Egypt; that is to say, with the posterity of Ham, which was united to that of Judah, to take a part with them in the blessing; from whence it came to pass, that the Song that was written upon that marriage, was preferred as a piece divinely inspired, and ought to be considered as a happy presage of the calling of the Gentiles to the communion of the Messiah.

One may also join here the manner of Solomon's giving to Hiram's subjects, who had helped him in the building of the temple, the country of Chabul, which was enclosed within Judea, although those people were of the Canaanites posterity, upon whom Noah had particularly pronounced, Cursed be Canaan (e).

(e) Gen. ix.
One may also see, that as God had permitted his people to be transported into Chaldea and Babylon, and had raised up there Prophets amongst them on purpose to acquaint the world with the glorious hopes of the Jews, so he caused the books of Scripture to be translated into Greek above 300 years before our Saviour’s birth, not only to prevent all fulficion of falsehood in the minds of the Gentiles, if they were produced of a sudden after the birth of the Messiah, but also to instruct the Heathens by little and little of the right which all nations had, as well as the Jews, to that promise; that they might take their share in it, whenever they should be invited to it by God; and especially to take away the scandal which was to follow upon God’s destroying the form of that commonwealth by the Romans, according to Daniel’s prediction.

All these things, no doubt, engaged the Jews who read the books of Moses to make particular remarks upon them.

But they ought to have observed three things especially: the first was, that although God had at first chosen their whole nation, yet he was pleased to disperse afterwards almost ten parts of thirteen; which plainly shewed that this choice which he had made, was only an economical choice, and for a particular design.

The second is, that although he was very severe and punctual in exacting obedience to the ceremonial service, yet he had fixed the most part of their observances to certain places, to certain times, and to certain persons: it was easy to judge, that when God bounded them in this manner, it was only for an economical service, prescribed only upon a particular prospect, which was one day to have an end.

The third is, that experience convinced them that although God seemed to have fixed his service to the temple, yet he suffered the Chaldeans to destroy the first, and did not restore to the second the first marks of his presence, when it was rebuilt by the order of Cyrus.

From whence it was natural to conclude, that such a glory as retired by little and little from that place which God had chosen, was only designed to be there for a time, till God should extend his service, by calling all the world to his religion, and so making the whole universe his temple, as we see it done in our days, by the calling of the Gentiles to the religion of our Saviour.
THE PREFACE.

In my Reflexions upon the Book of Genesis, I have shewed the means God made use of to imprint the ideas of the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah, during that long tract of 2500 years, before the children of Israel departed out of Egypt, and before the history of it was penned by Moses.

They that consider that God at first prescribed the law of the sabbath, to fix the belief of the creation of the world, and that this law hath been constantly observed since the beginning of the world until Moses, and is still to this day observed amongst the Jews, easily apprehend, that this fact of the creation could not be more incontrovertibly proved, or more firmly grounded.

In like manner an attentive reflexion upon the Oracles which I have mentioned, and which alone at first were the foundation and hope of the religion of the Patriarchs, and were afterwards recorded in the book of Genesis, is sufficient to persuade any one that it was impossible but the memory of the Promise of the Messiah should be deeply engraven in the minds of the Israelites, though we should suppose that the spirit of jealousy which God had raised amongst the several pretenders to the execution of that great Promise, did not much contribute to preserve the remembrance of it; as I have shewn very carefully, that it was very useful for that purpose.

I have in my Reflexions afterwards proved, upon the four last Books of Moses, that God prosecuted the same design in the laws which he gave to the people of Israel, as well as in the peculiar forms and regulations of their government and religion; the great design of which rules, was only that the Messiah, at his appearance in the world, might be unquestionably known.

Whoever shall read the Reflexions which I have made upon this matter, will easily perceive, that the long life of the Patriarchs was of great efficacy, to make so fresh and lively an impression of those illustrious facts, the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah, that there was no need of very frequent Oracles to confirm the same; as indeed we find that, in the space of 2553 years, only five or six principal Oracles were given, which have a particular relation to the Messiah, as I shall shew afterwards.
Now this reflection being once supposed, as the life of man was afterwards considerably shortened at the time of Moses, so one may judge that this promise ought to be more frequently propounded, and more clearly explained. And we ought to suppose that in proportion to the delaying of the Promise, and the shortness of men's lives, which discouraged their hopes of ever seeing a Promise fulfilled, which their ancestors, whose lives were much longer, could never attain to the more distinct knowledge which God gave of this great object, was in order to stir up strong desires in the minds of the Israelites, as well as of the Gentiles, to whom God was afterwards to renew the ideas of it: and consequently we find that a greater number of Oracles and Prophecies were required, from time to time, to entertain and strengthen the belief of a Promise, the accomplishment whereof was so considerably deferred.

And indeed this was exactly the method which God followed, the spirit of Prophecy having in a most illustrious manner been employed to preserve the ideas of the Promise of the Messiah, and to increase them in the minds of the Jews, until the time of the accomplishment itself; and God hath so exactly set down by the Prophets, the several parts of his design, as there needs not be afterwards any difficulty in discerning the prosecution of that design which he had formed at first.

I intend, in this third part of my Reflexions on the Writings of the Old Testament, to explain this method which God hath followed, in shewing how he hath accommodated himself to the state of the Jews, whom he had made the depositaries of his Oracles, and proportioned them to their understanding and desires.

For the more happy execution of this design, and a clearer discovery of this conduct of God, which seems somewhat obscured, by intermixing these predictions concerning the Messiah, with a great number of events, during that series of ages whereof we have the history written by his own order, I think myself obliged first of all to explain the reasons why God was pleased to interweave the Oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other matters that seem to be of a very different nature; and then shall lay down the rules which one ought to follow, in applying the ancient Prophecies to the Messiah.

After these preliminary Reflexions, I suppose, that in order to a fuller discovery of the series of God's design, and a more distinct knowledge of the progress of the revelation of this matter, that I ought again to resume, and to set before the eyes of the reader, the five or six principal Oracles which God hath given concerning the Messiah, from the beginning of the world to Moses, together with that Oracle which he uttered by the mouth of that illustrious legislator.

One will easily judge, without my undertaking to prove it, that the ideas of these Oracles were familiar to the Jews until David, during the space of 400 years; after which, God began to discover the same more particularly, in choosing David to be the person in whose family that Prophecy should be accomplished, because the Messiah was to be born of his seed.

And so I shall immediately pass on to the consideration of those Oracles which David himself uttered on this subject, which deserve so much the
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more attention, because God, who at that time changed the government of the Jews, did considerably augment the ideas which the ancients had concerning the Promise of the Messiah.

Lastly, I shall collect under certain heads those Oracles which were uttered by the Prophets concerning the Messiah, some hundred of years before the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and soon after; and forasmuch as the light concerning this matter was at that time much increased, and the Oracles themselves are much more clear and distinct, as giving many more particular characters of the Messiah, so I shall content myself briefly to touch upon them, in following the principal characters which they give concerning the Messiah.

After which, I shall have nothing else to do, but to make some reflections upon the state of the Jews, from the time of the last of the Prophets, until that wherein the Christians pretend that this Promise and these Oracles were accomplished in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Though the multiplicity of the things which I am to handle, and which I intend to do with the greatest brevity that is possible, might seem to oblige me to omit the examining the succession of the history of the Jews, yet God having been pleased to intermix the history of the Jews, and many other transactions, with these Prophecies, it obligeth me in this third part to make also some Reflections upon the Historical Books of the Old Testament. And indeed this will be of great use to prove the truth of these Oracles, and the manner how God hath constantly followed that draught which he at first formed to himself; as also to make it appear, that notwithstanding the different revolutions of the Jewish commonwealth, he hath always continued those means which he chose at first, to facilitate the distinct knowledge of the Messiah, whenever he should appear.

It is very necessary to explain this series of the design of God, to make the authority of these Prophecies more firm and unmovable; those laws, the observation of which serve to distinguish the family of Judah, and that of the Messiah, being so many boundaries and limits, within which God was pleased to confine himself, that his conduct in this matter might be the more easily observable and known.

And forasmuch as, in my Reflections upon the Books of Moses, I have begun by the firm establishment of the truth of those Books on which I made my reflections, without which that work would have wanted all its strength, so I intend also in this part to follow the same rule; and accordingly I shall at first establish the truth of the Historical and Prophetical Books of the Old Testament: for if one ought to prove that these Prophecies were well known and very famous, then it will be expected from me that I should solidly demonstrate the truth of those Books in which those Oracles are recorded, before I can of right conclude that the facts which are related by other authors are the accomplishment of these Prophecies.

This design would naturally engage me to prove the truth of every one of these Books, in order, particularly: but as I have not only proved the truth of the Books of Moses already, but that moreover I intend, in my Reflections on the Books of the New Testament, to demonstrate the truth
truth of them beyond all contest; and besides, that the Historical and
Prophetical Books of the Old Testament are so essentially linked with
those of Moses, and the Disciples of Jesus Christ, that it is impossible to
acknowledge the truth of the one, without owning at the same time the
truth of the others; I believe I may be dispensed with, as to the proving
the truth of every Book of the Old Testament in particular; and there-
fore, because I intend to be very short, I will confine myself to some
general Reflexions upon those Books of the Old Testament which were
writ since Moses, but such as, I hope, will be sufficient to satisfy an
equitable and intelligent Reader,
That there is, in the Historical Writings of the Old Testament, an uninterrupted Series of Events, which have a natural and necessary Dependance for more than Ten Ages.

The first general proof which I make use of to establish the truth of the Historical Books of the Old Testament after Moses, may be lawfully drawn from the uninterrupted series of events which are related by those authors who have written the History of the State and Church of Israel.

We may observe several considerable epochas of this history, which takes in about one thousand and forty years.
The first part takes in all that happened after Moses till the establishment of the kingdom, which is related in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and the first book of Samuel.

The second contains the history of the kings of Judah and Israel, till the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem.

The third contains an account of what passed during the Jewish captivity, and after their re-establishment.

Now, there is not one of these books which concern the history of this people, in one or other of these epochs, which has not certain characters of the truth of its relations, by the necessary connexion which it has, either with those events which went before it, or with those which followed it, and this by a natural and immediate dependance. This ought to be confirmed by some observations.

The book of Joshua, which contains the conquest and division of the land of Canaan, is the execution of Moses's design, who brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, to go and make themselves masters of a country which the Jews pretend that God promised to Abraham. The division of this land amongst the tribes, is the title which each tribe had to its possessions in it; and this division subsisted a great while very distinct, and well-known by the several tribes of this people. There happened no considerable change, but only when the kings of Assyria carried the ten tribes into captivity, after the taking of Samaria, in the three thousand two hundred and eighty-third year of the world; the country continuing in the same state, under the two remaining tribes, without any change ensuing upon their transportation into Babylon, as I have observed in the nineteenth chapter of my Reflexions upon Exodus, and the following books.

This book has a very natural influence upon the following books, as is manifest from the history of the alliance which the Gibeonites got from the Jews by surprize. It serves for a foundation to all that happened for four hundred and thirty years after, in David's reign, under whom the commonwealth, being already changed into a monarchical government, had in all appearance undergone a great alteration.

The book of Judges has an essential relation to the books of Moses and Joshua, the most part of the captivities of the people of Israel being a consequence of their quarrels with the nations which they had subdued, or with their neighbours, as the Moabites and Ammonites descended from Lot, who were jealous of this people that was descended from Abraham.

There we may see, for instance, the Israelites upon the defensive part, because God forbad them to set upon the Moabites and the Ammonites; whereas these last pretended that Israel had usurped some part of their country.

It must be granted, that there is nothing so remarkable as the actions of these judges, whom God raised up to deliver his people from these different captivities through which they paused for three hundred and fifty-six years together. But we may find the memory of some of them preferred by those public hymns which were famous throughout the nation, and by those illustrious monuments of their judicial authority which were preferred amongst them, and which kept up a remembrance of them amongst the Israelites and the neighbouring nations.
For this ought to be observed with care, that since the Jews could not invent any thing upon this head, which would not be well known by all the neighbouring nations, as the Tyrians, who kept up their own government till Alexander's time, who subdued them entirely, and the Moabites, whose empire continued for fourteen ages after Lot's time, until the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, it was not easy for any fabulous relations in this matter to obtain authority.

The book of Ruth seems not to have any thing considerable, but the conversion of Ruth, a Moabitish, who relied upon the hopes of the house of Judah, out of which she had married her husband. But we may take notice of three things besides: 1. Of the exact practice of that law which obliged them to marry the widow of a relation who died without issue; 2. Of their lively remembrance of the deeds of their ancestors, as of Judah's unceasing with Thamar, which was looked upon however as a fountain and a pattern of blessings; 3. Of the lineage of David, whom this author represents as deriving his pedigree from a Moabitish, which not making much for the honour of a king of Israel, does at the same time confirm the truth of the relations which are contained in that book.

The first book of Samuel contains the history of Eli's and Samuel's judicatures, of the change of the government from a commonwealth to a monarchy under Saul, of David's anointing, Saul's rejection and death.

The second contains the history of David, his victories, his design of building a temple, a design which God left to Solomon to execute, his wars with the Ammonites, his crime with Bathsheba, his son Abijalom's insurrection against him, and his great successes against his enemies. There is nothing in these two books, which has not an exact connexion with what went before, and what follows. One sees throughout, an exact relation to the law of Moses; one sees throughout, monuments set up in several places, to preserve the memory of particular actions; one sees also, in the wars of the Israelites with their neighbours, a constant series of those old differences which were the fruits of the jealousy of those nations against the children of Israel.

The books of the Kings, which the Jews reckoned but as one book, contain an abridgement of Solomon's establishment in the place of David, of the glory of his empire, which was carried by David to the banks of Euphrates, according to the ancient prophecies; of his marriage with the king of Egypt's daughter; of the building of the temple, and his own palace, with the help of Hiram, king of Tyre: one sees the manner of the queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon, of his alliances with the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Zidonians, and the Hittites; thinking by these marriages to have put an end to the old quarrels between his people and those nations, who were jealous of the people of Israel. All this was done in the forty years of Solomon's reign; and as there never was so famous a reign in Judea, so never was there any, of which there are left so many monuments, as well there, as in the neighbouring countries.

One sees afterwards, in the same book, the division of Solomon's empire into two governments, that of Judah, which continued from Solomon's
mon's death, during the reign of eighteen successors, for three hundred eighty-six years, to the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar: and that of Israel formed by Jeroboam, which lasted two hundred fifty-four years, under the reign of nineteen successors, until the taking of Samaria, the capital city of the kingdom of Israel.

The history of the Chronicles, which was written about twenty-six years after that of the Kings, carries the history down to Cyrus, the founder of the empire of Persia, who gave the Jews their liberty again. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah contain the history of what passed under his successors, to the time of Artaxerxes, for almost eighty-two years.

It was in this interval that the deliverance happened which the Jews received under Esther, wife to one of the most powerful kings of Persia, the memory of which the Jews celebrate every year in all places, the thirteenth and fourteenth days of the month Adar, (which answers to our February) by virtue of Esther's law.

After these general remarks, with which I shall content myself at present, I ought to make some reflexions, which cannot be omitted without taking away a great deal of force from those proofs which establish the truth of this matter.

The first is, that as these histories have a necessary relation to the laws of Moses, so they could not have been neglected by a people who, in their religious and civil conduct, were absolutely regulated by those very laws.

The second is, that all the actions related in this history, have passed altogether in the bosom of a people, the extent of whose country is not twenty leagues in breadth, nor eighty in length.

The third is, that this people having observed the law of the seventh year, and of the first year, or year of jubilee, (which law you have in the twenty-fifth of Leviticus) from their first conquest and division of the country, forty-seven years after their coming out of Egypt, this observation has served for a double cycle, to fix the remembrance of those actions, and to make it pass from one generation to another. And so the greatness of that promise which God made to Hezekiah, (Ezai. xxxvii. 30. and II. Kings xix. 29.) may easily be understood; that although Sennacherib's invasion would, in all probability, lay waste all Judea, yet they might eat the fruits of the earth in quietness, the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, and the next year they should eat the fruits that would grow up of themselves without tillage, and that on the sixteenth year they should have liberty to till the ground, as formerly; which shews, without any force upon the words, that the fifteenth year of Hezekiah's reign was the sabbatical year, in which the Jews were forbidden to cultivate the ground.

The fourth is, that it appears in effect, by the series of this whole story, that things were written so as to agree with the public records which were extant amongst the people: this is manifest, if we consider how often the sacred penmen refer us to the histories and annals of those kings of whom they speak, and of whom they only quote the principal stories, in short, in pursuing their design, which was entirely to bring an account
account of the state of the religion and the government of the Jews and Israelites, under one view.

Let us go on to other proofs to establish this truth.

CHAP. II.

That there is a strict Connexion between the Sacred History, and the oldest Monuments which we have of Profane History.

As there were but few very ancient writers of Profane History, and as we have but small fragments of them dispersed here and there, preserved for the most part by the care of Josephus the Jewish historian, and of Eusebius in his books De Preparatione Evangelica, so we ought not to be surprized, if but few of the more illustrious passages and events of the Jewish history be taken notice of by Pagan writers. The people of Israel being otherwise engaged, by the observation of the Mosaic law, to keep close to that country where it was established; this made their neighbours have less knowledge of their history.

However, there is enough left to shew with how great fidelity and exactness the sacred writers penned the history of their own nation: in short, we may find amongst the Heathen historians and poets (who were their first historians), several relations which shew that the matters of fact related by the sacred writers, were well enough known to them, and in the same manner that they are related in those historical books which were written after Moses.

The memory of Joshua and his conquests was famous amongst the Heathens: there are ancient monuments extant which prove that the Carthaginians were a colony of the Tyrians, who escaped from Joshua; as also that the inhabitants of Leptis in Africa came originally from the Zidonians, who forsook their country, because of the miseries which afflicted it.

The fable of the Phænician Hercules arose from the history of Joshua (f); the overthrow of the giants, and the famous Typhon, owe their original to the overthrow of Og the king of Bashan, and of the Anakims, who were called giants (g).

The tempest of hail spoken of in the eleventh of Joshua, was transformed by the poets into a tempest of stones, with which, as they say, Jupiter overwhelmed the enemies of Hercules in Arim, which is exactly the country where Joshua fought with the children of Anak.

One finds the memorial of the actions of Gideon preserved by Sanchoniatho, a Tyrian writer, who lived soon after him, and whose antiquity is attested by Porphyry.

(\textit{f}) \textit{Procop. Vandalicorum, lib. ii. c. io.}
(\textit{g}) \textit{Polybius, Frag. cxiv. Sallust, de Bello Jugurthino.}

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One finds, in the manner of Jephtha's sacrificing his daughter after his victory over the Ammonites, the original of the sacrificing of Iphigenia; it being usual with the Heathens, as Elian judiciously observes (b), to attribute to their later heroes the glory of the actions of those who lived long before.

We have an account of a feast which was observed by the Heathen Romans in April, the time of the Jewish harvest, in which they let loose foxes with torches fastened to their tails, which certainly came from the story of Sampson, and was brought into Italy by the Phœnicians (l).

One finds, in the same history of Sampson and Delilah, the original of the story of Nisus and his daughter, who cut off those fatal hairs upon which the victory depended (k).

Nicolaus Damascenus has preferred the account of the victory which David obtained over the Syrians of Zoba, upon the banks of the Euphrates, as it is described by the sacred writers (l).

There are monuments extant which describe the part which Hiram king of Tyre had in the building of the temple of Solomon, almost the same with the account which the sacred authors give us of his part in the erection of that great work.

One finds in Herodotus an account of the taking of Jerusalem by Sesostris, king of Egypt, as it is described in the history of Rehoboam (m).

One finds the history of the kings of Syria related by Nicolaus Damascenus in the same manner as it is described by the sacred writers, when they give us an account of the victories which the kings of Syria obtained over the kings of Samaria.

One finds that the story of Phaethon is solely founded upon the translation of Elijah in a chariot of fire (n).

All that I have taken notice of, happened before the time of the first Olympiad, from whence the learned Varro has observed that the first knowledge of history began amongst the Greeks; whence also it is that they call all the precedent time fabulous, the Greeks having before nothing but fables, into which they had turned whatever ancient history they were acquainted with.

Since that time, we do not find fewer marks of the truth of the sacred histories.

One sees in the Pagan writers the reign of Tiglab-Pilesfer, who is the same with the younger Ninus; as also the destruction of the Syrian monarchy by his means, as it is described to us in the sacred historians. Nicolaus Damascenus in Josephus, Antiq. lib. vii. cap. 6.

One sees amongst the Heathens, the succession of Shalmaneser as it is described in the Scriptures (o).

One sees the manner of Senkacherib's conquering the most part of the towns

(b) Variae Histor. lib. v. cap. 3.
(i) Ovid. Fastorum lib. iv.
(n) II. Kings ii.
(o) Caeser in Euseb.
towns of *Palestina*, of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, described in Heathen writers, particularly as we have it in the Scriptures (p).

The manner of *Sennacherib's* succession to *Shalmanezer*, of his desolating the country of *Palestine* while he carried on his victories, is described by the Heathens, *Herodot. lib. ii.* & *Berosus in Josephus, lib. x.* c. 1. exactly as the sacred historians relate it.

The memory of *Tirhakah* king of *Ethiopia*, as of a great conqueror, is preferred amongst the Heathens (q); for it was his coming, in short, which obliged *Sennacherib* to arise from before *Libna*, whence he intended to go and besiege *Jerusalem.*

One finds amongst the Heathens the remembrance of the manner of the destruction of all *Sennacherib's* army, for his blasphemies against God, which the *Egyptians* disguised, to appropriate to themselves. *Herodot. lib. ii.* cap. 141.

One finds the ruin of *Aphrod* by king *Psammetichus* described by Heathen authors, as we have it in the sacred Scriptures. *Herod. lib. ii.* (r).

One finds an account of the ways by which the *Medes* loft the empire of *Asia* under *Cyaxares*, after his conquests over the *Assyrians*, in the Heathen writers, much the same as it is described in *Nabum* ii. 5.

The account of the taking of *Ninive* by *Nabopolassar*, and by *Assyges*, is much the same in Heathen authors (s) with the description of it in *Nabum*, *Esaiah*, and *Ezekiel*.

The manner of *Josiah's* undertaking a war against *Pharaoh-Necho*, king of *Egypt*, when he was overthrown in the plains of *Megiddo*, as it is described by the Heathens (t), agrees with the relation which is given of it in the holy Scriptures.

The victories of *Nebuchadnezzar* over the *Egyptians* and the *Jews*, the carrying away of the consecrated vessels of the temple, and of the *Jews to Babylon* (u), are described by the Heathens.

The manner of the yielding up of *Tyre* to *Nebuchadnezzar*, as they describe it (x), agrees with what *Ezekiel* says, chap. xxviii. 18. 19.

One finds in Heathen authors an account of the stately buildings of *Babylon* by *Nebuchadnezzar* (y), which is described exactly in the Scriptures.

One finds also in them (z), that the death of *Pharaoh-Hoptha* or *Vaphres*, as they call him, happened according to *Jeremiah's* predictions, chap. xl. 30.

One finds also the taking of *Babylon*, by *Cyrus* (a), as it is described by the Prophet *Jeremi*ḥ, chap. li. 46.

One finds also that the death of *Belshazzar* (b) happened exactly as *Daniel* described it, chap. v.

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(p) *Menander* apud *Joseph. lib. ix.* cap. ult.
(q) *Strabo*, lib. i. & xv.
(t) *Herodot. lib. ii.* (u) II. *Kings* xxiii. 29, 30.
(y) *Beros. Abyden.*
(z) *Herodot. lib. ii.* cap. 163. & 169.
(a) *Herodot. lib. i.* cap. 178.
(b) *Xenophon. Hist. lib. vii.*
One sees there an account of Xerxes's great undertaking against Greece (c), as Daniel had foretold it, chap. xi.

Here then is an agreement which is perfect enough in several articles, to which we might add a greater number, if we had a greater number of Pagan historians: but as we cannot find, after the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, histories amongst the Jews of equal authority with those which were written by and after Moses, as Josephus the Jewish historian observes, so we cannot compare the Jewish and Pagan histories together afterwards, in that form we have done hitherto.

But it is easy to observe four things, which are very considerable, upon this head.

I. That the credit of the sacred historians may be grounded upon the great number of remarks we have made already, or else nothing will ever establish it. For how can we conceive that all sorts of historians, of all nations and all ages, Babylonians, Assyrians, Tyrians, Egyptians, and Greeks, could agree so exactly with the Jews, in those facts they relate, if the Jewish authors had not exactly followed the rules of truth?

II. That as the prophecies of Zechariah and Daniel describe, with an almost incredible exactness, the considerable events which happened in the countries near to Judea, and in Judea itself, in a time which was not expired until the sacred writers had given over writing amongst the Jews, so there was need of almost nothing else, but to look over the books of Daniel, to see what happened from day to day. And here we may observe, that the reason why Porphyry thought the book of Daniel was forged after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, was, because this book seemed to him to be rather a history than a prediction; which he justified, in making a sort of commentary upon this prophecy, by comparing with it the Pagan historians which were then extant.

III. That as the Jewish commonwealth came under the power of the Greeks, who were masters of learning, and of the art of writing histories, so there is little need of any other witnesses beside the Greek authors, as Josephus demonstrates, in effect, by proving that the Greeks were well enough acquainted with the affairs of the Jewish nation.

IV. That we do really find, after the time of Artaxerxes, a very great part of the Jewish history composed by the care of some particular men, with sufficient exactness, though it be not of equal authority with the sacred writers.

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**CHAP. III.**

*That there is an uninterrupted Series of Events foretold by the sacred Oracles, of which we may see a very great Number accomplished in every Age.*

As we may very reasonably say, that all the history of the people of Israel has a very exact dependance upon the writings of that famous legislator; so we may also observe, that there are scarce any considerable

(c) *Herod.*, lib. vii. cap. 5, 6.
siderable events which make up the body of this history, which do not
deserve a particular remark, either as a fulfilling of Moses's prophecies,
or of those other Prophets whom God raised up after him to reform the
events of that nation. And it is a very considerable thing, that in all the
series of events foretold by the Prophets, there was not one generation
amongst all the offspring of the people, but what saw the accomplish-
ment of several of those oracles. A little attention and care in com-
paring the chronology of the oracles with that of the events, will suffi-
ciently justify what I say. I shall content myself with observing their
different orders, which will satisfy a judicious reader, since my design
does not engage me necessarily to do a thing which would carry me too
far, and which may be done with little application.

We may consider four sorts of oracles: 1. those which have respect
to particular facts nigh at hand; 2. those which have respect to par-
ticular facts, but at a greater distance; 3. those which have respect to
facts which belong to the whole Jewish nation; 4. those which have
respect to facts which belong to foreign nations, either bordering upon
Palestine, or further from it. Now there is nothing so exactly fulfilled,
as those four sorts of oracles.

You have, for particular facts, which were nigh at hand, and fore-
told by the Prophets, the oracle of Moses concerning the advancement
of Joshua, and the conquest of Palestine, which happened soon after.
You have Deborah's oracle of the victory promised to Barak.
You have Samuel's oracle of the advancement and rejection of Saul.
You have an oracle of the same Samuel, of the advancement of
David.
You have Nathan's oracle concerning Absalom's revolt.
You have Abijah's oracle concerning the advancement of Jeroboam,
and the division of Solomon's kingdom into ten tribes, and into two tribes,
whereof the lesser part was to continue in the possession of Solomon's
heirs.
You have Abijah's prediction of the death of Jeroboam's son.
You have a prediction of the advancement of Jehu in the place of
Jehoram king of Israel.
You have Elijah's prediction of the exemplary punishment of Ahab
and Jezebel.
You have the prediction of Jeboiam's death made by Jeremiah,
chap. xxii. 18, 19. and chap. xxxvi. 30. which happened ten years
after.
You have the prediction of Jeconiah's miseries made by Jeremiah,
chap. xxii. 3.
You have Jeremiah's prediction of the death of the false Prophet
Ananiah, but seven months before it happened.
You have an express designation of Zorobabel to conclude the re-
building of the temple, made by Zechariah, chap. iv. 9. and which was
completed in four years.

It is therefore fully evident, that the prediction of particular facts,
which were to happen in a very short time, served to establish the au-
thority of the Prophets. And in effect one sees that they proceeded
upon
upon the authority which those predictions of nearer events gave them, to foretell other particular events at a greater distance.

So you see that Moses foretold after a sort, after Jacob, the manner how the land of Canaan was to be divided, though the thing was to be done by lot.

You see the same Moses foretelling the several captivities which the people of Israel suffered after the conquest, and the method of God's raising up several judges, to the number of fourteen, to bring them out of those calamities.

You see the same Moses foretelling that the temple should be built in the tribe of Benjamin, though it was the least.

You have Joshua's prediction of the way how the rebuilder of Jericho should be exemplarily punished; which was accomplished in Ahab's time, (1. Kings xvi. 34.) about 570 years after this prophetical impreca tion of Joshua.

You have the prediction of a Prophet, who was contemporary to Jeroboam, about the birth of Josiah, which was not till 350 years after, (1. Kings xiii.) and of the manner of his destroying the altar which Jeroboam built.

One sees a prediction of the overthrow of the kingdom of Samaria, within 65 years, by Isaiah, in the reign of Jotham.

One sees the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, foretold by several of the Prophets.

One sees the taking of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, foretold by Isaiah, chap. xxiii. 15, 17.

One sees the promise of its re-establishment, seventy years after its destruction.

One sees the promise of Cyrus's birth made by Isaiah, chap. xiv. 45, as of one that should restore liberty to the Jews, and give them opportunities of rebuilding their temple at Jerusalem.

One sees the prediction of the manner how Antiochus Epiphanes would treat the Jews in his life time, and how he should be punished for his cruelties and sacrileges.

One sees the prediction of the courage of the Maccabees, who should oppose the tyranny of that prince, and purify anew the Divine worship.

So that it is plain, that the foretelling of these particular facts, which were at so great a distance, revived the memory of these Prophets amongst the Jews in every age, and made them read them with a singular attention.

One ought also to make the same reflexion upon those oracles which have respect to the particular events of the state of the Jews, and its continuance until the time of the Messiah, after which the Prophets foretold its ruin and destruction without remedy.

In short, one may say, that there was no revolution, never so little considerable, of which we do not find very many and very particular predictions foretold by several Prophets, upon very different occasions, and particular circumstances.

One sees in the books of Moses exact descriptions of the pilgrimages of Abraham's posterity, of their continuance in Egypt, of the oppression they were there to undergo, of their prodigious increase, of their robbing...
Reflexions upon the

One Ch.

for which was accomplished in the Ishmaelites and Edomites, and at last in the Israelites.

One sees express predictions of the several judges whom God should raise up to the people of Israel.

One sees an express prediction of the advancement of the tribe of Judah to the kingdom.

One sees a prediction of the future subjection of the Edomites to the power of the kings of Judah, and of their conquering of the countries which lie along the banks of Euphrates, which was fulfilled in David's time.

One sees an express division of that kingdom into two very unequal parts.

One sees great numbers of predictions concerning the state of the kings of Judah and Israel: for instance, you have an oracle concerning the destruction of Jebu's family in the fourth generation (d).

The destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes is expressly foretold, and the term is very exactly let down.

The ruin of Jerusalem, and of his kings, is also expressly foretold.

The time of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and their re-establishment by Cyrus after seventy years, are also very distinctly foretold.

The defolation of Judea under the empire of Alexander's successors, is foretold very exactly.

Their re-establishment after these defolations, and the way by which they were to be defended by the Maccabees, who should become their kings, is likewise foretold.

In short, one sees express predictions of the ruin of Jerusalem, and of the whole nation under the Roman empire, after the coming of the Messiah.

As the people of Israel had always great quarrels with the neighbouring nations, so one finds that amongst the oracles which particularly regard the state of the Jews, the Prophets have interwoven a great number which concern those strange people, with relation to those differences which were kept up between the people of Israel and them.

So one sees the Egyptians and the Canaanites punished, in the execution of the oracles pronounced against the descendents of Cham.

One sees the prediction of the ruin of Benhadad, king of Syria, and of his house, foretold to the tenth generation.

One sees the prediction of the ruin of Egypt and Tyre, which happened under Nebuchadnezzar.

One sees the prediction of the ruin of the Moabites, which was under the same Nebuchadnezzar, after that kingdom had subsisted almost fourteen ages from its first foundation.

One sees frequent oracles concerning the ruin of Nineveh, and its empire.

One sees oracles concerning the ruin of Babylon, which happened under Cyrus.

(\*\*) II. Kings x. 30.
Booth of the Old Testament.

One sees oracles of the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander.

One sees oracles concerning the manner of this prince's conquering the greatest part of the world, and of his leaving his empire divided into four kingdoms.

One sees frequent oracles concerning the state of the empire of the Seleucides, and the Ptolemeees, who had particular quarrels with the Jewish commonwealth.

One sees the alliances which were to be between the two kingdoms foretold, and the small success which should arise thence in terminating their differences.

One sees predictions of the treatment which the Jews should meet with in those kingdoms.

One sees a prediction of the retreat which Egypt was to give to the Jews, and of the temple they were to build there.

One sees an exact prediction of the manner of the profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, for three years together.

One sees the prediction of the ruin of these two governments by the arms of the Roman empire.

It is very natural to make some reflexions upon such a various multitude of oracles.

I. That there are no books in the world which are formed like those which we find in the hands of the Jews.

One finds there a history exactly pursued, and in a natural dependance, from the beginning of the world, for 3500 years.

One finds there a series of oracles which foretell all sorts of events, so inseparably united with the history, that it is impossible to find by what means the prophecies could have been so brought to support the history, and the history to support the authority of the prophecies.

One finds oracles so clear, and so particular, especially in the book of Daniel, that Porphyry, a mortal enemy to the Christians, was forced to affirm, that the book of Daniel was forged after Antiochus Epiphanes's time: a ridiculous imagination! for this prophecy was translated into Greek more than one hundred years before, and was in the hands, not only of the Jews, but of the Egyptians also, mortal enemies to the whole Jewish nation.

This also is very surprising, that since the Jews, after their dispersion, preserve these histories, wherever they are, as the accomplishments of the oracles, and these oracles as predictions of those events of which their history is very full, they should never think of proposing to us any books of a like nature, considering that now, for one and twenty ages, they have had no parallel authors, who have both writ history, and pronounced oracles.

II. But, as these reflexions lead us on to others, so we ought to enter upon them, by considering what the most unreasonable obstinacy can oppose to the authority of the Historical and Prophetical Books of Scripture.
C H A P. IV.

That how common soever Oracles may have been amongst the Pagans, yet nothing amongst them can justly be compared with those which are found amongst the Jews.

ONE of the greatest objections which can in all probability be made against this surprising series of Oracles, which are found in the books of the Old Testament, is taken from that great number of Oracles which are found amongst the Pagans. This objection deserves to be considered, because it will more clearly demonstrate the authority of the Prophetical books which are in the hands of the Jews.

I confess there have been false prophets: and indeed, since God has given us marks to distinguish them from true ones, which may be seen in the books of Moses, it cannot be denied but there have been some false prophets; and that, moreover, the history of the Prophets discovering to us impostors frequently, we may freely acknowledge, that amongst the Pagans, and the people bordering upon Judea, there have been men who have boasted of predictions of things to come, as well as amongst the Jews.

I confess also, that some Heathen writers speak of certain oracles, which in all appearance are very well circumstanced, and of which they relate a very exact accomplishment.

But several things ought to be observed upon this argument, which deserve an attentive consideration.

I. We see that their most celebrated things have been only an imitation of what was done amongst the Jews. The Egyptians imitated the Urim and the Thummim of the Jewish high priest; and they appropriated to him the right of giving oracles: and so we see they are given by a voice from heaven, which the Jews saw was granted to their Prophets. We may see it in the history of Socrates's life, and in Apuleius, p. 339.

II. We see that the same Pagan historians take notice that very many, even the greatest part of their oracles, were very ambiguous and false. The philosophers, and Tully particularly, openly laughed at them (Lib. I. II. de Divinatione). They thought it a ridiculous thing, that Apollo Delphicus, the god of poetry, should give his answers in very bad verse, and at last be reduced to prose. Eusebius quotes a discourse of Oenomaus, a Greek philosopher, who wrote against oracles, to decry them as impostures.

III. We see that those oracles which had acquired the greatest reputation by their accomplishment, were borrowed from the Prophets of the synagogues. We have an illustrious example in the birth of Cyrus, which the Prophet Isaiah had foretold, about the year of the world 3292, and concerning which they pretend to shew prophecies of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, about the year 3492 (e); which shews, that if the thing was

(e) Abydenus. Herodot. lib. i. cap. 55. & 91.
was really known to them, they could not have known it but by the prophetical writings which were amongst the Jews, and which could not have been concealed from them, because the Jews read them with care, to comfort themselves under that captivity to which they were reduced by Nebuchadnezzar.

IV. It is in effect proved by examining their oracles, most of which were either false or forged. This Eusebius has clearly proved, [de Præpar. Evangel. lib. ix. cap. 5.] The proof of the Sibyl's or Delphic priestess's favouring of Philip, is commonly known. It was easy for these Heathen princes to bias their people with such predictions. But what Eusebius says (f), puts the thing beyond all question; for he expressly shews, that when the priests were put to the rack, they confessed the whole contrivance of those oracles, which they pronounced to abuse the credulity of the people.

We ought to observe, that we cannot find great numbers of oracles upon the same subject; whereas one sees that the Prophets followed (as it were) Moses's model of the state of the commonwealth of the Jews, and that they frequently concur in foretelling the same facts from one generation to another.

VI. We ought to remember that these oracles were not kept within the limits of one single state or nation.

VII. It may be said that they were not publicly known, having been only proposed in private places, before a very few, and, in short, that they were not actually known to the most part of the neighbouring people; whereas one sees that the Jewish Prophets gave their oracles in the most solemn assemblies; and when they were committed to writing, they were known to all those who had any commerce with that nation. So that Isaiah's prophecies were questioned known to Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, who looked upon himself as designed by God to restore their liberty to the Jews. We may make the same judgment of the book of Daniel, which was known to Alexander without all question, as one may collect from the favourable reception the Jews found from him.

VIII. We ought to observe, that these pretended oracles were given, for the most part, in favour of those princes who could satisfy the greediness of the priests. Whereas the Prophets among the Jews lived in the most disinterested manner in the world, and usually pronounced nothing but reproaches and menaces of cruel calamities to those princes who had the government in their hands. Their ministry consisted in a courageous opposition to the corruptions in their laws and their religion, and in cenfuring their princes and governors with a singular intrepidity; and, indeed, we see that most of them met with the punishment of their boldness, and made trial of the most cruel tortures.

IX. Last of all, we ought to take notice, that as the oracles which are mentioned in Heathen authors, were only of facts of small importance to those people amongst whom it is said that they were pronounced, so we do not find that they thought themselves much concerned in their preservation; whereas one sees that the Jewish nation were so perfused of the truth of those oracles with which they were entrusted, that nothing to this very day could ever oblige them to discontinue the reading.

(f) De Præparat. Evangel. Lib. iv. initio.
ing of them, whatever disputes they may otherwise have with the Chris-
tians, who make use of them to establish their pretensions, notwith-
standing all the claims of the synagogue.

When this is laid down, it would seem as if I might reasonably con-
clude, that the wonderful variety of oracles which are to be found
amongst the Jews, cannot be at all weakened by those oracles of which
we find so frequent mention in Pagan writers.

But we ought to go further, in explaining two things, which will per-
fectly clear this matter; one is, that the Historical and Prophetic Books
of the Old Testament after Moses, can be no forgeries; the other is,
that in truth, those Oracles which we find inserted in those books,
could not possibly have been forged after their completion.

CHAP. V.

That the Books in which we may find these Oracles, were never forged.

I have observed formerly, that it is absolutely necessary that the
authority of those Books in which those Oracles are inserted, be
established, before we can build upon the authority of the Oracles.
And, indeed, if we cannot clearly shew that these Books were written,
and publicly known, before the things happened which are said to be
accomplishments of those preceding Oracles, it would be natural to
call in question the authority of these Oracles. But it is very easy to
satisfy an equitable reader herein, and to establish in general, or
severally, the existence of these prophetical writings, before the times in
which those facts happened, which we propose as the accomplishment of
those prophecies.

I shall make use of two sorts of reflexions to establish my proposition.
The first consists in general considerations upon the books themselves:
the second has respect to particular facts, which are uncontested, and
whence the same truth very naturally results.

I. We ought to observe, that whereas, in Genesis, Moses makes use of
no other epocha to fix the time of any event, but the years of the life of
some famous Patriarch: as, for instance, he fixes the flood to the 600
year of Noah's age: in Exodus and Numbers (g) he uses the time of their
coming out of Egypt for his epocha; in the books of the following
authors, the years from their departure out of Egypt were carefully set
down till the fourth year of king Solomon's reign, which was 480 years
after their departure. This was a character to fix the time of all those
who lived after that epocha.

II. The building of the temple began a new epocha amongst the Jews,
as appears from 11. Chron. viii. 1, though they began after that time to
reckon by the years of the kings of Judah and Israel, as appears by the

(g) Exod. xix. Numb. xxxiii. 38.
III. It is plain that the Babylonish captivity, and afterwards their subjection to the Persian empire, obliged them to fix their events, and to date their prophecies, by the years of the governments of those foreign kings. [See Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariab, and Haggai.] So the author of the book of Maccabees refers to the years of the Seleucides. Now, that we may the better perceive the force of this observation, we must remember three things. 1. That the authors who lived after the carrying away of the Jews into Babylon, make use of some Chaldee terms, which are not to be found in the foregoing prophets; for we may see in the books of Haggai, Zechariab, and Malachi, the same style with Ezra, Nebemiah, and Daniel (b). 2. The authors of these books give names to the months, which they had not before the captivity. The Jews only called their months, first, and second, &c. and so they gave names which were unheard of before (i). 3. The authors of these prophecies take particular notice of any newly-instituted facts; thus we see that the Prophet Haggai mentioned those facts of which we have nothing in the law, but which were instituted during the captivity.

We must blind ourselves of purpose, to conceive that any impostor could forge books which have so exact a relation, and such certain characteristics, to fix them to the time in which every author lived, and to the circumstances wherein he wrote. We must of necessity grant, that, before such an impostor could bring about such a design, he must have made himself master of the whole profane history, to fix so exactly the history of the Jewish nation, and of those oracles which have been given in circumstances which are unintelligible without the help of profane histories of different nations.

I come now to facts which cannot be contested. It is sufficient that those facts be acknowledged as true, to establish in general the truth of those books whereof we teach.

I. It cannot be denied, that the Jews preserve these oracles to this day with great fidelity.

II. It cannot be denied, that they are in the hands of Christians, who preferve them, as well as the Jews, since they have been separated from them; that is, for almost seventeen ages.

III. It cannot be denied, that these prophecies have been exactly read by the Jews, because of those oracles upon which they believe, to this day, that the whole happiness of their nation is founded.

IV. It cannot be denied, that the Jews have read these books exactly, to refute the Disciples of Jesus Christ, who have pretended, from the first age of their appearing, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah marked out by these oracles. In short, whereas the Christians pretend to prove by the accomplishment of the ancient oracles, that Jesus Christ was the Messiah; it is known that the Jews endeavour to this day to wrest the sense of these oracles, and to shew that there are many things which are not literally

(b) Ezech. x. 1. Daniel x. Zach. i. Hagg. i.
(i) Talm. Rofcb. Laffanab. c. i.
rally accomplished, and which by consequnce cannot be applied to Jesu Christ.

V. It cannot be denied, that most of the controversies of the Jews with the Christians, only regard the application of the text of the prophetical authors. The Christians explain them in a mystical fense; the Jews maintain that they ought to be explained literally.

VI. It cannot be denied that, about 300 years before the birth of our Saviour, the prophetical boks were translated, and put into the hands of the Egyptians, having been carried to, and translated at Alexandria, by a public order of the whole nation, for the satisfaction of a king of Egypt. The history of that version which put those sacred books into the hands of the Greeks, and the Jews who dwelt in Egypt, is the most famous thing in the world, and which made those books perfectly known.

Here we have now these books in Hebrew, and in Greek; that is to say, in the primitive language of the Jews, and the vulgar language of the empire which Alexander founded.

It is known, that from that time the Christians took care to make great numbers of translations into all the vulgar tongues, after the preaching of the gospel; and that they preserved those ancient books as the first elements of their religion.

Now it will be sufficient to acknowledge those truths, to consider, That those oracles were true which foretold things which happened almost four ages after their prediction. Thus, for instance, the destruction of Jerusalem, the overthrow of the Jewish state, the calling of the Gentiles to the service of the God of Israel, the destruction of the Syrian and Egyptian monarchies, are all contained in the books of Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Now there is not more difficulty to conceive that such authors as Isaiah, Amos, Joel, should have foretold the same thing eight or nine hundred years before, than there is to believe that they were foretold by those who lived but little above four ages before they actually came to pass. There is therefore no difficulty in conceiving that these ancient oracles were proposed as we see them, and in those times to which we find them fixed.

But we ought to go further into this matter, and to establishe the same thing by the consideration of the things themselves.

I confe that we might have a fufpicion of those oracles which are not related upon the faith of a public volume; as, for instance, those of Elijah, Elisha, and Uriah the son of Shemaiah, who seem never to have publishe any thing.

But here we are to observe, 1. That usually the authors who publish the oracles, are not the fame with those who tell us of their accomplifhment; 2. That the oracles of which we now speak were upon subjects perfectly known, and upon very illuftrious exigencies. What more illuftrious than the defftruction of Ahab’s family, foretold by Elijah? What more extraordinary than the manner of Jezebel’s death, foretold by the fame prophet?

In short, we ought to take notice, 1. That these oracles were written for the moft part in complete volumes: we have sixteen prophets sufficiently distinguished by their proper volumes.
II. Each of these authors has a very different character from the rest; so that some, as Daniel, for instance, write in a peculiar language, one part of his book being in Chaldee.

III. Every one has some relation to the rest; so those who lived together often treat of the same things: so Isaiah, for instance, Joel, Amos, Hosea. But they had separate ideas, and particular oracles, and a turn which perfectly distinguishes them one from another.

IV. One needs only read their works, to find that they wrote in different places. Amos was of Judah, and went to prophesy in Israel; that appears plainly. Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied in Chaldea; that is seen by reading their works.

V. There is a natural dependance between the books of Moses and those of the prophets in general; for the prophets were continually reproaching the kings and people with the crimes which they committed against the law of God propounded by Moses.

VI. There is a natural dependance between the writings of the former and of the latter prophets. So Jeremiah is quoted by Daniel (k), as foretelling the time when the desolations of Jerusalem were to have an end: this he prophesies, not as if he had learnt it by a revelation, but as a thing which he had found out by an attentive examination of the prophecy of Jeremiah.

VII. There is an exact connexion of these oracles with the history of the time, which is often interwoven with the prophecies. One sees it in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel; the other historical books not being altogether so particular as these prophetic books are.

VIII. In short, one sees that these books are interwoven with oracles concerning ancient events, and people which have now no existence; so that hinders us from suspecting any forgery.

I shall not repeat here the common arguments which establish the credit of these books; I brought in most of them, when I established the authority of the books of Moses. I shall only make some reflections here, to establish the same truth.

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CHAP. VI.

That the Manner of writing the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, shews that those Oracles could not have been forged after their Completion.

I have several things to take notice of, to make this truth more sensible. The first is taken from the necessary connexion of all the parts of the history of the Old Testament, the truth of which I have proved by several characters. This history is exactly written by several authors: now the history of the prophets, and of their oracles, is

(k) Dan. ix. 2.
so exactly framed into the history, that it is impossible to take it out, without confounding the whole.

The books of Samuel, which were written by Samuel, by Nathan, and by Gad, as appears by I. Chron. xxxix. 29. contain the history from the year of the world 2888 to the year 2987.

The books of the Kings contain the history of the kings, and of the prophets, from the year 2989 to the year 3442.

The books of the Chronicles recapitulate the history, from the beginning of the world to the year 3468.

Ezra writ his history from the year 3468 to the year 3538.

Nebemiah continued it from the year 3550 to the year 3563.

Here is therefore, on the one side, an uninterrupted series of history; and on the other side, a continued succession of prophecies.

David, who began to reign in the year 2950, with several other prophets of that time, writ the most part of the Psalms, which are full of oracles, and which were sung by the people, as a part of the divine service.

Isiah began his prophecy in 3246, and died in the year 3306. Hosea, Micah, and Nahum, were contemporary with him.

Jeremiah began his prophecy in the year 3375, and lived at the same time with Nebemiah.

Daniel was carried into Babylon in 3401, and prophesied until 3470. Ezekiel prophesied at Babylon in 3509.

Haggai and Zechaniah prophesied in 3590, soon after Ezra, in the time of Nebemiah.

Malachi seems to have lived until the year 3589.

Can we therefore in the least imagine that a history should be so intermixed with prophecies and oracles, without conceiving at the same time the truth of both by an invincible necessity?

But we may make a second reflexion hereupon.

There are three general characters which distinguish prophets very sensibly from the generality of authors.

I. They were public censors: let us but read the history of Isiah's conduct, who called all the heads of the people, rulers of Sodom; or that of Jeremiah, chap. xxxvi, or of any other of the prophets in general.

II. They were comforters of the people, when they had brought them to repentance by their preaching. There are as many instances of this, as there are prophets.

III. They foretold remarkable occurrences, happy or unfortunate, long before there was any probability that they should happen.

It is impossible to consider these characters, without seeing that the state of affairs was that which gave a foundation for their sermons: so that one must of necessity have framed their history of new, to give ground for a forgery. This change in the style of the prophets, follows the circumstances of the Jewish state exactly. All that Isiah or Jeremiah say, will hold no longer than whilst you suppose the state of the Jews to be as corrupt as the history of that time represents it. But if you suppose it to be as the history does distinctly explain it, nothing can be imagined more forcible than their sermons; for as they joined oracles with
with promises in their thundering sermons, so one sees that they cannot be parted.

One may make another reflexion upon this matter, by shewing that these oracles and these books were so famous amongst the Jews, that no forery can be supposed.

The times in which they were writ, are a great proof, for they appeared upon very remarkable occasions.

One may rank the prophets into four orders, according to the several times in which they appeared: David, and the prophets of his time; those who lived before the Babylonish captivity; as Jonah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah.

Those who prophesied during the captivity; Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Those who lived after their return from Babylon; Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Now we have an equal assurance of all these prophets, that they were famous.

Who can deny the oracles of David to have been famous, when they were preferred amongst their public hymns?

One sees that Micah's prediction sav'd Jeremiah, whom they would have condemned for prophesying the ruin of the temple under Jeboai-kim, when Micah had prophesied the same thing under Hezekiah, that is to say, about one hundred and twenty years before this prediction of Jeremiah: here is an event which assures us without affectation, that this prophecy was very well known. Were not therefore the other prophecies, which were in the hands of the Jews, very well known by the whole nation?

The other prophets lived in very remarkable times: Isaiah under Jotham, Ahaz, and Manasseh, impious princes; the last of which put him to a cruel death, for the freedom of his cenfures and predictions.

There was, in the time of every prophet, a great number of circumstances which may be enlarged upon, and which will further prove that their works must of necessity have been very public, and very famous amongst the Jews.

We must not here neglect what does more particularly regard the persons of the prophets.

I. Some of them were priests, that is to say, public ministers of their religion. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were of that number: this may be observed in reading of their works, and in observing the nature of their revelations, which were for the most part accommodated by God to those ideas about which the prophets were most employed.

II. Some were very illustrious by their birth: thus David, for instance, was king of Israel, Isaiah was a prince of the blood, and Daniel was one of the princes of Judah; which may be easily found out by considering the majesty of their style, and greatness of their expressions.

III. Some were very contemptible by their employment, and by their birth: so Amos, for instance, and those other prophets whose father is barely
barely named, without joining to it any honourable title, if the Jews observation has any strength.

Now, it is well known, that though the gift of prophecy made him who had it sufficiently famous, yet the character of the person often made the prophecy famous. Sometimes indeed the meannesse of the person, as in Amos, made the work to be more regarded, every body taking occasion, from the ancient profession of the prophet, to consider the prophecies which he published with more attention.

One ought to observe with care, that those prophets whose writings are preserved, as well as those who did not write, were continually struck at by faltie prophets, who oppofed them with great heat. Since then we have no prophecies preferved but of thofe whose predictions were accomplished, the event justifying the truth of their predictions, with regard to particular facts near the time which they had foretold to eftablish their authority; whereas the predictions of others, wanting this character, were negle&ed, and at last absolutely loft; it appears plainly, that those which remain were things of the greatest reputation among the Jews.

Befides, I may add, that one needs only read their books, to fee that they not only foretold obscure things, or what particularly concerned their state, but also things of a more splendid nature, the overthrow of kingdoms, of cities, the defeftion of whole nations, the defeftion of their own city, with its re-eftablifhment; matters which would render their books very illuftrious, and which would cause them to be read, not only by the Jews, but alfo by the neighbour nations, the Ammonite, Moabites, Affyrians, Persians, Egyptians, &c.

Is not this therefore a very particular thing, and that which made the prophets very illuftrious, that the great luftre of the prophets continued but for a certain time? There have been none since the year 3553. Their glory appeared in the history of eight ages; but it does not extend itself any farther. Now why, I pray, should there be no impoftors after Malachi, as well as there were impoftors before him?

One may imagine, perhaps, that the prophecies were immediately difperfed, fome being uttered in one place, and fome in another: fome in the kingdom of Judah, and others in the kingdom of Israel; fome in Babylon, others in Egypt; which might give opportunities for impoftors. But,

I. This objection may be strongly retorted back: for how can we conceive, that in the division which separated the Israelites from the Jews, thofe of Judah would charge themselves with the writings published in a kingdom fo much an enemy to them, without examination, when every thing which comes from thence ought to appear suspected?

II. They were all collected into particular volumes. But the prophecies of Hosea, Jaffah, and Jeremy, and the moft considerable of the refl, are preferved in books which contain many other things.

III. They are all exactly joined with the history of the fame nation, each one in a place where there was an equal concern to prefervp and to gather them together. But befides, they were all collected into one body. In short, the seventy-two Interpreters translated them into Greek in
in the year of the world 3727, and so submitted them to the examination of the Egyptians; and this also keeps us from doubting of their truth.

This translation was made but one hundred thirty and eight years after Malachi, the last of the prophets.

But what judgment soever may be made of these reflexions, the design whereof is only to establish the reputation of these prophecies, and of the books wherein they are written, that so no room may be left for any suspicions of forgery; I shall add two considerations to what I have said already, which ought to appear convincing to every attentive man.

I. One can suspect none but the Jews as forgers of these oracles. Now, not to say any thing of the absurdity of supposing that a whole nation should have subscribed to such an imposture, all the Jews throughout the world were, after their return from the captivity, strongly persuaded with an opinion of the Messiah's being a great temporal king: and they have the same belief to this very hour, in all places of the world, wherever they are dispersed.

This being once laid down, I affirm it to be impossible that the Jews should forge oracles which affect expressly, that the Messiah should be put to death in so very odious a manner: for, as I shall afterwards shew, the oldest doctors attributed to the Messiah all those oracles which speak of the death of the Messiah according to the Christians, and which they themselves in process of time were forced to interpret of two Messiahs, one exposed to a world of miseries, and the other only glorious: or at least, I may say it is impossible that the Jews should content to a forgery which thwarted their common ideas and pretensions in so very sensible a manner.

II. The second consideration establishes the same truth with no less firmness, which is, that the Call of the Gentiles to have a share in the blessings of the covenant which God made with the people of Israel, was the thing in the world from which the Jews had the greatest aversion: they looked upon the blessings which the Messiah was to communicate, as advantages entirely reserved for those of their own nation. How then can we conceive that the Jews should forge so many oracles which should thwart their prejudices so sensibly? or how can we imagine that a whole people would authorise with their approbation an imposture so contrary, and so very opposite to their own opinions?

But it is no hard thing to imagine, that when the Jews were once persuaded of the authority of their prophets, either by their miracles, or by the ready accomplishment of every oracle which they had publicly pronounced, they should receive their books with a profound submission, and reverence them with the utmost care. But it appears to be an incomprehensible thing, for a people to receive impostures contrary to their prejudices, and impostures reiterated so often, without any ground, but what a vast number of records never before heard of would produce.

But I suppose these reflections will suffice to establish the truth of the historical and prophetical books of the Old Testament: so that there will be no need of alleging particular proofs, which might demonstrate...
the truth of each book in particular, which would carry me out to too
great a length.

I shall now consider the oracles themselves, and I shall shew the pro-
gress of the light of this revelation, with respect to the promise of the
Messiah. That this progress may be the better observed, I shall do
three things, as I have formerly observed, without which the mind of a
wife reader will not receive satisfaction.

I. I shall explain in a few words the reason why these oracles are
interwoven with several histories or prophecies which seem to have no
relation to the promise of the Messiah.

II. I shall give such rules as will serve to justify the application which
both Jews and Christians have equally made of several oracles only to
the Messiah.

III. I shall set the oracles according to the order of time, which will
manifest the advancement and progress of that light which is to be found
in the revelation itself: as, indeed, it is natural to conceive that God
should explain himself more clearly in this matter, in proportion as the
things themselves were nearer to their completion.

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C H A P. VII.

For what Reason the Oracles which relate to the Messiah, were interwoven
with other Things which seem to be very widely distant.

One of the greatest difficulties which may be raised against the
oracles of the Old Testament which concern the Messiah, is that
surprising mixture which one sees of those oracles, and of other subjects
which seem to be widely distant from any idea of the Messiah.

There are none so profane as to deny, that if in the same author, and
in the same chapter, any man should read in one continued series predic-
tions which should explain the miraculous birth of the Messiah, his fa-
ily, his preaching, his miracles, his sufferings, his resurrection, his
ascension into Heaven, the sending of the Holy Ghost, the calling of the
Gentiles, but that the history of the gospel would sufficiently justify
Jesus Christ to be the promised Messiah.

But they take it to be a very strange thing, that the apostles should
apply several passages in ancient authors to the history of Jesus Christ,
though the whole contexture of their books do not seem to oblige us to
make any such interpretations.

They therefore suppose that the apostles made several fortunate allu-
sions to the more remarkable passages in those ancient authors, which
may pass for predictions of those events which afterwards happened; just
as Nonnus wrote the history of the gospel in Homer's verses, and as Eu-
doxia
daxia made a Canto out of Virgil's poem, which contained the same history, though neither Homer nor Virgil had any of the mysteries of the Christian religion then in view.

That this apparent difficulty may be solved, it will be necessary to examine three things: I. The matter of fact itself. II. The reasons which gave occasion for the doing of it. III. The impression which this fact has produced in the minds of men, to this very time.

For the first: Though it is well known that common use does not allow men to join foreign ideas in the same discourse, yet we may easily conceive that God might and ought to do it, if we will allow what may be easily collected, that he resolved to send the Messiah into the world: such a practice was the more natural, because the ancient Patriarchs before Moses, and Moses himself, who formed the commonwealth of the Jews, had prepared the minds of the people to such sort of expressions as were raised above the present subject.

And certainly, if one takes but the pains to consider the wisdom and beauty of the authors who writ these prophetical books on the one side, and the character of the writers of the New Testament on the other, he would perceive, that if these words, That it might be fulfilled, were of necessity to be changed into these, As one may perceive a sort of completion of such or such passages in the Old Testament, yet, notwithstanding that, the most part of these quotations would evince an exact accomplishment, and the oracles which they allledge would bear a just proportion to those events which are related by the evangelists in our Saviour's life.

Can any thing be more singular than the prophecy in the seventh of Isaiah, of the Messiah's being born of a virgin; of the piercing of his hands and feet, Psal. xxii. of the mixture of gall which was offered him to drink, hinted at, Psal. m lx. 22. of his being fold for thirty pieces of silver, Zechar. xi. 3. or than several others of a like nature, which at present I shall not stand to reckon up?

It must be confess'd, however, that these oracles are interwoven for the most part with matters relating to events happening in the time when each prophet lived, or which seem to be applicable personally to the prophets.

Three orders or reasons may be conceived, which will justify the wisdom of God in the ordering of these oracles in a way which seems so contrary to the common practice of the world.

The first order contains reasons drawn from the person of the Messiah himself, of whom we speak.

The second order contains those which arise from the consideration of the people amongst whom the Messiah was to be born.

The third contains those reasons which respect other nations amongst whom the Messiah was to be preached. I shall examine these three sorts by themselves; and I hope that we may gather from thence, that the eternal wisdom presided over this mixture of these oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other ideas which seem to be wholly foreign to the subject.

In short, it may be urged, that the belief of a Messiah formed of so apparent contradictions, cannot easily be received of the sudden: a
Messiah of the seed of David, whom David calls his Lord; a Messiah who complains that he is forsaken by God, whom however he ought to adore; a Messiah born with the weakneces of youth, who at the same time is called a mighty God, and the father of eternity, &c.

However, these ideas which seem to opoosite ought of necessity to have been fo separated by the prophets, left they should have been looked upon as chimerical descriptions, and incompatible in one and the same subject.

A second reflexion which may be made upon this matter, is, That the Jews were bound not only to preserve their oracles, but also to execute them in part: thus, for instance, there was a necessity for them to reject the Messiah, to deliver him up to the Gentiles to be crucified; there was a necessity that their punishment should be as signal as their crime, and that they should be dispersed over the world, after the destruction of Jerusalem, as the prophets have clearly shewn. Now how could all this have ever been effected, if the description of the Messiah by the prophets had been as historical as that of the apostles, or the evangelists, who gave us only a narrative of matters of fact?

In a word, was it not the intereft of the Gentiles, to whom the gospel was to be preached, that these oracles should be scattered up and down the writings of these ancient authors? They were to be called, upon the rejection of the Jews: the Jews were bound to preserve the books of the Old Testament, after they were cast off by God, that the authority of these books and these oracles might be beyond all contest, as testimonies with which we are furnished by the adverfe party, which ought to have place, until the fulnefs of the Gentiles should preferve Christianity. Let any one therefore judge if it was not neceffary, in this state of affairs, that there should be some obfcurity in the prophetical defcriptions; and by consequence, that this interweaving of foreign ideas with thofe which concerned the Messiah, as also this dispersion of the oracles through different places of the facred writers, was not neceffary; and fo much the more, as they were uttered upon feveral occasions by different authors.

And we may affirm it, as a certainty, that, according to the purpose of God, this obfcurity did not hinder either Jews or Pagans from perceiving thofe ruling ideas of a Messiah, when they read the Old Testament. Neither was the dispersion of these oracles through fo many different places any greater hindrance to their application; since the Jews laid it down as a constant maxim, that the accomplishment of every thing which we find to be foretold as great and illustrious by the prophets, ought to be looked for in the perfon of the Messiah, when the events of a nearer date did not answer to the greatness or magnificence of the predictions.

Several ages had paffed, from the time in which the prophet had foretold that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem; and yet we see that the idea of it continued very fresh among the Jews in our Saviour Jesus Christ's time, as is plain from the answer which they gave to Herod.

There are severall other examples might be given, which shew that the Jews in our Saviour's time applied the very fame oracles to the Messiah which
CHAP. VIII.

General Rules for the Understanding of ancient Oracles, and for the Application of them to the Messiah.

I. As it appears very natural to conceive that the most ancient revelations ought to be expressed in the most general terms, because they were first from the time of their accomplishment, and so one ought to find in them a more perfect delineation of the design of God; yet it is visible, however, that they ought to contribute very much to the understanding of those later Oracles, because, if these later ones do really contain a more particular explication of his design in sending the Messiah into the world, yet they ought always to follow those ideas which God at first made use of to make his design known in the world.

II. It is natural to grant, that when God had told the Jews, by Jacob and Balaam, that the coming of the Messiah was not suddenly to happen, if he intended to bring them to a certain knowledge of the Messiah after a long revolution of years, by those ceremonial and judicial laws which he established, that he ought to breed them up in an expectation of the Messiah, by lively ideas, and by oracles which should particularly explain the manner and circumstances of his appearance.

III. It is no less natural to acknowledge, that when God promised some illustrious person, or some great advantage to the Jewish nation, he did it only to entertain the people with an expectation of the Messiah, and, upon that account, that he might and ought to join the promise of the Messiah with it, as the principal object which the Jews ought always to have in view, until it should actually happen.

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In short, there are two sorts of oracles in the Old Testament: the first are such as it is impossible to apply to any other besides the Messiah; as, for instance, the place of his birth; the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head; the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken (1). Whereupon he that added the relation of Moses's death, takes notice that after that there arose up no Prophet in Israel like unto Moses.

The second are such as seem to agree in part to somebody else besides the Messiah, though we may find there also such particular characters, that it is impossible to apply them perfectly, and in their utmost extent, according to the whole force of their expression, to any other subject besides the Messiah. And so Balaam seems to have spoken of David, Numb. xxiii as Julian the apostate maintains, and of his victories over the Moabites, in the same place where he promises the Messiah, and where he speaks of the manner of his subduing the children of Seth; and so David, in the second Psalm, speaks of the oppositions which he met with, in his advancement to the throne, but in terms too great and too emphatical to be applied to him alone.

Those principles which I have now established, that God promised the Messiah in general terms, but without any intention of sending him into the world until several ages had been passed, gave rise to these two sorts of oracles. On the one side, there was a necessity of explaining this promise distinctly from time to time; and, on the other side, there was a necessity of accommodating himself to the desires of the Jews, by joining these ideas with every thing that was great and considerable in those events, and in those persons to whom the prophetic spirit intended to add a lustre by its predictions.

The Jews are agreed at present, as they were also in our Saviour's time, in the application of the most part of those oracles in the Old Testament, which the Christians apply to the Messiah; and if they dispute some of them, which they explain in a sense perfectly forced, yet they cannot dispute these following truths.

I. That the most part of those oracles which we apply to the Messiah, were applied in the same manner by the Jewish Doctors in our Saviour's time: as the CX. Psalm, for instance, which has relation to the nature and glory of the Messiah; the II. Psalm, which has respect to the conspiracy of the princes and the people against the Messiah; that place in Micah which fixes the birth of the Messiah to Bethlehem, &c.

II. That, as they thought themselves obliged to make two Messiahs, because of the apparent contradictions which are to be found in those various events which are applied to the Messiah in those predictions; some perfectly glorious, and others every way contemptible; so there is no injustice done, in expounding those oracles which at first seem only to have relation to one single person, of the Messiah, and of some other person.

III. That since they themselves believe, that their ancestors might lawfully pass from one sense to another in their explications of those oracles, so that they were permitted to apply an oracle to some other subject, which did not seem to agree exactly enough to that subject which

(1) Gen. iii. 15. Deut. xviii. 15. Deut. xxxiv. 10.
their ancestors had first in view, as the particular subject concerning which the oracle treated; so it is not only just, but necessary too, to pass from one subject to another, as the Apollos have actually done.

IV. That we ought to pay a much greater deference to the opinion of the ancient Jews, than of those who have been power'd by their miseries and disputes to such a degree, that they have lost that principle of equity which keeps men from denying the most evident truths, and which have been the most universally acknowledged by a whole nation, that was not prepossession with so great a degree of obfinacy.

But we ought to observe, besides, that this seeming confusion of those oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other subjects treated of by the Prophets, arose from several causes.

1. From the Prophets often joining the ideas of the principal promise, the sending of the Messiah, with the promise of those means which were absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of that promise, as the preservation of the Jews, for instance. So the captivity of the Israelites in Egypt, and their departure from thence, with their settling in the land of Canaan, which he had promised them before, were foretold, as necessary means, in the order of Providence, to the execution of the great design of God.

For so the Babylonish captivity, and their deliverance therefrom, which are both foretold, are foretold as steps towards the execution of the promise of sending the Messiah.

And so likewise, when they foretold the persecutions by Antiochus, and the other neighbouring nations, they also foretell the deliverance which God would grant to the Jews, and their re-establishment until the birth of the Messiah, which was the accomplishment of that great promise.

II. This seeming confusion arose from the writing of these books piece by piece, which afterwards were put in this order, without having always a regard to the time in which they were written, and without taking notice of all the occasions which engaged the Prophets to write. And thus we see the prophecies which relate to the Messiah joined to several other transactions, and to several other predictions, whose connexion is not always so very evident.

III. It arises from the writing of the prophecies each by themselves, so that all those of the same Prophet were put together as they came out, making only a new chapter in the work; whereas they ought to be considered rather with relation to the matter, than to the order in which they lie in the book, as we have it at the present: for the Prophets often borrow their light from what they themselves had said some time before, or from what some other Prophet had foretold, which ought to be observed particularly of those who lived about the same time.

But besides those rules which I proposed in the beginning of this chapter, and besides those observations of the joining the oracles which relate to the Messiah with other subjects, I must add two rules more, which may be useful in determining the tenor of great numbers of oracles which are expressed in figurative terms. The first is, that it is natural to conceive, that when the Prophets were to speak of the Messiah, and when they were intent upon the description of his kingdom, they should make...
use of expressions which seemed to foretell a sort of overturning of nature, which should happen at that time: but then these expressions ought to be understood in a figurative sense, in the same spiritual sense in which the Christians understood them, as the famous Maimonides allows in that passage of Isaiah where the wolf and the lamb are said to feed together.

Secondly, since the Messiah is described as one who should unite, in his own person, the glory of the Divinity and the meannesses of the human nature together, we ought to understand those oracles in such a manner, that what is great in those prophetical descriptions, should not contradict the more contemptible part, when we consider the Messiah as clothed with all the meannesses of the human nature. These ideas, which are often joined in one and the same oracles, ought to be exactly applied to the different consideration which the Prophets had of the Messiah, or to those various states through which they themselves assure us the Messiah was to pass.

An intelligent reader will easily judge, that I might have added a third rule to the two former; which is, that when a person who has all the characters of a Prophet, applies an old oracle to any subject, one cannot reasonably dispute his application. This the Christians assure us was done by the Apostles in a very great number of oracles. But because this supposes a prophetic character in the apostles before it has been establisht by solid proofs, I shall wave the proposall of it at present.

After these general remarks, I shall gather together those oracles in the Old Testament, which relate to the Messiah. I might here follow the order of the matters, by bringing under each article those oracles which relate to it, which would give a great light to the subject, as Eusebius has rightly observed, and as he has practised himself in his books de Demonstratione Evangelica. However, I rather chose to follow the order of time in which these oracles were uttered, which did not seem improper to explain those truths which are contained in those oracles.

In short, this is of great importance: I. Because it is very natural to consider the series of God's design, and the connexion which may be found in those ideas which are made use of to express it.

II. Because of the necessity of the increase of light in the Revelations, proportionally as the time drew near; so that it is of use to observe how the Divine wisdom followed this natural order in making the later oracles clearer than the former, and in hinting, by little and little, a greater number of circumstances, by which it was necessary to explain them.

III. Because this serves to give us a very strong proof that God intended to furnish us, from the Scriptures themselves, with that which should fix us in a belief of this capital truth in our religion. In short, when the truth of each of the books in the Old Testament is once approved, and their age set down, it appears that several Prophets did agree wonderfully, without any concert, in the explication of the same truths, at several times, and in several places and circumstances, which leader men, for the most part, from agreeing in the most common matters which are the subjects of their reflexions.

(m) Lib. de Regibus, cap. xii.
I have already considered that the wisdom of God followed rules very conformable to the condition and inclinations of the Patriarchs, when it spoke of the Messiah. We may see the same conduct in the following times.

So, since God had promised children to Adam in Abel's stead, one may see that he also promised David a son who should sit upon his throne. He explains almost all the circumstances of his coming, his humiliation, his exaltation, the oppositions he should meet with, the victories he should obtain, and his offices, prophetical, priestly, and royal.

One sees afterwards, that the Prophets explain, in a more particular manner, all these ideas which David had already proposed. Isaiah speaks of his birth by a virgin, of his spiritual gifts, of his miracles, of his sufferings, of his resurrection, of his calling of all nations in to his worship, and of his casting off the Jews.

Those who come after, point out the place particularly, and the town, where the Messiah was to be born; they describe his covenant, and the calling of the Gentiles to the service of the God of Israel.

In short, they describe both the character of the fore-runner of the Messiah, and the empire under which he was to appear, and the very year in which he was to die, as Daniel particularly doth.

I cannot undertake to relate all the oracles which are contained in the books of the Old Testament, they are so very numerous: but I hope at least, to mark the more principal, and the most illustrious ones, and to explain them in such a manner, that all shall be obliged to acknowledge, I. That God designd to give infallible proofs to his church, of his designd in sending the Messiah into the world, and to preserve the continual remembrance of him, as of a person who was promised to give all comfort to his church, and whose coming should bring salvation to all mankind; II. That the care which he took in specifying all the circumstances of his coming into the world, shews that he designd to prevent the scandal which the abject life and death of a Messiah might produce, and the false judgments which men might form of the works of a Divine wisdom, when they only judge of them by the outside; III. That he designd to give an infallible proof, that this sending of the Messiah was the work of his wisdom and fidelity, which at last accomplished a thing, the designd whereof had been proposed to mankind immediately after the fall.

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CHAP. IX.

Of those Oracles concerning the Messiah which are to be found in the Book of Genesis.

I BEGIN with those Oracles which are contained in the book of Genesis, since it is convenient to touch them all over again in few words.
The first oracle is comprised in these terms, Gen. iii. 15. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

This oracle has considerable advantages, though it is expressed in figurative terms. God uttered it in the beginning of the world, after he had given sentence against Adam, and the woman, and the serpent, in a very sensible manner, even under a human shape, if we may dare to affirm it. He uttered it before the head of all mankind, which ought to make it considerable to all his posterity. He exprest it by an allusion to the nature of the temptation, and to the form of the serpent, which the tempter had took upon him. He preserves thereby the memory of the temptation, by inspiring all mankind with an invincible hatred against all serpents in general, though the tempter had took the shape but of one particular kind, for an instrument to accomplish his design.

In short, this oracle clearly shews, I. That it should be particularly the seed of the woman; Adam not being touched at. II. That the seed of the woman, that is to say, the Messiah, should destroy the power of the serpent, expressed by the head, that is to say, the power of the Devil. III. That this seed should, however, receive a considerable wound from the Devil, though it should only touch his heel, the least considerable part of the Messiah. IV. That all the blessings which God should give to mankind after the fall, should be grounded upon the sending of this seed into the world: this is more clearly expressed by God's telling Abraham, That in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth should be blessed (n).

That this oracle, Gen. iii. has relation to the Messiah, is plain: I. Because it is the source and abridgment of the whole revelation; II. Because all the ancient Jews in effect understood it so; III. Because the Apostles, in following the ideas of the synagogue, plainly referred them to the Messiah, by the allusions which they make to them (o), John xii. Romans xvi. II. Cor. xi. I. John iii.

The second oracle which relates to the Messiah, is contained in these terms, when God spoke to Abraham; In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

This oracle is very illustrious: I. By the person of Abraham, whom God made the depotsitory of it, and who made himself ready to sacrifice his own son; II. By the frequent repetitions which God made to this Patriarch, using in effect all those ways which he afterwards followed in his revelations to the Patriarchs, for fifty years together, from the year 2083 to the year 2133 of the world: III. Because it was accompanied by the circumcision; so that, thought it foretold that the advantages should be in common to all nations, yet it limited the Messiah to be born of Abraham's seed.

It also intimates very clearly, I. That the blessings which it promises should be in common to all nations; II. That this blesings should be quite of another nature from temporal ones, as the increase, for instance, and the power of Abraham's posterity, which had been promised to him before. St. Paul's reflexions, Gal. iii. 8. That God spake of seed in the singular number, is very remarkable; and so much the more, because the Jews made a like observation upon a parallel place in the Old Testament.

(n) Gen. xxii. 18. (o) Targum in b. l.
As God repeated this promise when he spoke to *Isaiah* in the year 2202, and to *Jacob* in the year 2245, Gen. xxviii. 14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed, so one ought to repeat again the same reflexions. This ought only to be added, That God restrained the honour of bringing forth the Messiah to *Jacob*, the son of *Isaiah*; that the *Edomites* might not come in to challenge the right, as I have very particularly explained in my reflexions upon *Genesis*.

We come now to the oracle which *Jacob* gave in the year 2315. It is one of the clearest predictions in the whole Bible, and it is expressed in these terms: Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: be floated down, he conched as a lion, and as an old lion: who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. Gen. xlvi. 8.—12. I know very well, that some of the *Jews* have pretended that *Moses* ought to be understood for Shiloh; but this is so ridiculous an opinion, that there is not the least probability to maintain it. What sceptre had *Judah*, before *Moses* came? How was *Moses* the expectation of the *Gentiles*, and the object of their hope?

And, indeed, the body of the *Jewish* nation are agreed, that this oracle was meant of the Messiah; so Onkelos the Chaldee paraphrast, so the *Jewish* Targum, and Jonathan's, so R. Solomon Jarchi, Abenezra, and Kimchi, are agreed.

Now these reflexions may be naturally drawn from this oracle, which *Jacob* uttered upon his death-bed.

I. This oracle is found amongst a great number of oracles which concern the other tribes of the *Israelites*, and which were accomplished as to every tribe.

II. This oracle contains several particular events which relate to private transactions in the tribe of *Judah*.

III. This oracle was, as it were, *Jacob's* will in favour of *Judah*, at a time when he divided amongst his children their portions which they were to expect from him.

IV. This was a preference of *Judah*, who was but the fourth, to *Reuben* who was the eldest, and who, by consequence, ought to have been the head of his family. The sceptre, and the authority of legislator, was promised to *Judah*, which did not belong to him by the right of his birth.

*Jacob* therefore prepared his children to look for an accomplishment of those promises made to *Abraham* in *Judah*, as well for the kings who were to be descended from him, as for the nations of the earth who were to be blessed in *Abraham's* seed.

But we must go yet further. I shall therefore observe, I. That this prophecy particularly regarded the tribe of *Judah*, as all the preceding and
and following oracles concerned those tribes whose heads were then
named by Jacob.

II. That this prophecy concerns the tribe of Judah, as settled in the
land of Canaan, by a distinct establishment from the other tribes. In
short, it is certain that the tribe of Judah had some superiority. Thus
God, for instance, commanded that tribe to march the first, Numb. ii.
& x. Its heads offered their presents first, Numb. vii. 11, 12, 13. In
Joshua's time this tribe took its division, without drawing lots for it. One
sees that God ordered the tribe of Judah to lead the people out to the
conquest of the rest of the country; one sees the same prerogatives in
the book of Judges, though they were often of other tribes. From David's
time to the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the kings were all of
that tribe; and Zorobabel afterwards headed those who returned out of
Babylon. The book of the Chronicles names the tribe of Judah first; Herod
was the first king who was wholly a stranger.

III. That Jacob supposed that the tribe of Judah should be in possession
of a form of government, and of a community, till the coming of the
Messiah. This was all very proper; and indeed we see that this tribe
continued under its own governors, after the other tribes had been
transported, II. Kings xvii. 18. It almost swallowed up Benjamin and
Levi, who settled in their country; and indeed Josephus affirms us,
that there were but few of the ten tribes who came back again into Judea under Ezra, for the greatest part of them stayed beyond Euphrates; and we see that at last they gave their name to the whole
country.

IV. That this oracle was fulfilled by degrees. This I have observed
already of the pre-eminency of the tribe of Judah before David's time,
which was a step to the advancement of it to the throne; and the lessening
of their dignity, which was to be entirely taken away when the Messiah came, had also the same gradations. David was set upon the
throne over all Israel; but his house lost the government over ten tribes
in his grandson Rehoboam's time. His successors were tributary to the
neighbouring princes: whereas David carried his empire to the walls of
Babylon; though afterwards the Babylonians subdued the Jews, and deposed
the kings of Judah. At last, they absolutely lost all that authority which
they had hitherto kept. They recovered a little in the person of Zoro-
babel; and though they were soon after invaded by the Seleucidae, yet the
Maccabees preserved them a little, till Herod and the Romans took away
all those remnants which they had yet left.

In carrying these views of this oracle further, we may yet further ob-
serve, I. That God intended to oblige the Israelites to wait for the sceptre
in the tribe of Judah. It must be there, before it could depart thence.
It was natural to conceive, that the Jews were to look yet much further
than David. Tho' words, It shall not depart, denote a continuance of
the sceptre in the house of David for some considerable time.

II. It is easy to comprehend a lessening of the dignity in the term
lounger, [See Judges v. 14. ClassNotFoundException] which God seems to have made
use of, as a mark of the fall, which I have observed in the person of
Zorobabel, who, as to the time, was about the middle of the oracle.

III. In
III. In a word, it is easy to acknowledge that this oracle affirms the
ephra in gros for the time of the coming of the Messiah, viz. the ruin
of that authority and power which the Jews (properly so called from the
tribe of Judah) should enjoy after their re-establishment. God could
not explain himself more particularly, in stating the precise time when
this thing should happen.

There are two other very considerable oracles; one uttered by Balaam,
in the year 2553, before the king of the Moabites, who had sent for him
to curse the people of Israel that lay in the plains; the other uttered the
same year, by Moses, the famous legislator of the Jews. The first is inserted,
by Moses, in the xxivth chapter of Numbers; the other is in the xviiith
of Deuteronomy.

The first is in these words: I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold
him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall
rise out of Israel, and shall smite all the corners of Moab, and destroy all the
children of Seth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession
for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that
shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

One ought to observe, that Balaam's character, the presence of the
king and the elders of Moab, and all the circumstances in which it was
uttered, do advance its authority considerably.

But the turn of his expressions is equally singular and remarkable.
I. He speaks of the Messiah as of a star, hinting out to us the celestial
nature of the Messiah: whereas hitherto God had only described him
under the figure of a bare man: though the other was made sufficiently
intelligible, when the destruction of the empire of the tempter, and the
right of procuring a blessing unto all the nations of the earth, which he
was personally to enjoy, were attributed to him; things infinitely beyond
the power and condition of mankind to perform, were attributed to him.
II. He observes, that this person of whom he speaks such magnificent
things, ought however to be descended from Jacob; which ratifies Ja-
cob's prophecy in favour of Judah. III. Though he hints very clearly at
the effects of those blessings and temporal victories which Jacob's po-
tegrity was to obtain over their neighbours, yet at the same time he in-
finuates plainly enough, that the bestowing of the blessing which all the
nations of the world should obtain, was to be referred to Jacob's seed;
when he refused to retract those promises of blessing which God had made
to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to which oracles he made a sensible
allusion.

And it is very important to consider, that the Jews always applied this
oracle to the Messiah, as may be seen by their Chaldee paraphrase; and it
was acknowledged generally, that the famous Achiba, who lived under
the emperor Hadrian, pretended that Barchocheba was the Messiah,
because his name was Chochab, which is a star in Hebrew; as if God in-
tended to mark that impostor for the true Messiah, by foretelling what
name he should be called by.

The oracle which Moses uttered a little before his death, is very con-
siderable. The people being terrified with the manner of God's speaking
to them upon Mount Sinai, desired that God would no longer speak as
he had done before, but that Moses should give them an account of what-
ever God should command. Hereupon, God consents to their request, and promised them, by Moses, that he would raise them up a prophet like unto Moses, to whom they ought to hearken, upon pain of being cut off.

He that made the addition to the last book of Moses, wherein his death is described, takes notice that there never rose up afterwards a Prophet in Israel like to Moses. If it was Ezra who made that addition, then here is a plain and clear decision against the Jews, some of whom assert, that Joshua or Jeremiah was the prophet whom Moses promised: if it was Eleazar, who lived in Joshua's time, then here Joshua at least is excluded from this privilege of being designed by Moses.

But it is to no purpose to stop at such frivolous objections: one needs only observe Moses's character, to take notice of four certain marks of Moses's prophecies, which advance him infinitely above all the other Prophets. I. He had all the sorts of revelations which are generally found amongst all the Prophets. II. He was illustrious for great numbers of miracles. III. He not only reformed the errors and false ways of worship then prevailing amongst the Jews, but he set up a new worship, and a new form of religion. IV. He introduced this law, and this way of worshipping God, by such a conversation with God, as one sees amongst two intimate friends. In which of the Prophets may these four characters be found?

The Galileans themselves testified plainly that these characters ought only to be found in the person of the Messiah, when they saw the miracles of Jesus Christ; John vi. 14; and the Jews acknowledged the same in our Saviour's time, when they applied that oracle to the Messiah, John i. 45.

But if these oracles were obscurely hinted at in this oracle, one may see them clearly applied to the Messiah in the following oracles, proportionally as the revelation increased, and as God unravelled the ideas of these ancient oracles, by explaining them more particularly by those Prophets whom he afterwards raised up. This may clearly be seen, if we pass on to those oracles which were uttered by David, and the other Prophets who lived about his time.

CHAP. X.

Of the Oracles which concern the Messiah in the Book of Psalms:

These were the Oracles which were the subjects of the meditations of the faithful from the year of the world 2553, in which Moses died, until David's time, who was particularly chosen by God to be the only man of his family, which was also separated from all the other families of Judah, who came from Pharez, from whom the Messiah was to be descended.

I have
I have observed, in another place, that in all probability God raised David to the throne, only to make the genealogy of that family better known, from which the Messiah was to spring.

As this double advancement of David, one to the throne of Israel, the other to be the father to the Messiah, ought to have inspired him with lively remembrances of gratitude, and as his oracles would be much more famous, being uttered by a royal Prophet, and the rather because God employed him in the making a just regulation of the service of the sanctuary; so we see that David employed his pen in giving more distinct ideas of that Messiah which he promised them.

The name Messiah properly signifies a person consecrated by anointing to be King, Priest, or Prophet. This name was particularly applied by David, and the Prophets who lived after him, to that holy seed which God had promised to Abraham's family by Isaac, by Jacob, by Judah, and by David; and one may observe in David's Psalms, and in the Prophets of his time, that they gave the name of Messiah to the promised seed, under one or other of these three senses.

The characters both of a Prophet and a Priest, though each of them are august enough, yet yield to that of a King. These are the different ideas which David, and the Prophets of that time, followed in all the variety of their descriptions.

But it is not my design to give a particular account of all those oracles which describe these different characters, for fear of being excessively long: so I shall content myself with observing two things: I. That David alone uttered more oracles than all the Prophets who came before him; II. That these oracles of David, concerning the Messiah, are clearer than all the precedent ones.

Now, I say, that David alone uttered more oracles than any one Prophet who came before him; thus in the xliith Psalm he explains the decree by which the Messiah became the servant of God, and clothed himself with the form of a servant, to offer unto God a more perfect obediency than that which had formerly been offered by burnt-offerings and sacrifices. He describes the measure and the nature of his ministry, which was to confit in the instruction of the people in righteousness, truth, and the salvation of God. Psalm xli. 7.—11. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then, said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness, and thy truth, from the great congregation.

In the xvith Psalm he describes the inviolablesteadfastness of the Messiah to the service of God, who had sent him to form a great people; with the manner of his deliverance by God from all the powers of the world, by raising him up from the dead, and afterwards receiving him into glory. Psalm xvi. 8, &c. I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt
not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

In the xxiid Psalm he describes the agonies through which the Messiah was to pass, the manner of his death, the victory which he should obtain over his enemies, and the conversion of those very nations which had cast him off.

In the sixt Psalm he speaks of the oppressions of the Messiah, pronouncing great numbers of imprecations against that very person who should signalize himself by persecuting his innocence. Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise: for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. Verfe 1, 2. Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. Verfe 6, 7, 8.

Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come to him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Verfe 16, 17, 18.

In the lxixth Psalm he carries this argument further, in his description of the zeal of the Messiah for the house of God, and of those ills which he should meet with, and the manner of their giving him vinegar and gall to drink, with the hardening and rejection of those who had used him in that manner. Save me, O God, for the waters are come into my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Verfe 1, 2. Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Because for thy sake I have born reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children: for the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me. Verfe 6, 7, 8, 9. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their reins continually to shake. Pour out thy indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Verfe 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

In the xcviiith and xcviiith Psalms, he describes the destruction of idolatry when the promised Saviour should appear, and when God should raise him upon his throne. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Psalm xcviit. 1. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods. Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord: for thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods. Verfe 7, 8, 9. O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he bath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, have gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation:
nations: his righteousness hath been openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth towards the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praises.

Psalm xcvi. 1—4.

In the lxviiiith Psalm he explains the glory of the Messiah, and his accession into heaven, with the effusion of those gifts which he was to spread abroad for the conversion of the nations, that God might dwell amongst the most rebellious. Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the Lord. To him who rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Aseribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places, the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Verse 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

The Prophets who lived in the time of David, or soon after, pursued all his ideas. One sees that Nathan, II. Sam. vii. foretells Solomon's glory, and the honour which he should have in building that temple of which David had formed the design before, in such a manner, that he clearly shews three things which will by no means agree with Solomon. I. That God should raise up a son to David after his death, and place him upon his throne; whereas Solomon was born, and advanced to the throne by David himself. II. It was promised that this government should be endless: this is not applicable to the royal posterity of David, who had but twenty successors, who bore the title of kings. III. That God particularly promises to be the father of this promised son, which is not more applicable to Solomon than to David, to Josiah, or Hezekiah.

One sees that Corah's posterity gave that account of Solomon's glory upon his marriage with the king of Egypt's daughter; he speaks of a throne much more august than that prince's was, and he represents to us a God consecrated with oil of gladness above his fellows. This exactly sets forth the august character of the Messiah, and his anointing to be the king of all nations, their Prophet, and their Priest.

Psalm xlv. 1. My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Verse 7, 8 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows. Verse 10. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

One sees the same Prophets inviting all nations, in the lxviiiith Psalm, to acknowledge the kingdom of God; which Daniel afterwards describes as that which the Jews already knew was to be governed by the Messiah.

One sees Apob describing in the fiftieth Psalm the manner of the Messiah's assembling all people, and of his rejecting the ancient and legal service, and prescribing a spiritual one, even sacrifices of vows, and of praise. Verse 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify
testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor be-goat out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

One sees the author of the lxxxixth Psalm describing the glory and happiness of Solomon's kingdom in such a manner, that he carries his views as high as the Messiah at the same time; he foretels the continuance of his kingdom as long as the sun and moon endure; that all the kings of the world should bring presents to him, and that all the nations of the earth should worship him. Verse 5. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. Verse 8. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Verse 11. All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.

Verse 17, 18, 19. His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with all his glory; Amen and Amen.

One sees that Ethan the Ezr habite, who is represented to us as the wisest man in that age after Solomon, explains the promise made to David of a son who should reign for ever, and whose throne should be immovable, in the lxxvith Psalm. This agrees to none but the Messiah, whom he describes as the first-born of the princes of the earth, and as the son of God, in a manner which is not applicable to any of David's posterity, except only to the Messiah. Verse 19, 20. Then thou spakest in visions to the Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. Verse 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him; and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation. Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. Verse 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulnesses to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me: it shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.

One needs only read over the Psalms which I have now taken notice of, and which are almost all applied by the Jews to the Messiah, to see the great number of oracles which God gave in David's time, concerning this matter; not to speak of those which describe the calling of the Gentiles, which fill up the book of the Psalms almost entirely.

I come now to the proof of the second article, which is to shew, that the oracles which David uttered are much clearer, and much more particular, than those which were given before. This I hope to prove beyond all consideration, by considering two Psalms, the one whereof describes the prodigious humiliation of the Messiah, and the other describes his
Considerations upon the Sufferings of the Messiah, and upon his glorious Ascension into Heaven, foretold by David in the xxiiid and cxth Psalms.

It cannot be denied, when one reads the xxiiid Psalm, but that the person there spoken of is described figuratively, as one exposed to the severest sufferings, from which he is afterwards delivered by the Divine assistance, and advanced to rule an empire which extends itself over all the nations of the world, and afterwards universally adored.

I. He that speaks, cries out as if God had forfaken him, and had stopped his ears unto his cry.

II. He describes himself as a worm, and no man, as the reproach of men, and one despised by the people.

III. He takes notice, that those who were witnesses of his sufferings, made a mock at them, bidding him trust in God, that he might deliver him.

IV. He ranks his enemies amongst the bulls of Bashan, and raging lions, who (according to the prophetical way of speaking) are the chief men in the nation. Amos iv. 1. Ezek. xxii. 25.

V. He joins the dogs with them, that is, profane persons, or the Gentiles.

VI. He represents his hands and his feet as pierced with nails.

VII. He shews that he was stretched out before, in such a manner, that they might count all his bones: this expresses the idea of a man fastened to a cross, and exposed to the view of all the world; as he afterwards describes himself to be quite dried up, from the loss of blood, when he was crucified.

VIII. He takes notice of their parting his garments, and,

IX. Of their casting lots upon his vesture.

In short, one sees, throughout all the expressions of this Psalm, the image of a death which was equally shameful and cruel.

The other part of the Psalm gives us an account of the deliverance of that person who is mentioned in this holy hymn.

I. He obliges himself to praise the name of the Lord in the most numerous assembly.

II. He observes it as an effect of this deliverance, that all the ends of the world should remember, and turn unto the Lord, and that all the kindreds of the nations should worship before him.
III. At last, he takes notice that the kingdom of God should spread itself over all the nations of the world.

One may judge, by the history of David, whether this Psalm is applicable to him; therein we may see all the crosses which he underwent, particularly represented, during all the former years of his reign. But there we have no account that David ever suffered any thing like that which is so exactly described in this Psalm. And this may be said further, that when David took any occasion to paint out his sufferings to us, he has put in several strokes which only relate to the Messiah, and which shew us, in a very lively manner, that he was to pass through much greater trials than any of those from which David had been delivered.

The later Jews, who endeavour to verify this prophecy in Esther or Mordecai, agree with us at the bottom, that David carried his views further than barely in his own sufferings; and those also who apply it to the people of Israel, must acknowledge the same truth, even against their wills.

But the more ancient Jews were more equitable in their applications of the xxiiid Psalm to the Messiah. They applied it to him in earnest, even after the time of Jesus Christ, when the comparison of these characters of the Messiah, which may be found so exactly in the death of Jesus Christ, led them to an opposition of this truth.

And certainly there needs very little equity to acknowledge that this oracle, or rather this heap of oracles, belonged to the Messiah, by the confession and agreement of the Jews in our Saviour's time.

I. They had not then resolved to make their advantages of the writer's fault, who writ [רינכ] like a lion, instead of [רינכ] they have pierced my feet, as they have done since. In short, Aquila, who lived a hundred years after Jesus Christ, and the other Jewish interpreters, Symmachus and Theodotion, translated that passage as we now read it.

II. The notion which the Synagogue always had of the sufferings of the Messiah, obliged them to suppose two Messiahs, one suffering, and the other glorious, rather than to contradict that truth openly, which is expressed by these oracles in so particular a manner.

III. Nothing can be imagined to be more ridiculous, than to suppose that Jesus Christ should quote the first words of this Psalm upon the cross, thereby to engage all mankind to take notice of the accomplishment of this ancient oracle in all his sufferings, if we suppose that this Psalm, even by the confession of the Jews, had no relation to the Messiah.

The same reflection may be made concerning the apostles, who have quoted so many passages of this Psalm, to prove that Jesus Christ was the Messiah; because one may find in his death, and in the circumstances of it, such a literal and exact accomplishment of this ancient prophecy.

But if it should be objected, that, after all, this agreement of the Synagogue can make no more than a strong prejudice, this may be easily answered, by considering that when the Psalmist speaks of the extent of his kingdom over the whole earth, it was that circumstance which determined the Synagogue in their application of this whole Psalm to the Messiah; because, as the Jews themselves acknowledge, this extent of empire
empire is one of those characters which, according to the ancient oracles, is applicable to none but the Messiah. In short, (because it is of great importance, I shall repeat it here again) common sense led those who considered these ancient oracles, to compare them (as naturally they ought) with those that went before, and to determine the scope and intent of the later ones by the relation which they had to the precedent ones; and there was only need of one considerable clause, to make a certain determination after they had made such a comparison. This the Jews were certainly convinced of, when they acknowledged that the last words of David, II. Sam. xxiii. 1—8. were to be applied to the Messiah, by comparing them with Balaam's oracle of the Messiah, Numb. xxiv.

We may therefore take it for granted, that David did not absolutely speak of himself in the xxii Psalm, and that he carried his views as far as the Messiah; that he gave a great number of characters to his posterity, whereby they might distinguish, notwithstanding the greatness of his sufferings, and even the better by his very sufferings, than which no clearer marks can possibly be given; because there is nothing more involuntary than enduring of miseries, nor nothing which depends less upon the choice of the person who is to undergo them, than the particular kind of punishment, or than the circumstances which must accompany his death, when it is once left to the unjust power of violent enemies.

We come now to the cxth Psalm, which in a very few words contains several very important characters of the Messiah, which are very distinctly expressed.

If one considers it exactly, it seems to have been composed after that Nathan had acquainted David with the glory of his son, which God had promised him; such a son who should build a house wherein God should dwell for ever, and who should sit upon a throne which should never be overturned; whereas David had only formed a design of building a temple to the Lord.

In short, one sees that the spirit of prophecy had given him a view of the glory of this august king who should be born of his seed, and of the glory of his kingdom which should never be destroyed. David advances this king not only above all MEN, by calling him his Lord, who was himself a king; but also above the angels, by making him sit at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven. This is personal. He also describes the glory of his office, by considering him as a priest of a higher order than that of Aaron, from whom Melchisedech received tithes in the person of Abraham: and, in a word, he acquaints us with the progress of his kingdom, and the greatness of his victories. Let us examine all these characters of themselves.

I. He brings in God speaking to the Messiah, whom he calls his Lord: Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool. This point: out to us, 1. That the Messiah ought to be advanced to glory; 2. That God intended to subdue his enemies by little and little, whilst the Messiah should be in his glory, as it was foretold in the second Psalm.

II. He observes, That the empire of the Messiah was to begin at Jerusalem, or Sion, which was then to be under the power of his enemies.
III. He expressly points out the quick extent of the kingdom of the Messiah, with the character of those who should submit to him without constraint or violence, which was much practised under Moses's law.

IV. He positively asserts, that the Messiah should be established a Priest after the order of Melchisedech, which would overturn the whole Levitical priesthood, which then was to have an end; yet the very same king who designed the draught of the temple which Solomon built some time after, undermines the foundations of this material building, and clearly supposes that the Levitical ministry, which was fixed to Solomon's temple, should last no longer than until the coming of the Messiah.

V. He particularly takes notice, that the Messiah should, by the Divine assistance, destroy all that should oppose his power, and should bring all things under his dominion, as a conqueror who should overturn all things with the utmost violence.

Nothing can be greater than these several oracles; nothing can be more particular than his description of the glory to which the Messiah was to be advanced after that prodigious humiliation which is described in the xxii Psalm; but what can we suppose to be the reason of David's speaking of the Messiah in this Psalm? This I am further to consider.

One may say that the Jews did not confantly apply these prophecies to the Messiah, before the coming of Jesus Christ, without good grounds: they could not apply them to any of David's successors; none of David's successors was both king and priest. Uzziah was the only man who dared to usurp the priesthood; and he was punished by God himself. The Maccabees were not of David's tribe, but were Levites; and none of them ever went up into heaven, to sit at the right hand of God. Besides, their kingdom did not begin in Sion, and they never brought any other kings under their authority. They applied it therefore to the Messiah, pursuant to the maxim which they drew from a frequent meditation upon the ancient oracles, that we ought only to look for an accomplishment of those prophecies in the person of the Messiah, which they never could find to be fulfilled any where else; when, at the same time, they knew that the exactness and truth of those predictions could not be any ways contested.

In short, it plainly appears that they did unanimously apply it to the Messiah before Jesus Christ came into the world, from the manner of their confessing it to our Saviour, when he pressed them with the xcth Psalm; though they could not explain the manner how David should call the Messiah Lord, when they allowed him to be his son, Matth. xxii. 48.

One sees nothing so frequently urged by the Aposltes as this xcth Psalm; they use it upon all occasions, to prove that Jesus Christ had the characters of the true Messiah, such as David had given him in the xcth Psalm, supposing still, as a thing beyond dispute, that David spoke of the Messiah in this famous prophecy.

So that, what evasions forever the Jews may endeavour to make use of, yet they cannot deny but that their most famous Doctors, since Jesus Christ, have upon several occasions followed the old notions of the Synagogue in this matter. One finds in their writings great numbers of testimonies
testimonies which confirm this truth. I shall not mention them at present, because they are well enough known, and because I would make haste to come to that new degree of revelations which God gave to those Prophets who gave new characters of the Messiah to the Jewish nation for some ages after David's time.

They are in too great a number to be spoken of, one by one, and I am forced to range them under certain heads; though I intend at the same time to make more particular reflections upon some of those which give us an account of the most remarkable truths, and so by that means furnish us with the most sensible character whereby we may know more certainly the person whom God proposed to his people in such a manner as the Saviour of Israel, and whom he had before called the Expectation of the Gentiles.

CHAP. XII.

That the Messiah was to have a Forerunner, and what was to be his Character.

We shall make it manifest, in the sequel of the discourse, that the Messiah was to appear in a very despicable state, and consequently that his appearance would be very distasteful to those who expected him in the splendour of a great king and conqueror. To oppose this pre-conceived opinion of theirs, the Divine Wisdom thought fit to appoint one to be his forerunner, who should call the Jews to repentance, and a reformation of their lives, and form in them a true notion of the ministry of the Messiah, as of a person who was to prescribe to them laws of the greatest purity and holiness. And indeed, in examining the holy Scriptures, we find that the appearance of the Messiah was to be ushered in by a person thus distinguished: the following prophecies are very expressive of this purpose.

The first of these we find in the xith of Isaiah, verse 3, where the Prophet speaks thus, before the destruction of the first temple; the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God (a). The Jews acknowledge that this chapter speaks of the comfort the Messiah was to procure for his people, and that the voice mentioned here refers to those who were to declare and proclaim his coming (b).

We meet with a second prophecy in Malachi, who prophesied after the rebuilding of the temple, and who, having shut up the vision, precisely points at the time wherein he was to appear, viz. during the second temple, chap. iii, verse 1, 2, 3, and 4. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight

(a) Isai. xl. 3.  
(b) Abenezra.
delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand, when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

The Jews own that these words also of Malachi speak of the forerunner of the Messiah (c).

But we ought to observe in the foregoing passages, I. That they have a manifest relation to the time of the Messiah’s coming. Should the Jews deny this (as indeed they unanimously acknowledge it) it would be an easy matter to convince them, 1. By urging the authority of the Evangelists, who apply these very passages to the ministry of John the Baptist. Thus we find that St. Matthew and St. Mark make a manifest allusion to these two prophecies (d): Zachary also, the father of John the Baptist, applies that of Isaiah to his son; and his authority is the more considerable, because he was a priest. 2. By an attentive considering the passages themselves. 3. By the common consent of the Jewish church, who by a generally received and undoubted tradition, that Elijah the Tishbite (the Septuagint, in their translation of that place of Malachi, telling us as much) was to be the forerunner of the Messiah; and we find that, in the time of our Saviour, the multitude and his Disciples supposed the same thing: and the Jews at this day have the same persuasion, viz. that Elias is to come before the appearance of the Messiah; from which tradition of the Jews the Christians of old did, and many at this day do believe, that Elias shall resume the functions of his ministry before the last coming of Jesus Christ to judge the quick and the dead.

II. We may observe, that the character of the forerunner of the Messiah being that which the Jews had much in their eye, it was needful for it to be as notable and extraordinary as was that of the Prophet Elias, whose ministry was without dispute the most remarkable and illustrious of all the Prophets since Moses; which gave the the Prophet Malachi occasion to call him Elias, much upon a like account as the Prophet Ezekiel calls the Messiah David (e).

But above all things, we must carefully observe the several marks the Prophets give us of this forerunner.

The Prophet Isaiah gives us these following particulars: 1. That his ministry was to be very signal, and attended with general respect and veneration; 2. That he was to preach in the wilderness; 3. That he was to call sinners to repentance; 4. That he was to confound those who were most eminent in authority, and to comfort the poor and humble; 5. That he was immediately to precede the Messiah; 6. That his ministry was to usher in that grand revelation of the glory of God in the presence of all flesh, i.e. before all nations of the earth, who were to be called by the Messiah to his religion, according to the express declaration of the Prophets.

The Prophet Malachi doth most distinctly represent to us, 1. That the mission of this forerunner was not far off, Behold, faith he, I send my messenger. He speaks of it as of a thing at the door. Now it is evident,
evident, and the Jews themselves own it, that from the time of Malachi, there was never a prophet, till the appearance of John the Baptist.

2. It tells us that this Elias was to call sinners to repentance, and to prepare the way before the face of the Lord.

3. That he was immediately to precede the Messiah: this he expresses by saying, And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Angel of the covenant whom ye delight in. It is evident that he speaks here of the Messiah, whom he calls, not only the Angel or Messenger of the covenant, but also the Lord (f): the Lord, forasmuch as God had promised him as a king to the house of David; and the Angel of the covenant, because God by him was to make a new covenant with the nations of the earth, as Jeremy declares, chap. xxxi.

CHAP. XIII.

That the Messiah was to be born before the Dissolution of the Jewish State, and the Destruction of the Second Temple.

The preceding mark of the Messiah leads us to this we are now to speak of, and affords it considerable light. I will not repeat here what I have already set down concerning that prophecy, Gen. xlix. verse 10, concerning the time when our Saviour was to appear in the world. It is evident, at first sight, that the prophecy evinces three things: 1. That the sceptre was to be in the house of Judah, before ever the Shiloh was to come. 2. That the sceptre was to give way to an inferior dignity, which the Prophet sets forth by the word lawgiver; and which did take place till the time of Zerubbabel, and his successors. 3. There was a necessity that this last dignity also was to come to an end, which happened not till the advancement of Herod the Great to the throne of Judea. And it is easy to confirm this truth, by other oracles which give a further light to this our explication.

We have several that are very remarkable upon this account: the first is that of Daniel, chap. ii. verse 40, 41, 42, to 46. where he first takes notice of the succession of several monarchies, until that of the Messiah. 2. The time in which the Messiah was to appear. I confess he does not determine the time very precisely, mentioning only the monarchy during which he was to be manifested; but to make amends for this, when he comes to explain the particulars of this prophecy, which before he had proposed in general terms, he doth not only point at the time of his appearance, but the very year of his death; and he does it with that exactness, that it is impossible to be mistaken about it.

See what he saith in the sixth chapter of his Revelations, verse 24, 25, 26, 27. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up

(f) Psalm ii.
the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Verse 25. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the streets shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times. Verse 26. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the Prince shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. Verse 27. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading abomination he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured on the desolate.

For the understanding of this prophecy, which is so exact, and all the events it refers to so particularized, it is to be observed:

1. That by the weeks Daniel here speaks of, seven years are designed, according to the style of the law, Lev. xxv. 8. when it speaks of the year of jubilee; so that seventy weeks make out 490 years, which is acknowledged by the most learned amongst the Jews, Zachiades, Abarbanel, and Manasseh Ben Israel.

2. That the Prophet, writing in Chaldea, followed the account of the Chaldean year, which consists of 360 days, as appears clearly from other passages of this book, where he resolves the years into days, without regarding the several days which, in a just calculation, were to be intercalated.

3. That the Prophet expresses a certain epocha from whence the counting of these weeks is to begin, viz. an order to rebuild the temple, which cannot be applied to that of Cyrus, which was in a manner of none effect; nor to the edict of Darius, ion of Hystaspes, which had regard only to the re-establishing of the temple; nor to that of Artaxerxes, given to Ezra in the seventh year of the reign of that prince, because that contained only some particular privileges for the ministers of the temple; but to the edict which Artaxerxes granted to Nehemiah in the twentieth year of his reign, which contains a particular grant to rebuild the temple with its fortifications.

4. That God very distinctly marks that the last week was not to be immediately joined with the sixty-nine weeks, by saying that the Messiah was to be cut off after the term of seven weeks and fifty-two weeks expired, instead of saying that he should be cut off in the seventieth week.

5. That, according to this calculation, we find these three parts of this prophecy exactly accomplished. The first, which contains their building of the city, was performed before the end of the seven weeks; the second, concerning the cutting off of the Messiah, has been likewise fulfilled after the sixty-ninth week; Jesus Christ appearing in the 483d year after the twentieth of Artaxerxes, and being crucified the nineteenth of Tiberius.

As for the last week, it is distinguished by three characters God hath given it, because it was to be separated from the sixty-ninth week by a considerable interval, but yet was never a whit the less exactly accomplished. The first character is, that the people of the prince was to make
peace with many, which agrees with the peace the Romans made with the Parthians, of which Tacitus makes mention, Annal. lib. 15. which peace was concluded just seven years before the destruction of Jerusalem; the second is, the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, which happened three years and a half after the peace made with the Parthians, as Josephus hath observed; the third is, the destruction of the Jews, which arrived exactly three years and a half after the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, and seven years after the said peace made with the Parthians.

I know that some famous men begin the weeks of Daniel from the second year of Darius Nothus, and make them to end with the destruction of the Jews, which happened in the year 492, accounting from the second year of the said Darius; and they conceive themselves obliged thereto, by an argument they believe invincible, because, from the second year of Darius Nothus to the thirty-second of Artaxerxes Mennem, they find just forty-nine years, that is, the seven weeks designed by Daniel for rebuilding of the ruins, and fortifying of the city; and the rather, because Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes in the thirty-second year of his reign, having finished that work, Nehemiah xiii. 6.

But this opinion cannot stand, for two reasons, which seem to be decisive: the first is, because they join that which God hath separated, viz. the death of the Messiah with the last week, which ends at the destruction of Jerusalem; the second is, that without thinking of it they deprive Jesus Christ of the glory of having determined the time of the destruction of the Jews, as if, instead of a prophecy about this event, Jesus Christ had only given the world an explication of a former prophecy.

Now these observations being supposed, as indeed they are matters of the greatest evidence, it necessarily follows, that the Messiah was to appear before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The same is set down so precisely by Daniel, as leaves no pretence to doubt of this truth. And indeed, though the Jews seem, after the time of our Saviour, to have adopted the opinion I mentioned before, and therefore carried the appearing of the Messiah to the end of the seventy weeks, viz. to the destruction of their temple, notwithstanding Daniel expressly tells us that the Jews were not to be destroyed till after the cutting off of the Messiah; the Jews I say, being convinced by the force of this argument, have owned that the Messiah was born about the time of the destruction of the second temple, but that he had hid himself ever since.

The second oracle, concerning the time of the coming of the Messiah, is that of Haggai, which expressly tells us, that the Messiah was to appear during the second temple, which was begun to be built by the order of Cyrus, finished under Darius son of Hystaspes, and destroyed by Vespasian. The words of the Prophet are as follows, chap. ii. ver. 7, 8, 9. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts. It is worth our noting, 1. That this oracle promises a very great change. 2. It describes the Messiah as the expectation of the Gentiles, suitable to the idea God had given of him to Abraham. 3. That it fixes the coming of the Messiah to
to the time of the second house, that is to say, of the temple built by Zorobabel. 4. It makes the glory of that house to depend upon its being honoured with the presence of the Messiah.

In short, if we would be convinced of this truth, we need only consider three things. The first is, that the Prophets Zechariah and Malachi do represent to us the coming of the Messiah as near at hand: Balaam had said, almost ten ages before, I see him, but not nigh; which intimated his coming to be then at a great distance. But Zechariah speaks thus concerning it, chap. iii. verf. 8, 9, 10. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at: behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH; for behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, faith the Lord of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, faith the Lord of Hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour, under the vine and under the fig-tree.

Malachi expresses himself, concerning the approaching coming of the Messiah, thus: (chap. iii. verf. 1.) Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

One ought to observe two very considerable things in this prophecy: the first, that the Messiah was to come suddenly; the second, that Malachi expressly points to us, that the appearing of the Messiah was to be during the second temple; the words of the prophecy distinctly expressing it.

And sure it is, that all who gave any credit to these oracles, did understand them so.

The first, both Jews and Gentiles looked for the Messiah during the second temple. We find a passage express to the purpose in Tacitus; and it was on this ground that Josephus gave the title of Messiah to Vesphasian.

2. They expected him at the end of the seventy weeks, which was the third year after the death of Jesus Christ. This was the occasion of their being deluded by so many false Messiahs, about the time of our Saviour, and a little after.

3. They never despaired of his coming (taking the promise of the Messiah’s coming to be conditional, whenas indeed it was absolute) until they began to believe that the term set down by God himself was expired.

4. The reason of their cursing those that compute the times set down so distinctly and precisely by Daniel, was, because they found themselves disappointed in his calculation, finding that the time which Daniel had pointed at for the coming of the Messiah, seemed to be already expired.

5. It is but of late that they have tried to evade it, by maintaining that the temple will be built a third time, and that then the Messiah shall appear; but this evasion is unanswerably refuted: 1. Because Daniel assigns a certain term which is expired 1600 years since; 2. Because he expressly tells us, that the defolation of the temple was to be, for ever,
as will appear in the following chapters; and 3dly, because Haggai in effect calls the temple of which he speaks, The second or third house; by which expression he so distinctly points out the second temple to us, that it would be ridiculous to suppose it meant of a third temple, to be built 1700 years after the ruin of that of which he prophesied.

CHAP. XIV.

That the Messiah was to be born of a Virgin of the House of David.

HITHERTO we have seen that the Messiah was to be born of the posterity of Abraham by Isaac, of that of Isaac by Jacob, and of that of Jacob by Judah. This hath been sufficiently made out already. I have also shewed from the oracle in the I. Sam. chap. vii. that he was to be born of the posterity of David; and we find the same very particularly and fully set down in the lxxxixth Psalm.

The following prophets have expressed themselves to the same purpose; Isaiah xi. verf. 1, 2, 3. and the prophet Jeremy hath pursued the same ideas, chap. xxiii. verf. 5, 6. and chap. xxxiii. verf. 15, 16, 17.

Neither do the prophets only distinguish the Messiah by his being born of a virgin, but also by determining that virgin to the house of David. Neither need I repeat here what I have already observed, that this is a truth, the grounds whereof God had laid down in his first promise, viz. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head: where he makes mention of the seed of the woman only, without naming that of the man, the word of seed or posterity very evidently designifying a man to be born of the woman, which is acknowledged by the Jews in another prophecy, and the same which the Apostle St. Paul (e) takes notice of as a maxim generally owned by the doctors of the synagogue. It is also evident that the word woman plainly denotes the sex of which this person was immediately to be born.

It was obvious to judge, that something miraculous was to attend the birth of the Messiah. We see Isaac born of a barren mother, past the age of child-bearing; we find also something very singular at the birth of Sampson and Samuel: and it is well known that the promise of the Messiah was something far greater than the birth of thefe now mentioned, how illustrious foever they might be; and that therefore probably his birth was to be attended by a greater miracle. But because this was a thing wholly new, we ought to observe in what manner God did particularly foretell it.

The prophecy of Isaiah expresseth it thus, chap. vii. verf. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thou a sign of the Lord by God, ask it either in the depth, or in the height above

(e) Galat. iii.
above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall be eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good: for before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings: The Lord shall bring upon thee, upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, even the king of Assyria. Where we may observe,

1. That the promise here is made to a wicked king, but of the family of David, to whom the prophet particularly addresses himself.

2. That this prophecy was given at a juncture of time very capable of awakening their attention to it, at a time when the state of the Jews was reduced to the greatest extremity, and the house of David in particular in a very great confusion.

3. The prophecy was uttered by a very illustrious prophet, who was of the royal family.

4. It was sealed and confirmed with the prediction of the birth of a child, which came to pass accordingly.

5. It is set forth as a very extraordinary sign, instead of that which the wicked king refused to ask, when Isaiah offered it him, in the name of God.

I am not ignorant that the modern Jews deny that this character of being born of a virgin belongs to the Messiah: but it is an easy matter to confute them.

For, first, would it not have been ridiculous for the apostles to go about to apply this oracle to their Messiah, if it had not been a thing universally owned by the Jews, that this was the meaning of Isaiah's prophecy? Is it not evident that this character, so difficult to gain belief, would rather perplex than strengthen their proofs? And yet certain it is that St. Matthew has done so, chap. i. ver. 23; as likewise St. Luke, chap. i. verse 31.

Justin Martyr observed, that the notion of this oracle, as we understand it, hath been entertained amongst the heathens, who built their fable of Perseus upon it, whom they pretend to have been born of a virgin.

3. It appears that all those laws which I mentioned in my reflexions upon Exodus, and the following books, chap. xx. and which have relation to the distinct knowledge of the state of virginity, receive much light from this notion; and are, without it, altogether useless.

4. It is evident that the Jews did not dispute this character, till after they saw that the Christians applied it to Jesus Christ; and thereupon have fallen upon such childish fancies as may justly cover them with confusion.

But we shall be yet further satisfied hereof, if we add to all these just prejudices, only the following reflexions on the terms the prophet makes use of.

The first is, that the seventy interpreters have, in translating this prophecy,
prophecy, made use of a word that signifies a virgin, and not a young woman, as the Jews have understood it since our Saviour's time. The first who rejected the interpretation of the Septuagint was Symmachus, who lived in the second century, as it is observed by Justin Martyr and Tertullian, who for this reason accuse the Jews of having falsified the holy scripture.

The second is, That the Hebrew word expressly signifies such an one as, according to the law of virgins, was kept under lock and key from the eyes of men, according to the custom of the eastern nations, and especially of the Jews, which continues amongst them till this day.

The third is, That this word hath been taken by the Africans in the same signification, as St. Jerome observes.

The fourth is, That the prophet doth set forth this child-bearing as a prodigy and miracle altogether unheard-of, and as a particular character, by which the house of David was to be strongly confirmed in the hope of seeing the accomplishment of the promise which God had made of settling an eternal kingdom upon it, which could not be accomplished but by means of the Messiah.

The fifth is, That though some Jews have applied this prophecy to king Hezekiah (g); which yet to others of them seems very ridiculous, he being nine years of age when the prophecy was uttered by Isaiah, and themselves never making use of this evasion, except in their disputes against the Christians, and so on this occasion have dropped a confession which alone was sufficient to confound them; yet it hath been a thing so generally received amongst them, that this prophecy did respect the Messiah, that, after they had applied it to Hezekiah, one of their most famous doctors concludes (b), that they ought to look for no Messiah, since the time of Hezekiah, that prophecy having had its accomplishment in him; an opinion which those that succeeded him have rejected with the greatest abhorrence.

The sixth is, That the title of Immanuel, given to this son, whose birth is here promised, is represented to us, chap. viii. as the name of him who was lord of the land; which is a true representation of the heir promised to David, to whom David said, O God, thy God hast anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Psalm xlv. 7, 8.

The seventh is, That the prophet Isaiah having alleged and cited two witnesses, Uriah, the son of Shimeaiah, a prophet, who was put to death by Jehoiakim, and Zechariah the son of Jehercibiah; the former of which lived long after Abaz, and the latter since the captivity, under Darius king of Persia, according to the account the Jews themselves give of them; he sufficiently hints, by this circumstance, that the prophecy concerning the birth of the Immanuel he speaks of, was to be fulfilled many ages after, and not in that age wherein he prophesies.

(f) In Dialog. cum Tryphon. Tertull. cont. Jud. cap. 9.
(g) Raphbi in h. 1.
CHAP. XV.

That the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem of the Family of David, which at that Time was reduced to a private State.

GOD had not only pointed out the time in which the Messiah was to appear, with the miraculous manner and circumstances of his birth; but he had also named the family, the place, with the state and condition of the family in which he was to be born, as a triple character by which he might be known.

I say, first, That according to the Divine oracles, the Messiah was to be born of the family of David, as will appear if we consider the following oracles.

1. God expreffly promiseth as much to David, II. Sam. chap. vii. a place I have quoted before, which proves that the Messiah was to be born of the family of David.

2. It appeareth that David believed this himself, from Psalm cxxxii. verse 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. And after having faid, verse 12. That if his children would keep his covenant, that their children also should fit upon his throne for evermore; and this, because (verse 13 and 14) the Lord had chosen Zion, and desired it for his habitation, &c. and promised, verse 15, that he would abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread; that he would, verse 16, clothe her priests with salvation, and make her saints fweet for joy; he subjoins, verse 17 and 18, There I will make the born of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish. It is very evident, that by this born of David is to be meant a king, the Messiah, whom he distinguishes by that expression from all the rest of David's children. And Zachariah, in his song of praise, Luke i. verse 69. applying it to our Saviour, puts the matter out of all doubt.

3. Hence it was the Prophets took occasion to give the Messiah the name of David. So Ezek. xxxiv. verse 23, 24. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them: I the Lord have spoken it.

4. The Jews are, and have always been, firm in this persuasion, grounded on the forefaid and other like places of Scripture, which they constantly refer to the Messiah.

I say, in the second place, That the Divine oracles expreffly point out Bethlehem for the birth-place of the Messiah. Micah, chap. v. verse 2. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.

The Jews acknowledge that this oracle speaks of the Messiah; and indeed the Prophet, distinguishing by Bethlehem, adding the word Ephratah (whence the family of David was), from that Bethlehem which belonged to
to another tribe, makes it apparent that nothing could be spoken more distinctly to determine the birth-place of the Messiah. Besides, we find that all the Jewish Rabbies and Priests agree in this: That the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, when, being consulted by Herod about this matter, they declared this to be their sense, grounded upon the forementioned place of Micah, Matthew ii. verse 4, 5, 6.

In the third place, it appears that the Messiah was to be born in an abject, contemptible, and weak condition, and very different from the greatness of the kings of Judah. Indeed, should we only have our eye on II. Sam. chap. vii. and Psalm cxxxii. it would be natural enough to think the contrary: but Micah's oracle sufficiently refutes them; for how great things soever the Prophet there speaks of the Messiah, whether as to his divine nature, by declaring that his goings forth were from the days of eternity, or to the majesty and glory of his empire, yet however he gives us a different idea, inducing us to conceive of him, as of one that was to be born in the state of a private person; for why else is his birth determined, not to Zion, which was the place and seat of the empire of Judah, but to Bethlehem, a town where the family of David lived, whilst they were private persons, except for this cause, to make us conceive that the Messiah was not to be born in that place where the family of David possessed the empire, but in a condition far distant from the glory of kings, and in a place where the house of David was contemptible, and of very small esteem?

The same is hinted to us by Isaiah, in his xith chapter, v. 1. where he calls the Messiah a rod, or shoot of the stem of Jesse. Now Jesse was not king, but a private person. And on the same account it is that the Prophet describes him, chap. liii. as having no form or comeliness.

The Prophet Zachary also, chap. ix. verse 9. represents him, not as a king sitting on the throne in Zion, but as riding to Jerusalem on an ass; and he gives him the title of Lovable, which signifies as well a mean condition, as the virtue of humility.

But, in short, this is very considerable: 1. That those who acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, thought they had the greatest reason to do, because they acknowledged him to be the son of David:

2. That those who denied him that title, thought themselves sufficiently justified in so doing, by esteeming him a Nazarene; as concluding he could not be the son of David, if he were born at Nazareth, as they supposed.

3. The Evangelists precisely tell us, that Christ was born at Bethlehem, of the lineage of David, reduced to a very obscure condition; and so making this one of the chief characters which spoke him to be the Messiah.
CHAP. XVI.

That the Messiah was to work great Miracles, for the establishing of his Mission, and of the Truth of his Doctrine.

HERE is another character which is very particular, and whereby the Messiah might be certainly known, viz. That he was to work great miracles for the confirmation of his mission and of his doctrine.

This appears, as I have already hinted, 1. From the conformity which the Messiah was to have with Moses, in being the founder of a new religious society, and in proposing a new doctrine to men; upon which account there lay upon him the same obligation as upon Moses, to support his authority by miracles, that even in this he might not be inferior to him.

2. One may gather this also from the title of Prophet, and great Prophet, which are applicable to the Messiah; it being difficult to conceive, that God, who vouchsafed the glory of doing miracles to most of the Prophets, though they were barely sent to foretell the coming of the Messiah, and to give an account of him, should have denied the same glory and the same power to the Messiah himself, of whom all the Prophets were but the forerunners.

Besides, it is easy to judge, from the mean and contemptible state wherein the Messiah was to appear, that this glory of doing miracles was of absolute necessity, to give him authority and respect; for, since he was to be born in an obscure condition, and not in royal grandeur, it is evident that the gift of miracles was needful to make him known, and counterbalance that low and opprobrious condition in which he was to appear in the world.

But this particularly appears from an express oracle which God gave upon this very subject, in Isaiah xxxv. verf. 3, 4, 5, and 6. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb be unfolded. Then shall the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. Which oracle very fully expresses the power of Miracles wherewith our Saviour was to be dignified, in curing all manner of diseases, of which the Prophet had named some only, to give us a specimen of the rest; and it seems as if the Prophet had chosen these four forts before all others, because throughout the whole Scripture we do not find that ever any Prophet did the like, that so the character of the Messiah might be particular in his miracles too.

It is also worth our noting, in giving a character of the Messiah, first, That even those who rejected Jesus Christ, yet did at the same time suppose that the Messiah, when he came, was to work miracles. Therefore it is that we hear some of them saying to Christ, What sign dost thou ?
and others maintaining that Moses had wrought greater wonders than Jesus Christ, in giving them bread from heaven, and feeding them miraculously for the space of forty years; whilst others affirmed, that none could work greater wonders than he wrought: When the Messiah shall come, will he do greater wonders than this man?

Secondly, one ought to observe that Jesus Christ alludes this oracle of the Prophet Isaiah, taking it for granted that the accomplishment thereof was most visibly evident in the miracles which he wrought, as appears from the answer he gave to the messengers of John the Baptist.

Thirdly, it is also observable, That those who were willing to flatter the vanity of the emperor Vespasian (whom Josephus endeavoured to raise to a belief that he was the Messiah, because he had been proclaimed in the east, applying to that purpose the words of Micah, misapplied, chap. v. verse 2. Whose goings forth are from the east) were not wanting to attribute to him the glory of doing miracles, and such as Isaiah ascribes to the Messiah, by attributing to him the cure of one that was blind, and another that was lame at Alexandria. He that would know the particulars, may consult Tacitus's history.

And, last of all, we ought to observe, That the Jews do not only agree that this oracle of Isaiah refers to the Messiah; but they also still propose the power of working miracles, as a character which would render the Messiah very illustrious, and certainly known.

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C H A P. XVII.

That the Messiah was to be an illustrious Prophet.

This truth I have already ascertained in the Reflexions I made on the prophecy of Moses, Deut. xviii. But one ought to explain this character of the Messiah more particularly, God having been pleased further to illustrate this oracle of Moses.

First, then, we say that the word Messiah implies anointing, which was common to kings, prophets, and priests; and since David's time, we find nothing more common than this title in the books of the Old Testament: where we may observe that Moses was dignified with this gift of prophecy; and that Samuel communicated the same to Saul and David, when he anointed them to be kings. Yea, the Jews to this day are of opinion, that Elias the Prophet shall anoint the Messiah; that is, initiate him in his prophetical, as well as his royal function.

Secondly, God more precisely signifies this, Isa. xi. vers. 1, 2, and 3, where he declares he would communicate all the necessary gifts of the prophetical function to the Messiah. There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.
that he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the
hearing of his ears.

These words need no commentary; for the Jews refer them constantly
to the Messiah; and they plainly import that he was to be a great Pro-
phet, forasmuch as all the characters which are there given to the spirit
which was to rest on the Messiah, are the same which in the Old Testament
we find attributed to the Prophets, and may easily be taken notice of in
the history of the Prophets, especially of David and Solomon.

And much to the same purpose is that passage, Isaiah, xlii. verse 1, 2, 3,
4, 5, 6, and 7. Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my
soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to
the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in
the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the sma\oing flax shall he not
quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be
discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for
his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and spread
ted them out; he that spreadeth the earth, and that which cometh out of it;
she that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk there-
in: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and
will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gen-
tiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them
that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. In which oracle one ought
to take notice particularly of those things which the Jews apply to the
Messiah.

1. That God proposes the gifts of the spirit, which he bestowed upon
him as an effect of his love, and the choice he had made of him.

2. That the Messiah was to make use of the same, as rules for re-
forming the country, and propounding God's covenant to the Gentiles;
which clearly suppose the necessity of the gift of prophecy to qualify
him for such great undertakings.

3. That, contrary to the thundering character which distinguished the
rest of the Prophets, who were as so many public censoirs, the Messiah
was to speak with all meekness and sweetness to the nations which should
receive his preaching.

One sees that Isaiah repeats the same ideas, chap. lxi. verse 1, 2, 3,
4, 5, 6, and 7. The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord
hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind
up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of
the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the
Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to
appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the
oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that
they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he
might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the
former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many
generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks; and the sons of
the alien shall be your ploughmen, and your vine dressers. But ye shall be named
the Priests of the Lord; men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall
eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.
For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their
portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be upon them.

In short, he represents, in this and the former oracle, the Gentiles as a people being in darkness, and in the misery of a prison; from whence we may easily infer, first, That the Messiah was to be a Prophet, how vile and abject forever that character may appear in the eyes of the world, as I have shewed that it was, where I spake of the Prophets in general; secondly, That he was to discharge these functions during the whole course of his life, and that it was to be his chief employment here upon earth.

David had before signified, Psalm xxii. verse 22. that the Messiah was to declare the name of God unto his brethren, viz. the Jews, by exercising his prophetic function in Judea; but the Holy Spirit did something more, when he seemed to point out Galilee as the place where this sacred Doctor was chiefly to fix his abode.

This is in effect insinuated, when God tells us that he was to begin his ministerial functions in the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulon. Isai. ix. verse 1, 2, and 3. Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

I shall afterwards take notice, That the time of the Messiah was to be distinguished by an incredible abundance of spiritual gifts: and so this shall suffice at present to prove that the Messiah was to be a very great Prophet.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the Messiah was to propound a new Covenant from God with all Men.

This is a truth which is easily gathered: 1. Because all nations, before they could be made partakers of the blessing of God by the Messiah (according to the promise made to Abraham), were first to be received into the covenant; 2. From the nature of that covenant itself, of which Moses was the mediator, the end of which was, to separate the Jews from other nations, some of which were not capable of being received amongst them, till after several generations, whereas they were to be made partakers of this blessing by the Messiah; 3. Because in effect all the ceremonial law was only added to the moral, as it were, contrary to God's principal intention, and only upon occasion of
the Jews worshipping the golden calf, as St. Paul observes in the third chapter of his epistle to the Galatians (i).

Besides, it appears that God at divers times had given sufficient hints concerning this.

1. He had proposed a new priesthood of the Messiah, which was to abolish the Levitical priesthood; and this is the more remarkable, forasmuch as David, who pronounced that oracle, Psalm ex. was he who first formed the design of building the temple, to which all the Levitical service was annexed.

2. We find him rejecting in some sort the Levitical ministrv, after he had despised it in comparison of the spiritual worship. Psalm xi. ver. 6. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. And Psalm I. ver. 8, 9, 10. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings, which have been continually before me. I will take no bullocks out of thine house, nor begoats out of thy fold, for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. And Psalm li. ver 17. he tells us that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; in opposition to the sacrifices which the law prescrib'd, and to signify their imperfection; the law having appointed none for the expiation of murder or adultery.

Isaiah follows David, chap. i. ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts: and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When thou comest to appear before me, who hast required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. And Jeremiah speaks much to the same purpose, chap. vii. ver. 21, 22, and 23.

But besides, God directly promiseth this new covenant by Isaiah, chap. xiii. ver. 6, 7. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison-house.

It is natural to observe, that in this place, where God speaks of the Messiah, as the Jews themselves confess, he expressly declares two things: 1. That the Messiah should be a covenant of the people, that is, that he should mediate a covenant between God and the people; 2. That the fruit of this covenant was to extend to the Gentiles, which plainly implies that it was not the old covenant, forasmuch as from it several were excluded.

The same covenant is also mentioned, chap. xlix. ver. 8, 9. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. That thou mayst say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, (i) Gal. iii. 19.
darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

He pursues the same notion, chap. lv. verf. 3, 4. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Than which, nothing can be more particular.

And to the same purpose he speaks, chap. lxi. verf. 8, 9. For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.

It is as clear as the day, that God in these oracles promiseth an irrevocable covenant, because he calls it an everlasting covenant in opposition to the former. He takes notice also in the same book, that the said covenant was to be propounded in the midst of the nations, and that then that blessing of God should be known according to the ancient oracles, which was promised univerfally to all nations.

This is that which God more particularly explains afterwards, by the voice and pen of a Prophet who was of the order of Priests, thereby to prevent all sorts of exceptions.

Jeremiah in effect speaks to the same purpose, chap. xxxxi. verf. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36. Behold, the day is come, faith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they break, although I were a husband to them, faith the Lord); but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, faith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, faith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus faith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, faith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

Nothing can be defired more particular than this oracle. 1. It tells us that God would make a new covenant with his people, which supposes an abolifhing of the former; 2. That this covenant was not to be like the foregoing; 3. That the old covenant had been made vain, and had been broken by thofe with whom it was made; 4. That this covenant was to be made after thofe days, that is, in the time of the Messiafh; 5. That this new covenant was not to be engraven in tables of stone, but in their hearts; 6. That in the same covenant full remifion of fin is promifed.

The fame thing is also expressed, chap. xxxii. verfe 40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them.
to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me. And, chap. i. v. 5. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.

To this purpose also Ezekiel, who himself was a Priest, speaks of a religious worship extended to all nations, and of a new covenant which God was to make with them, chap. xvi. verse 60, 61, 62. Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy fathers, thy elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.

Here is, first, a covenant differing from the former; 2. a covenant wherein other nations were to be included, clearly intimated by the elder and younger sisters of the synagogue; 3. a covenant whereby the Gentiles were to enjoy the same privileges with the Jews, and be incorporated with them.

Malachi follows the steps of these Prophets, when he calls the Messiah the Angel of the covenant, chap. iii. verse 1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger (Angel) of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. I know very well that the Jews apply those words to Elias, whole ministrty, as they pretend, was to confide in leading the Jews to repentance. But if we read the text with attention, we shall find two messengers mentioned; the first, to prepare the way of the Messiah; and the other is the Messiah himself, who is called the Angel of the covenant, as being sent of God to make a new covenant with men.

CHAP. XIX.

That the Jews, by a dreadful Effect of their Blindness, were to reject the Messiah.

This is a very peculiar mark, which will guide us surely to the knowledge of the Messiah. We find the Jews at this day very ready to follow every one that usurps that august title, and to take him for the only true Messiah that was promised them; which is no other than what was infallibly to come to pass.

Neither will this much surprise us, if we consider, 1. That this people, on divers occasions, have given very strange instances of a prodigious blindness: we see them reject Moses, notwithstanding God had authorised his call by great and avowed miracles; yea, we find them rejecting David also, whom God had so signally appointed to be their king, and the father of the Messiah, of whom we hear these prophecies.

2. That
2. That God upbraids them with this blindness by his Prophets, as a
fin to which they were peculiarly inclined; as appears from Psalm lxix.
verse 23, 24, 25, 26, and 28. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not;
and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon
them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be
defolated, and none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast
smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add
iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let
them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the
righteous.

One sees the same thing in Isaiah, chap. vi. verse 9, 10, 11, and 12.
where the Spirit of God foretells that the Jews should shut their eyes
against the most evident and convincing proofs imaginable. Go, faith
the Lord to the Prophet, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but under-
stand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people
fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and convert,
and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And be answered, Until the cities
be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be
utterly desolate: and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a
great forsaking in the midst of the land.

Nothing can be imagined more particular than this oracle concerning
the Jews refusing the Prophet, which God exprelses in terms very usual
amongst the Prophets; as if Isaiah, who was only the foreteller of their
being hardened, should himself be the cause of it.

The Prophet Hosea describes the very same complaints of God against
the Jews for their blindness and ignorance, for which he denounces their
destruction. Hosea iv. verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Hear the word of the
Lord, ye children of Israel; for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabi-
tants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God
in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and deceit, and com-
mitting adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall
the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the
beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also
shall be taken away. Yet let no man strive or reprove another; for thy people
are as they that strive with the Priest. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day,
and the Prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will despoyle thy
mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast
rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me;
seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

The Prophet Jeremy speaks to the same purpose, chap. v. verse 21,
22, and 23. Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding;
which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not. Fear ye not me,
faith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at my presence, who have placed the fand
for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it; and though
the waves thereof go to them themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar,
yet can they not pass over it? But this people had a revolting and a rebellious
heart; they are revolted, and gone. And he reiterates the same, chap. viii.
verse 7. The flock in the heavens kneweth her appointed times; and the turtle
and
and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming: but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.

Ezekiel prosecutes the same matter, chap. ii. verf. 5 and 8, calling the Jews a rebellious house. And chap. xii. verf. 1 and 2, he faith, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, and see not, they have ears to hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious house.

Neither do the Prophets only represent to us in general the blindness of the Jews upon several occasions; but they also very particularly inform us, that he who was the most considerable person of their state, and the great minister of God, should be notwithstanding rejected by them.

And here, first, It is worth our noting, that Moses threatens the worst of calamities to those who should refuse to hear the great Prophet, like unto him whom God was to raise to his people, Deut. xviii. verfe 18.

Secondly, David, Psalm cxviii. verfe 22. expresses this in these words, The stone which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner. From which words it is evident, 1. That the Messiah was to be rejected; 2. That he was to be rejected by those who were intrusted with the care of building the house; 3. That this was to be before he should be acknowledged the great Minister of heaven.

God speaks the same thing by Isaiah, chap. xxviii. verfe 16. Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Which place is to be understood of the Messiah, by the confession of the Jews themselves.

Daniel follows the same notion, chap. ii. verf. 34, 35. Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, and brake them to pieces: and the stone became a great mountain, and filled the earth.

On all which prophecies we may make these remarks: 1. That Jesus Christ quotes most of them, as such, which by the Jews themselves were owned to refer to the Messiah. Thus, Matt. xxxi. verfe 42. he faith, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. And St. Peter, Acts iv. verfe 11. This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. St. Paul makes the same allusion, Ephes. ii. verfe 20. And are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. And I. Cor. iii. verfe 11. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. And when Jesus Christ himself faith unto Peter, Matt. xvi. verfe 18. Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, &c. he alludes to that of Daniel; Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone which smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Our Saviour applies also to the Jews those prophecies which foretel their being offended at the Ministers of heaven; in particular that of Isaiah,
Isaiah, chap. vi. verse 9. Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

2. We may observe that the Jews of old applied those prophecies (as the Apostles did) to the hardening of their own nation; as appears from that of St. Paul, Rom. x. verse 21. But to Israel be faith, All the day long I have stretched forth my hand unto a disobedient and gainfaying people.

3. We must take notice, that the same temper which was in the ancient Jews, who rejected the Prophets, was found in those who lived at the time of our Saviour; and for this, we need only to read the description which Josephus, de Bello Judaico, lib. vii. cap. 3. gives of them, where he compares them with the Sodomites, which is the comparison Isaiah makes, chap. i. verse 10.

And last of all, we may take notice, That Josephus acknowledges that this blindness of the Jews was the cause of the final destruction of Jerusalem, which was to succeed the death of the Messiah, according to the express oracle of Daniel, chap. ix. verse 26.

CHAP. XX.

That the Messiah was to die; and an Account of the several Circumstances of his Death.

To be convinced of this truth, we need only prove that what is set down in Psalm xxii. Isaiah liii. Daniel ix. and Zachariah xiii. and other prophetical passages of holy Scripture, is to be understood of the Messiah; and the reading of them alone is sufficient to satisfy the meanest capacity, that the person they point at was to lose his life by violence, with several very infamous circumstances.

Now it is certain that both ancient and modern Jews interpret these places of the Messiah; and it is as evident that the Apostles understood them so; and therefore all along applied them to Jesus Christ, following therein the known explications of the Rabbies of their own nation.

It is plain also, that the death and suffering of our Saviour would have proved a more efficacious argument to refute the Apostles, than all the miracles of Jesus Christ could have been to establish their doctrine, if the prophetical writings had not so precisely determined his sufferings and death, with the several circumstances of them.

It is also to be noted, that the prophecies referring to the death of the Messiah are generally interwoven with ideas which point to other prophetical passages avowedly owned by the Jews to have relation to the Messiah. Thus, if we compare Psalm xxii. verse 28. with Psalm lxii. verf. 8, 9. we shall find the same idea set forth in them both.

And because this character was to be the most proper and distinguishing note of the Messiah, forasmuch as none with pleasure do precipitate themselves into death, or are masters of the manner and circumstances of
of it, therefore God caused the same to be expressed by the Prophets with the greatest plainness and exactness possible.

It cannot be denied but that some of the Prophets have been very cruelly persecuted, and that some of them have died in the midst of torments: but concerning the death of Christ we have many more particulars, viz.

1. That he was to be forfaken by his own friends, Psalm xxii. verse 11. Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. And Psalm xxix. verse 11. I made sackcloth also my garment, and I became a proverb to them. And verse 20. Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.

2. That he was to be exposed to all manner of reproachful usage. Psalm xxii. verse 6, 7, and 8. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn: they flout out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. And Psalm lxix. verse 1, 2, 3; 4 Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God. They that hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty.

The same is represented to us, Isaiah liii. verse 4, 5. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed.

3. They take notice that he should be beaten and abused, as appears from Isaiah liii. verse 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, he was wounded for our transgressions, &c. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearsers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

4. They declare that he should be hold. Zech. xi. verse 12 and 13. And I laid unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, for bear: so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was priz'd at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter, in the house of the Lord.

5. They make mention of his being condemned by the Jews and Heathens. Psalm ii. verse 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed. And Psalm xxii. verse 16. For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. And Psalm lxix. verse 12. They that set in the gate speak against me, and I was the song of the drunkards. And Isaiah liii. verse 8. He was taken from prison and from
judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

6. They specify his death on the cross. *Psalm* xxii. verse 16. They pierced my hands and my feet. And *Zechariah* xii. verse 10. And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.

7. They intimate his dying between thieves. *Isaiah* liii. verse 12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he has poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with transgressors.

8. They take notice of his being mocked before his death. *Psalm* xxii. verse 6, 7, 8. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, &c. And *Psalm* lxix. verse 17, 18, 19. Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me, because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproach, my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.

9. That they who put him to death should divide his garments. *Psalm* xxii. verse 18. They part my garments amongst them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

10. That the Messiah should complain that God had forsaken him in the hands of his enemies. *Psalm* xxii. verse 1, 2. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou hearest me not; and in the night season am not silent.

11. That they would give him vinegar and gall to drink. *Psalm* lxix. verse 21. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

12. They set before our eyes the manner of his death on the cross. *Psalm* xxii. verse 14, 15, 16, 17. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws: and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. And *Isaiah* liii. verse 7, 8, 9.

13. That not one of his bones should be broken. *Psalm* xxxiv. verse 20. He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.

14. That he was to be burial in the sepulchre of a rich man. *Isaiah* liii. verse 9. He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

We may make these following reflexions on the foregoing oracles.

1. That here are many very different events and circumstances, all meeting in the same end.

2. That many of these passages that might be questioned whether they were particularly applicable to the Messiah, are joined with such hints as can no way agree with the Prophets that uttered them. Thus we find that in the xxii and *Psalm* there are many expressions which cannot be applied to David.

3. That
3. That most of these prophecies are avowedly attributed to the Meffiah by the most ancient authors of the Synagogue. And the modern Jews themselves refer them to some that suffered a violent death, as to Rabbi Akiba, who died in the second century.

4. That the Apostles unanimously applied them to Jesus Christ, the true Meffiah, following therein the general content of their nation.

CHAP. XXI.

That the Messiah was soon after to rise again.

Forasmuch as death entered into the world by sin, and that the Messiah was to take it away, we may easily conceive, that if the Messiah were, according to the Divine disposal, to submit to death, he could not long continue subject to it. He who was to restore life to those who were dead, could never be confined and imprisoned in a grave: and he who was superior to Enoch and Elias, who ascended into heaven, because he alone was exalted to the right hand of God, to reign there for ever, as the prophecies concerning him assure us, ought certainly to leave his sepulchre by a glorious resurrection.

And this we are positively assured of by the ancient oracles. Psalm xvi. verf. 10, 11. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. And to assure us that these and the like passages are applicable to none but the Messiah, we find in the same Psalms expressions too high to be applied to the authors themselves: as for example, Psalm xxx. verf. 1, 2, 3. I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave, thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. And Psalm xli. verf. 8, 9, 10. An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more. Yes, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. And Psalm llix. verf. 15. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me. Psalm lvi. verf. 11, 12, 13. In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praise unto thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, &c. Psalm lxxi. verf. 20. Thou who showed me great and sore trouble, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Psalm cxliii. verf. 11, 12. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake, for thy righteousness sake bring my soul out of troubl.
ble: and of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul, for I am thy servant.

Hosea speaks to the same purpose, chap. xiii. verse 14. I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be bid from mine eyes.

Isaiah expresseth the very same thing, chap. xxv. verse 8. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken from off all the earth; for the Lord bath spoken it. And yet more expressly, chap. liii. vers. 10 and 11. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, be shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

For the better understanding of which passages, we are to observe, 1. That the Messiah, in many or most of them, compristh all believers with himself, according to that maxim of the Jews, who attribute to the Messiah, the greatest of all the Prophets, whatsoever God vouchsafed to any one of the Prophets; and according to this principle Jesu Christ speaks, Matt. xii. vers. 39, 40. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

2. That upon this account the Messiah is represented to us, not as rising again alone, but as making all his brethren partakers of the same glory; which makes the Prophets speak of him, not as a single person, but in common with others, who by him are made partakers of the same advantages.

3. That most of these texts are quoted by the Apostles, who in so doing followed the fende of the whole nation, as appears from Acts ii. vers. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. Whom God hath raised, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David, speaking concerning him, I foreseaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. And Acts xiii. vers. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37. But God raised him from the dead. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

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Wherefore he saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption. But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

In like manner we find St. Paul alluding to that of Hosea xiii, verse 14, in I. Cor. xv. verse 55. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

CHAP. XXII.

That the Messiah was to ascend into Heaven, and send down from thence the miraculous gifts of Prophecy, Languages, &c.

This was a thing which might rationally enough be expected (b); for the Messiah being to resemble Moses, who had not only the gifts of the holy spirit himself, but also in a manner communicated the fame to the heads of the congregation of Israel, it was reasonable to infer, that the Messiah was to receive much more eminent gifts, and to communicate them to far greater numbers.

But besides this, God had expressly promised it by David, Psalm cx. verf. 1, 2, where he represents the Messiah sitting at the right hand of God. The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

It is worth our noting, that Daniel represents to us the same notion, where he speaks of the kingdom of the Messiah, chap. vii. verf. 13, 14. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Where doth God dwell, unless in heaven?

David expresses himself in terms which import something too great to be applied to the symbolical ark of the covenant, Psalm xxiv. verf. 7, 8, 9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, &c.

He speaks further of the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, Psalm xlv. verf. 5, 6, 7. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. It is evident that David addresses himself there to the Messiah, because he styles him a God anointed above his fellows.

(b) Deut. xviii. 18.
lows. And he pursues the same idea, Psalm lxviii. verse 18. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them. Nothing can be imagined more expressive than these words, which lively represent to us the ascension of the Messiah, and the pouring forth of prophetical gifts, to bring the heathens to the service of God.

Isaiah speaks the same, chap. xliv. verse 3. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. The waters here spoken of, according to the ordinary style of the Prophets, are nothing else but the Graces of God's Spirit.

Joel expresses himself very plainly in this matter, chap. ii. verse 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whatsoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered: for in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Nothing can be conceived more particular than this oracle, concerning the effusion of the prophetical gifts upon the servants of the Messiah, after his ascension. For, 1. He clearly hints at the several ways of prophecy which shall be bestowed on the subjects of the Messiah; 2. That this great event was to be before the destruction of Jerusalem, which St. Peter foretells as a thing at the door, Acts ii. ver. 30, 31, 32. After he had shewed that the wonderful effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost was a literal accomplishing of the prophecy of Joel, he adds, Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: be seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Ezekiel goes on with the same views with Joel, chap. xxxvi. verff. 26 and 27. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And chap. xxxix. verse 29. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.

And Zechariah agrees with both the foregoing Prophets, chap. xii. verff. 10. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

It is obvious to make these following observations upon those oracles.
1. That the Messiah was to be raised above the reach of any of his enemies.

2. That he was to ascend to heaven, and to be inflated there in glory, in order to his being dignified and glorified above all nations.

3. That he was from thence to send down prophetical graces plentifully, which made his entrance into heaven a kind of triumph.

4. That this great event was to precede the destruction of Jerusalem, to which the Prophet Joel in the fore-cited place seems to allude. The Messiah was to form a new society, which was to be regulated, not by the laws given on mount Sinai, but by those which were to be published from mount Zion.

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**C H A P. XXIII.**

That the Gentiles in the Time of the Messiah were to be called to the Knowledge of the true God.

This article being one of the most important and most visible characters of the times of the Messiah, and also the great effect of his ministry, we see that God had a particular care to divulge the same by a multitude of prophetical representations of it.

For not only had he declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head (l); that is, the works of the Devil. And we cannot deny, but that the errors and idolatries of the Gentiles, and their vices which arise from thence, were the fruits of sin, which this unhappy spirit brought into the world. It was not only foretold that God would persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Sem (m), by uniting the posterities of both those Patriarchs in one and the same religion. Not only had he signified that the Messiah should reign over the children of Seth, that is, over all the posterity of Noah, the offspring of Cham not excepted; not only had he foretold that all nations, kindreds, and families, should be blessed in the Messiah (n). But God went much farther afterwards; for, as the light of the revelation increased, so the same was declared more distinctly. For,

1. The Patriarch Jacob tells that the Messiah should be the desire and expectation of all nations. Gen. lxi. verse 10. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

2. Moses threatens the Jews, that if they despised the law of God, strangers, that is, Gentiles, should be preferred before them. Deut. xxviii. verse 43. The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. The same prophet menaceth them from God, that he would stir up their jealousy, by calling a foolish

(l) Gen. iii. 15.  
(m) Gen. ix. 27.  
(n) Gen. xii. & Ch. xviii. & xxii.
a foolish people to his service and worship. Deut. xxxii. verse 21. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. Nothing can be said more express and particular than these last words of that great lawgiver and founder of the state of the Jews.

3. David sets forth the empire of the Messiah, as that which was to reach over all the earth. Psalm ii. verse 8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. And Psalm xxii. vers. 27, 28, 29, 30. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kingdoms of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is Governor amongst the nations. All they that be fat upon the earth, shall eat and worship; all they that go down to the dust, shall bow before him. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. Psalm lxxii. vers. 8, 9, 10, 11. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him. Which prophecy is the more remarkable, because the promise made to Abraham is there repeated in so many words, viz. That all nations of the earth should be blessed in the Messiah. Psalm ciii. verse 15. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. And Psalm cx. verse 2. The Lord shall send the rod of his strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. One ought to transcribe almost the whole book of Psalms, to take notice of all the passages which are to this purpose.

The Prophet Hosea declares in general terms, That it was not an impossible thing for those who had been God's people, to cease to be so; or for those that were not his people, to become his people; chap. i. verse 10. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

Isaiah mentions this so often, and in such an emphatical manner, that it seems to be the main thing he drives at in all his writings. Chap. ii. vers. 2, 3. he speaks thus: And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And chap. xi. verse 10. In that day there shall be a root of Jezreel, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek. And, chap. xviii. verse 7, he makes a manifest allusion to the expectation of all nations. In chap. xliii. verse 1, 2, 3, 4, he repeats the same thing: Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I will put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking...
smoking flax shall be not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. Chap. iv. verf. 4, 5. Behold, I have given thee for a witnes of the people, a leader and a commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee. But one fees thee in their greatest lustre in the ixth chap. of his prophecies, verf. 3, 4, 5. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and fee: all that gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and shine, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. And chap. lxiii. verf. 2. The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. And verf. 11 and 12. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the ends of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work is before him. And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord. And thou shalt be called Sought out, a City not forsaken. And chap. lxv. verf. 1. I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. And chap. lxvi. verf. 18. It shall come to pass, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory.

Amos (who was contemporary with Isaiah) speaks the fame thing, chap. ix. verf. 11, 12. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and close up the branches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it, as in the days of old. That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, faith the Lord which doth this.

The Prophet Micah also follows the Prophet Isaiah step by step. Mich. iv. verf. 1, 2, 3. But in the loft days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Zephaniah is as clear as any of the rest, chap. ii. verf. 11. They shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen. And chap. 3, verf. 9, 10. Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

Jeremiah, in the fourth chapter of his prophecies, verf. 2. confirms the same truth; as likewise chap. xvi. verf. 19. and more expressly chap. xxxi. verf. 34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every
every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, faith the Lord.

After the return of the captivity, we find that the Prophets still pursued the same ideas. Haggai ii. verf. 7, 8. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, faith the Lord of Hofts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, faith the Lord of Hofts.

Zechariah speaks in like manner, chap. ii. verf. 10, 11. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, faith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hofts hath sent me unto thee. And chap. viii. verf. 20, 21, 22. Thus faith the Lord of Hofts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hofts: I will go also. Yes, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hofts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. And chap. ix. verf. 10. he expresseth the same thing more distinctly. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

Malachi speaks to the fame purpose with the greatest clearness imaginable, chap. i. verf. 10, 11. Who is there among you that shuts the doors, or kindles fire on mine altar for nought? I have no pleasure in you, faith the Lord of Hofts, 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, faith the Lord of Hofts.

On all which passages one may make these observations:

1. That all this whole series of ideas hath as much connexion to one another, as the words of those oracles have which we have now alluded.

2. That these Prophets have set it forth with all its possible characters, by the original of these people, calling them the children of Seth, by their countries, Egypt, Assyria, the East and West; by their idolatry, by their aversion to the Jews, their ignorance, &c.

3. That these prophecies were generally understood by the Jews of old, of the calling of the Gentiles, as appears from the use the Apostles made of them when they preached to the Gentiles.

4. That forasmuch as God had ordered proselytes to be received into the Jewish communion, he seemed thereby to have hinted to them, that what he had enjoined them as to particulars, ought with much more reason to be practiced in general to all the nations of the world, and ought also to be universally desired.

5. That the modern Jews themselves constantly believed, that the Messiah should lead the Gentiles to repentance. So Kimchi, Moses, Maimonides, and many other authors, since the Talmudists.

6. That the opinion which the Jews have entertained, that the Messian,
Messiah, as a great conqueror, was to subdue the nations, proceeds only from the sense of the oppression they have been, and still are, under, which makes them so earnestly desire a temporal deliverance from the power of the Gentiles, by means of the Messiah: and the pompous expressions of some of the Prophets have strengthened this belief in them; though they cannot deny but that the same prophetical passages do imply that the Messiah was to subject the Gentiles by the way of instruction.

CHAP. XXIV.

That the Jews were to be rejected in the Time of the Messiah.

Here are three things which make this particular very considerable.

The first is, That it seems altogether opposite to the design of God, who was entered into covenant with the Jews, excluding all other nations of the earth.

The second is, That nothing ever was a greater scandal to the Jews than the thoughts of a possibility that God should ever cast off their nation.

The third is, That the rejection of the Jews seemed less possible in the time of the Messiah, than at any other time; the Messiah being, according to their persuasion, to procure the salvation of the Jews in the first place, and before other nations were made partakers of those blessings which he brought along with him.

And it was upon this account that God hath forgot nothing which might make those oracles that relate to the rejection of the Jews, in the time of the Messiah, very sensible.

The chief privileges which made the Jews consider themselves as God's peculiar people, were these.

1. God himself was in a peculiar manner their king and Sovereign; which gave Josephus occasion to call their state a theocracy.

2. Their religious service did wholly depend upon God, who had instituted their order of priesthood.

3. God had placed them in a country by themselves, and separated them from all other nations.

4. God had given them the Urim and Thummim, which gave them an infallible resolution in all important cases happening to their state; which was an evident mark of the Divine presence and direction.

5. God gave them particular marks of his blessing, the extraordinary fruitfulness which continually ushered in their sabbatical year; the security which they enjoyed during their three solemn feasts; and above all, the deliverers which he from time to time raised up for them, their fourteen judges and kings.

And
And God also threatened them with evils opposite to these blessings; and all this is denounced against them step by step.

1. He declares that he would no longer be their God.
2. That he would abolish and reject their order of priesthood, which was accordingly executed by degrees.
3. That he would turn them out of their own country, without recovery.
4. That they should have no more Prophets or revelations.
5. That he would take away from them all the marks of his protection. The passages expressing these several particulars are here subjoined, which may be easily ranged under the foregoing heads, that we may understand the better that God hath plainly foretold the rejection of the Jews at the time of the Messiah.

1. Moses then threatens them with a terrible desolation, Deut. xxviii. verf. 28, 29. The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and thou shalt grope at noon day, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways, and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.

Manasseh acknowledges that God in this passage foretells, not only their first desolation under Nebuchadnezzar, but also that which happened under Titus Vespasian; the eagle mentioned at the 49th verse of that chapter, being not only applicable to Nebuchadnezzar, whom Ezekiel, chap. xvii. represents under that notion, but more particularly to the Roman emperor Titus, whose eagles gave a literal accomplishment to that prophecy.

This makes it evident, that at the same time when God threatens them with their first desolation, he also denounces to them the last; and that consequently we may apply those passages to the second rejection of the Jews, which were spoken of the first.

2. Hosea expresseth the same in his first, second, and third chapters, where he particularly foretells their being deprived of the royal dignity, priesthood, and prophecy.

3. Isaiah speaks to the same purpose in his first, second, and fifth chapters; as also chap. xxviii., lxii., l., and lxvi. and in his xxvth chapter he speaks as if no restoration was to be expected.

4. Amos represents the same thing, chap. v. verf. 16, 17, and 21, 22. Therefore the Lord, the God of Hosts, the Lord faith thus: Wailing shall be in all streets; and they shall say in all the high-ways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. And in all vineyards shall be wailing; for I will pass through thee, saith the Lord. I hate, I despise your feasts-days; and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies: though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace-offering of your fat beasts. Where he hints that their desolation shall be without recovery.

5. Jeremiah is very express in chap. v., vi., and x. verse 11. where he declares that their destruction should be without remedy; as also chap. xii. and xxxi.

6. Daniel follows their steps, chap. ix. verf. 25, 26, 27. where he directly points at the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The words are these: Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of
of the commandment, to restore and build Jerufalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall MESSIAH be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come, shall deftroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. It is worth our observing, that Josephus (o) the historian, a little after the defttruction of Jerufalem, acknowledges that this prophecy of Daniel did expressly foretell the ruin of the temple of Jerufalem, and of the Jewifh government, by the arms of the Roman empire, which himself was an eye-witness of.

7. Zechariah speaks after the fame manner, chap. xi. ver. 9. Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the refh eat, every one the fish of another.

8. And Malachi fo, chap. i. verf. 10 and 11. Who is there among you that shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleaflure in you, faith the Lord of Hofs, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the fame, my name fhall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incenfe fhall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name fhall be great among the heathen, faith the Lord of Hofs.

I cannot conceive how any that consider the succession of these ideas, so interwoven one with another, can have the leaft doubt whether the Jews were to be rejected at the coming of the Messiah, or no; especially since the Apoftles, and St. Paul in particular, have made it appear, that the Prophets fo plainly did foretell this truth.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the Time which succeeded the Publishing of these Prophecies, till the Coming of the Messiah.

THUS we have seen an abridgment of the moft remarkable oracles uttered, either by God himfelf, or by Prophets, whom he made ufe of to declare his defigns. I might eafily have allledged a far greater number; but I chose rather to content myfelf with thefe, to avoid the confusion which the multiplicity of citations is apt to occasion. And I queftion not but thefe I have mentioned, will suffice to give us an idea of God's promife concerning the Messiah sufficiently great, and enable us to make a judgment, whether that which the Chriftians declare to have been the accomplifhment of it, be fo indeed.

In the mean time, for the further clearing of this matter, I defire the reader to make some reflexions on the whole matter, which feem to me to deserve a serious attention.

(o) Antiq. Lib. x.
The first is, That God hath by degrees put an end to those divisions that were between some other nations and the Jews, founded on their hopes of the promise of the Messiah, as the time of its accomplishment drew near.

We hear little now of the enmity of the Ishmaelites against the Jews: God having placed them in the desert of Paran, they have indeed continued there in a manner invincible, but also without any great communication with their neighbour nations.

As for the Moabites and Ammonites, they had their kingdoms on the borders of the Holy Land, and continued there till the time of Nebuchadnezzar, since which we find little mention made of them, as being in a manner wholly confounded with other nations; only we meet with some few memorials of the Ammonites, whose pretensions to that promise were the weaker of the two, as being the posterity of Lot's younger daughter.

It is worth our observing, That most of the prophecies of David, as well as of the following Prophets, which thunder forth such terrible denunciations against the pride of those people, threatening them with the curse of God and final destruction, seem to have an eye to the old quarrel and jealousy; their state quarrel which happened afterwards, succeeding to this their first aversion, and hatred of the Jews.

The state and government of the Edomites, as well as their jealousy against Israel, continued till after Cyrus, who granted them the liberty of returning to their own country, as well as to the Jews who had been carried away captives with them by Nebuchadnezzar; but contrary to the hope they had of being re-established to their former estate, we find, that according to the prophecy of Malachi, they continued in bondage to their neighbours, yea to the Jews themselves, until Herod the Edomite, posseffing himself of the throne of Judea, was probably flattered by those of his own nation, and by some Jews also, into a belief of his being the promised Messiah.

We must also take notice, That the Divine Providence seems to have continued this people so long, on purpose that the spirit of jealousy which was between them and the Jews, might preserve the notion of the promised Messiah more fresh and lively, and to engage men to a more attentive consideration of the prophecies concerning the same; and that God, by confounding them afterwards with other nations, intended wholly to take away their pretensions; the service which before they rendered to the Jewish church, being no longer needful, after so clear and distinct a revelation.

This reflexion will be owned to be more than a conjecture, if we consider God's dealing with the ten tribes: God suffers them to be carried away captives by Salomonisar, leaving only the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin, to be afterwards the depositaries of the Divine oracles.

The second is, That as it appears that God hath kept some distance of time in his revelation, that the authority of the Prophets might be fully and firmly established, which, as I have observed, was done by the accomplishment of some prophecies, respecting some particular matters of fact near at hand; so it pleased God, for above four hundred years, to leave the Jews without the light of prophecy; because that which he
had given them till Malachi's time, was sufficient to make them know the Messiah, when he should appear in the world.

The third is, That this cessation of the gifts of prophecy among the Jews did serve to increase their desires for the coming of the Messiah, in whose days those gifts (which were the peculiar glory of their nation) were to be restored in far greater abundance than had ever been granted to them before.

A fourth reflexion, which is well worth our attentive consideration, is, That God so ordered it in his providence, that all the books of the Old Testament were translated into the Greek about one hundred years after Malachi, that they might be communicated to all nations; the Greek tongue being at that time, and indeed ever since the reign of Alexander the Great, a language the most known and generally spoken in the world, he having with his power carried it into the South and East.

It is natural to conceive, that the Divine Providence hereby designed these three things:

First, To establish and confirm the authority of those Divine oracles, by delivering them into the hands of the heathen, by the public authority of the Jewish nation, at the desire of a king of Egypt.

Secondly, To prevent cavilling about the explication of those oracles. Thus, for instance, we see there is no place left to dispute the translation of that prophecy, Behold, a virgin shall conceive, seeing the LXX interpreters, who were Jews, have rendered it so themselves, some ages before any contells were started about it between the Jews and Christians.

The third was, To prepare and dispose the heathen for receiving the religion of the Messiah.

And indeed we may easily comprehend, 1. That it was necessary that the prophetical writings should be communicated to the heathen, in order to their ready submitting themselves to the authority of the Messiah, whom they knew by those characters which had been given of him.

2. That it was not fitting that the heathen should wholly depend on the authority of the Jews, forasmuch as the same Divine oracles do expressly affirm, that the Messiah was to be rejected by the greatest part of them.

I shall conclude these reflexions with a short view of the state of the commonwealth and religion of the Jews, since the last of the Prophets.

First, One finds that this government subsisted as distinct from all other nations of the earth, as ever it did before: we see the honour wherewith Alexander the Great treated their high-priest; and that, when he was appointed arbitrator of the difference between them and the Samaritans, he determined the matter in favour of the Jews.

One sees that Alexander preferred them in the enjoyment of their rights and liberties, as they enjoyed them under the kings of Persia; and in particular exempted them from paying any tribute every seventh year, because then they did not sow their ground, and consequently could not reap.

And if we find that Ptolemy took Jerusalem on a sabbath day, the Jews making conscience of defending themselves, because the law required their ceasing from all work; from whence Agatharchides, an heathen author, takes occasion to blame their law; if we find him carrying a great number
number of Jews with him into Egypt, yet withal we find him treating them with as much kindness as the Macedonians themselves, appointing distinct places in Egypt and Libya for their habitation.

If we find that powerful princes, such as Antiochus, Epiphanes, and some others of his successors, broke the power of the Jews, profaned their temple, and forced great numbers of them to abjure their religion; yet we see them also at the same time giving the highest instances of an immovable constancy and courage in defence of their law, and in enduring the most exquisite tortures; we see others of them encouraged with the love of their country, as well as religion, putting themselves into a posture of defence, purifying the temple, and celebrating a festival which is observed even at this day, and lastly obtaining favourable treaties at the hands of their enemies; as may be seen in the books of the Maccabees, and in the twelfth book of Josephus’s Antiquities: yea, we find their name and glory at that time spread as far as Lacedæmon, with which commonwealth they made an alliance during the high-priesthood of Onias.

One sees them after this so considerable, under the successor of Antiochus their persecutor, that even those kings sue for their alliance with great presents.

One sees that Ptolemy Philometor granted to Onias the son, leave to build a temple in Egypt, for the convenience of those Jews whom Ptolemy the son of Lagus had carried thither, as well as for those who left their country for the oppression of the Seleucidae; for Judea, being situate between Syria and Egypt, was ordinarily the theatre of war between those two states. It is here worth our noting, that the Jews undertook the building of the temple in Egypt, as thinking themselves authorized by that prophecy, Isai. xix. 24. it being a thing otherwise forbid by the law.

One sees, in the same prince’s reign, a great contest between the Samaritans and the Jews, about the pre-eminence of their temples, at Jerusalem and Mount Garizim, decided by him in favour of the Jews: on which occasion the Jews shewed that prince their law, and acquainted him with the series of their history, to confute the Samaritans pretensions.

One sees after this, when the Jews had conferred the sovereignty and high-priesthood on Simon, that their state became so powerful, that under Hyrcanus his successor they were in a condition to attack their enemies in Syria, and compel the Edomites to admit circumcision. Aristobulus his son was crowned; his brother succeeded him in the royal dignity, and left the state in a flourishing condition, notwithstanding the civil and foreign wars he was engaged in.

We find afterwards, that the intelline divisions among the successors of those Jewish princes did by degrees open a gap for foreign power to enter, and prevail over them: Pompey, siding with Hyrcanus, took Jerusalem, and made the Jews tributary to the Romans, but without changing any thing in their religion.

Julius Cæsar a while after bestowed the kingdom of Judea upon Herod the Edomite. Augustus after him used the Jews with the same equity as Pompey before him had done, as appears from one of his declarations published
published in favour of the Jews of Egypt and Asia, recorded by Josephus. This Herod and Augustus are the same under whom our Saviour Jesus Christ was born.

It is evident, therefore, That the state of the Jews has continued distinct from other nations, and sufficiently known, from the time of the Prophet Malachi until Herod.

We may also truly assert, That whatever inclination the Jews of old had for the idolatries of their neighbours, yet we do not find them given that way during this interval, between the last of their Prophets and Herod; as if the charge and command of that Prophet Malachi had always founded in their ears, Mal. iv. ver. 4. Remember the law of Mofes my servant, &c.

One fees that the Jews under the Maccabees, in great numbers, suffered martyrdom, rather than abjure their religion; and that they observed the ceremonial law with all carefulness, of which Augustus himself was witness.

One fees that, under strangers and heathen kings, they exempted themselves from answering any suit at law on the sabbath-day, from paying tribute the seventh year, and preserving the rights and privileges of their temple in spite of all opposition. Lastly, one finds them, during Herod's government, supported by the favour of the Roman empire, in refusing to set up the emperor's trophies, for fear some images might be hid under them, which they looked upon as a crime against their law.

I am not ignorant, that since Malachi some heresies sprung up among the Jews, their commerce with the Greeks (who applied themselves to philosophical speculations) having contributed to make them much more disputatious than they were before. The authority likewise of their kings, who were high-priests also, may have had a great stroke in blunting the purity of their religion.

But yet the disputes which we find amongst them, as that of the fatality of events, did not at all touch the substance of their religion.

They no sooner found the spirit of Epicurism to creep in amongst them, but they framed such additions to their public liturgy, as they thought most proper to eradicate, or at least condemn that corruption.

I confess also, that the Pharisees and Doctors of their law had greatly altered their morality, in making their own explications (by the great authority which they had amongst the people) to pass for authentic: but yet this change and corruption in their morals as to practice, did not go so far as to abolish the laws themselves, which were only wrested from their true meaning. This was indeed a great corruption, but not such a one as could make it to be no more the same religion.

So that we may boldly affirm (which is a thing very important to our present purpose) That the state and religion of the Jews have continued sufficiently entire till the time of the appearing of the Messiah in the world, for their preferring of whatsoever was necessary, viz. as well the books of the Old Testament, as the knowledge of those oracles which foretold the coming of the Messiah, together with the knowledge of these principles, according to which the Prophets have spoken in their predictions concerning him.

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I HAVE shewn in my Reflexions upon the Book of Genesis, that the facts of the Creation, and the promises of the Messiah, are truths not to be questioned, and that the ideas of this Messiah continued vigorously all the time that preceded the children of Israel's going out of Egypt.

We have seen afterwards, in the Remarks which I have made upon the Laws which God gave to Moses, that it was the great design of God to keep men in the expectation of this Messiah, and to take care that they might certainly know him whenever he should appear in the world.

I have taken notice, in the third part of these Reflexions, of the care which God took to give a great number of Oracles to explain particularly all the characters of this Messiah, the place and manner of his Birth, the principal circumstances of his Life, Death, and Resurrection, and to foretell the effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentiles, their call to the Religion of the Messiah, and lastly, the overthrow of the whole model of the Jewish religion and commonwealth, which was no longer of any use after the coming of the Messiah, and the calling of the Gentiles.

My present business is now to shew, That in the books of the New Testament we may find an exact accomplishment of this whole design, wherein God had with so much care instructed the world so long before; and there is nothing more easy, if we will but take a little pains to read these books attentively, and to compare them with the model which God himself made, as we have hitherto described it.

To make this truth yet more evident, I think it will be necessary to do two or three things, which seem to be very important for my present design.

And first, I am to observe, that there appears a most perfect coherence between the ideas of the Old Testament and those of the New; which is absolutely necessary, to shew that there is in these books a perfect unity of design, notwithstanding the vast difference there is between the Jews who prefer the Old Testament, and the Christians who prefer the New.

Secondly, I am to demonstrate that the ideas of the Messiah were very strong in the minds of the Jews at the very time that Jesus Christ appeared in the world.
This was absolutely necessary, that they might not have wherewith to accuse those who received Christ for the Messiah, of being deceived in their choice, for not having had the exact ideas of the Messiah which God had promised.

I shall upon this account shew in the third place, That when Jesus Christ did appear in the world, the model which God had framed in the law of Moses, whereby the Messiah might be plainly known, did then subsist in the manner wherein God had framed it.

After this, I shall endeavour to shew by proofs, which are indeed unquestionable. That in examining all the characters which the Prophets gave, by which the Messiah might be known, we cannot conceive a more exact execution of God's delign, as to the Messiah, than that which we find in the person of Jesus Christ, whereof the books of the New Testament have given us the history.

Lastly, I shall shew clearly that this model which God had framed in giving the law, and in forming the commonwealth and religion of the Jews in so proper a manner, to make the Messiah certainly known, is not in being at this day; but that it was so destroyed by the total dispersion of that people, that we should not be able to know the Messiah if he should now appear again in the world: and that indeed the principal events, which according to the oracles were to follow the coming of the Messiah, are already come to pass in part, and do still come to pass every day.

I hope to evince these truths beyond all contest: indeed the bare reading of the books of the New Testament plainly discovers the coherence which they have with the books of the Old; it shews clearly that the ideas of the Messiah were at that time very strong in the minds of the Jews; and it supposeth, without any affectation, that the model which God had made so necessary to distinguish the Messiah, stood at that time entire.

In particular, it is certain, that the four Evangelists, by the relation of unquestionable matters of fact, have proved that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the Messiah which God had promised.

St. Luke shews, in the Acts of the Apostles, that after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Gospel was preached to the heathens.

The epistles are a natural consequence of this vocation of the heathens, and of the abolishing of the law of Moses, which the Apostles had undertaken. They unanimously conpire to shew that God had resolved to call the heathens to partake of salvation, that the Jews for the greatest part should be justly deprived thereof, because they obstinately rejected the Messiah. Several questions are examined, which arose either from the calling of the Gentiles, or from the abolishing of the ceremonial worship.

The succession of the history of the Christian church justifies, That after the destruction of Jerusalem all people embraced the religion of Jesus Christ, in receiving him for the Messiah whom God had promised to the Patriarchs and to the Jews.

I shall resume all these articles one by one, in that natural order in which I have proposed them.
That there appears a very just Connexion between the Ideas of the Old Testament, and those of the New, the latter borrowing Light from the former.

As it is not much the character of romances, even then when they are most tied up to the rules of probability, to borrow either the style or ideas of those authors from whom they take their subject, so I suppose that, in this my undertaking to shew that the New Testament is an exact accomplishment of the Old, it is very important to make out, that at the first reading of the Gospels and Apostolical writings, one finds
finds in them a perfect conformity of ideas with the writings of the Old Testament.

One may to this purpose observe in general, that the Gospel supposeth the Divine authority of the book of the Old Testament, as an unquestionable truth. The gospels and epistles have the same coherence with the books of the law and Prophets which the writings of the latter Prophets have with those of the former, and which the books of all the Prophets together have with the books of Moses, and with the prophecies, laws, and histories, which are contained therein.

One may take notice afterwards, that all the books of the New Testament have an essential relation to those of the Old, in their most principal designs. I have shewed that their design was no other, than to raise men to expectations of the Messiah, and to paint him to the life whom God had promised from the beginning of the world; and the only design of the New Testament is, to prove that the Messiah is come according to the Prophets. The first speaks concerning the Messiah as expected; the latter, as already come.

But we must proceed to a more particular view of this matter. I say then, first of all, that the Christians have the same object of their faith which the Jews had; this Jesus Christ himself declares, where he saith, This is life eternal, that they might know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Behold here the true character of the Christian religion, as well as of the Jewish, to believe one only God, to own a Messiah, and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is he. The Jews agree with us in the former articles, though they dispute the last.

I say, in the second place, that the laws of the Gospel, which regulate religion and the conduct of particular persons in that society, are exactly the same with those of the Old Testament. Jesus Christ, in his sermon upon the mount, which contains an abridgment of his ethics, had no other end but to restore the true sense and meaning of those laws God had given upon mount Sinai; and though, in the matter of divorces, it seems opposite to that law wherein God had before permitted them, yet we may easily conceive that he began to abrogate those orders and dispensations which were only given to make the Messiah known whenever he should appear.

The prayer which Jesus Christ taught his Apostles, is full of notions which reigned among the Jews, as several expositors have manifested. I shall content myself with alluding the instance of the petition for our daily bread, which has an evident regard to the manna which God gave the children of Israel in the wilderness for forty years.

We know also that the sacraments of the baptism and the eucharist are originally Jewish ceremonies, which Jesus Christ hath applied, with a very little variation, to much more important subjects. Baptism was a washing which accompanied the sacrifices and circumcision of proselytes; and the washing practised under the law of Moses, signified that the proselyte who was admitted to the same, was resolved to renounce his former curses, and for the time to come to follow an opposite way of living, according to the rules prescribed him by the Ministers of Heaven, after that they, in the name of God, had assured him of the remission of his sins.

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The eucharist was an appendix of the feast of the passover, which preserved the memory of the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt, and the deliverance he afforded them, in punishing of the Egyptians. This ceremony did perpetuate the memory of the deliverance till the coming of the Messiah. Jesus Christ had substituted to this figure an instance of the curse of God against the posterity of Chab, the idea of his death, by which he had communicated his blessing to all nations of the earth according to his promise; and he hath made it a more full and exact memorial of his death, which he would have us to consider as the death of the true Lamb, which takes away the sin of the world. As the old covenant was made in the blood of a lamb, so Jesus Christ, with regard to the New Testament or covenant promised by Jeremiah, chap. xxxi, ordains the celebrating the memorial of the blood he had spilt, This is the New Testament in my blood, &c. And lastly, whereas the law ordained the commemoration of the pachal lamb but once a year, Jesus Christ seems to appoint a much more frequent celebration of the eucharist, when he saith, As oft as ye shall eat this bread, &c. the reason of which, without doubt, is taken from the greatness of the benefit which his death confers upon us.

It is well worth our observation, that ordinarily the same prophetical ideas that are found in the Old Testament may be met with in the New. The book of the Revelations contains abundance of particulars set down in the prophecies of Zecchariah and Ezekiel. Jesus Christ himself pursues the ideas of the Prophet Joel in the xxivth of Matthew, when he sets forth the destruction of Jerusalem; and afterwards he describes the same, according to the notions which Daniel gives us thereof.

Daniel foretels, in the viith chapter of his book, the destruction of the Roman monarchy by the Christians, whom he styles The People of the Most High. St. Paul follows the same notion, 1 Cor. vi. 2. where he supposeth it as a known thing: The Saints (faith he) shall judge the world. And St. John, in the xxth of the Revelations, ver. 4, represents Satan bound, and the government put into the hands of believers.

It is also very remarkable, that the promises and threats of Jesus Christ are expressed in terms borrowed from the Old Testament. These words of Jesus Christ, He that hears my words, and believes in him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, &c. have not they a plain relation to Adam’s unbelief and disobedience, to the judgment he underwent, and the punishment imposed on him? Is it not from this spirit, which penetrates both, that the New Testament so often makes mention of a new Canaan, a new Jerusalem, a new name, &c. and that glory is represented to us sometimes under the notion of Paradise, sometimes of a feast, where Abraham (who is called The Father of the Faithful) sits at the upper end?

Eternal damnation is represented to us under the notion of the valley of Hinnom, of a lake burning with fire and brimstone, with regard to the lake of Sodom, and to the place where the filth of Jerusalem was not to be burnt up and consumed. It is upon this account that believers are exhorted to remember Lot’s wife, Luke ix. 52. and and xvi. 32. and to depart from the midst of the wicked, Hebr. xiii.
If we consider the election of the Apostles, and of the seventy Disciples, we shall find the reference they have to the heads of the twelve tribes, and to the seventy elders whom Moses chose, to preserve the memory of the seventy souls of Jacob brought with him into Egypt. Those passages, Ye shall sit on twelve thrones, and your names are written in the book of life, and the number of 144,000, being the product of 12 times 12, by allusion to the twelve tribes, do all borrow their light from those ancient histories.

Throughout the New Testament we find nothing but a continual allusion to the state of the Jews: all those ideas of the liberty of the sons of God do allude to the ceremony of their jubilee. The first born mentioned there, and the kingdom of Priests, are not to be understood but by casting our eye on the Old Testament. If Jesus Christ be called the chief Corner Stone, if Peter be called a stone or Rock, Believers living Stones, and the Apostles Foundations, it is by way of allusion to the manner in which the twelve princes or heads of the tribes did contribute towards the building of the temple, and to the manner of the building of it. If the children of Zebedee are called Boanerges, it is with reference to the second of Haggai, Yet once, and I will shake the heavens and the earth. That the Heathens are described as a people afar off, and what is spoken concerning the wall of partition, hath a visible respect to the Gentiles being prohibited to enter into the holy place of the temple.

If I would in vain in all the mystical relations of the one volume to the other, I might say that there appears a singular conformity between them, even in those things which seem most opposite. Moses, the first and great minister of the law, had a flaming speech; Zachary, the father of St. John the Baptist, was struck dumb, when he was to pronounce the solemn blessing of the people; whereas Jesus Christ, on the contrary, hath this character given of him, that never man spake like him. God said at the beginning, Increase and multiply; he repeats the same to Noah, in order to the propagation of mankind, and replenishing the earth. Jesus Christ, faith, Go and teach all nations; and the word is constantly represented to us as the seed of the regeneration and baptism, as the laver or washing whereby we acquire a new birth. We see Noah receiving the dove into the ark with an olive branch, as a sign of the peace of Heaven; and Jesus Christ receives a like token.

Fire falls down from heaven on the sacrifice of Abel, Noah, Moses, David, Solomon, and Elijah, as a token that God accepted their offerings; and God sends the same mark of his favour on the day of Pentecost, to declare that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was most acceptable to him.

God had forbid the high priest to rend his clothes on any occasion whatsoever, that rendering of garments involving a mystery, as appears from the history of Jeroboam; and yet we see, that the high priest rent his clothes at the condemnation of our Saviour, and thereby violated for ever the authority of his priesthood: whereas, on the contrary, we find the garments of our Lord and Saviour were left whole and entire, to signify to us the eternity of his priesthood. We see that the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant, was cut off by St. Peter, and that Jesus Christ restored it again, to shew that the synagogue had lost the true faith, and Jesus Christ alone was able to restore it. We see the holy place in the temple
temple opened at the death of Christ, by the rending of the vail; which signified that the ceremonial law was then to lose its force and authority.

But the observations already made are sufficient to make out what I intend, without having recourse to these mysteries; and I believe no man can make such reflexions, without being persuaded that so great a conformity of ideas must necessarily imply a perfect unity of design; now it is impossible to suppose that this unity of design should be so constantly observed by different authors, who lived at such a distance of times, places, and interests, without being convinced of a perpetual Divine guidance.

I acknowledge that in the New Testament there may be found some decisions which seem wholly opposite to those of the Old: for instance, we find there a total abrogation of the ceremonial law; but, as much as all those observations had no other use but to distinguish the Jews from all other nations of the earth, and by this means to make the Messiah known to the Jews, amongst whom he was to be born, so it is obvious to conceive that all those ceremonies were of course to be abolished after that the Messiah was come into the world, and that, if we consider things in this view, we shall find no contradiction at all between Moses, who established these ceremonies, and the Apostles, who abolished them.

But, before we come to confirm these grounds, we must make it appear, that the ideas of the Messiah continued very fresh in the minds of the Jews; and this shall be the subject of the following chapter.

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CHAP. II.

That the Ideas of the Messiah continued very fresh in the Minds of the Jews at the Time of the Coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

It would be an easy matter for me here to shew that the ideas of the Messiah were lively in the minds of the Jews before the coming of Jesus Christ. This appears from the fable which the Rabbies told Origen, concerning Zedekiah, and Abiaib, whom the king of Babylon burnt, for persuading the Jews to believe that they were the persons that were to conceive the Messiah. But I intend to make use of proofs of a different nature.

Now, to prove that the notion of the Messiah was very fresh in the minds of the Jews, we need only take notice, that the promise of God concerning him, was the first, the most important, and repeated with the greatest assiduity in the books of the Prophets; and consequently it employed them the most: God having, for this reason, obliged them to read the books of Moses every Sabbath, to sing the Psalms of David, and
to examine the writings of the Prophets, where the promise of the Messiah was a thousand times repeated.

We may add a great deal of light to this observation, if we consider that the circumstances of the Jews at that time engaged them to give more diligent heed to what the Prophets had declared; and by weighing several matters of fact set down in the Gospel, to shew the universal effect of the lively impression of this notion of the Messiah on the minds of the Jews.

Without doubt the estate of the Jews at that time, being equally oppressed by the power of the Romans and that of Herod, could not but put them upon a careful examining of the promises which God had so often vouchsafed them concerning the Messiah; and the rather, because God had often represented to them the kingdom of the Messiah as a temporal kingdom, which was to deliver them from the power of their enemies.

This appears very evident in the Gospel on several occasions. We find that the people of Jerusalem and Herod were troubled at the news of the birth of Jesus, as that which would probably cause great troubles and desolations, before the kingdom of the Messiah could subdue the Romans as well as Herod: one sees that the multitudes would have taken Christ, and proclaimed him their king, and submitted themselves to him as the true Messiah; one sees that Christ's own disciples, both before and after his death, talked agreeably to these popular ideas. What else can we make of that passage of the mother of James and John, when the begs for them the chief places in his kingdom? When the Apostles dispute which of them should be the greatest, was it not an effect of the same cause? Did not the Apostles, when they went to Emmaus, discourse at the same rate? Did not they express themselves with much grief and trouble, before they were instructed in the most sublime truths of the Gospel? But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.

It is also very observable, that John the Baptist appears and administers the sacrament of baptism at this time: this his practice gave the Jews occasion to take him for the Messiah; but what ground had they to think so? surely from what they had read in Ezekiel, chap. xxxvi. verse 25. And indeed, when the great council of the Jews deputed some persons to him, they charged them to know of him whether he were the Messiah or not; and if not, why he exercised a function which that prophecy seemed to appropriate to the Messiah himself, in calling him the Angel of the Covenant?

The same truth may also be collected from what is related to us concerning the opinions of the Jews about the person of Christ: Whom, faith our Saviour, do people say I am? And the Apostles answer, that some said he was John the Baptist, others Jeremiah, others Elias, and others again that Prophet, that is to say the Messiah, who is so called by way of excellence in the xviiiith of Deuteronomy. And we find that when Jesus Christ styled himself the Son of Man, the multitudes easily conceived that he alluded to the seventh of Daniel, where the Messiah is so called.

We perceive also, from many other places in the Gospel, that the multitudes were very well acquainted with those passages in the Old Testament.
tament which were commonly applied to the Messiah: *The Messiah, when he appears, say they, will be do greater signs than this man doth? Others are offended because Jesus Christ was of Nazareth, arguing from thence that he could not be the Messiah; others maintain that, when the Messiah should come, it would not be known whence he was; and others again asserted, that the Messiah was to continue for ever; all which is an evident sign that the ideas of the Messiah were very familiar among the Jews.

This must have been so of necessity, because the Samaritans themselves were possessed with the same ideas, though they had not so great an extent of light as the Jews had. They did not indeed altogether reject the writings of the Prophets, but rather studied them with care: their animosity against the Jews, and their jealousy upon account of the promise, of the place of the temple, and other things in question, do manifestly shew that the characters of the Messiah were known to them, and that they were exactly informed in that whole matter.

One ought also to take notice, that as the Apostles call that the fulness of time, because the times set down by the Prophets were almost expired, and the sceptre was already departed from Judah, the weeks of Daniel were ended, and the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt were overthrown, so there were several good men who were filled with an expectation of the Messiah. Anna and Simeon are represented to us as those who, by their study of the Holy Scriptures, had discovered that the time of the coming of the Messiah was near at hand; much in the same manner as Daniel is represented to us to have learnt from the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the captivity was almost expired.

I shall add one argument more, which seems beyond exception; that many persons were found, about the time of Jesus Christ, who were either drawn by others into an opinion of their being the Messiah, or who of themselves desired to be accounted so. Thus we are told that the flatterers of Herod the Great gave him the title of Messiah: of this number were Theudas and Judas Galonites, with some others. Thus also, soon after, some applied the prophecies concerning the Messiah to Vespasian the emperor, because he had been chosen in the east. This is attested by Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius, who assure us that the notion of the promised Messiah, as of a great king, was very common in the east, and not unknown in the west.

We know that, under the emperor Adrian, Barcochab was the cause of a terrible sedition, by making the Jews believe that he was the Messiah: and we cannot be ignorant how many such like impostors have been since, who have abused the credulity of the Jews, even until Sabatai Sevi (a), who deluded them about one and twenty years since.

Lastly, we cannot but think that this idea of the Messiah was always fresh among the Jews, because we find that from that time they have continually disputed with the Christians about this matter; because they tell us of two Messiahs, one the son of Judah, and the other the son of Joseph; and because, in all places of the world whither they are scattered, they speak of the Messiah in their Commentaries on the Scriptures, in

in their sermons, in their public prayers, and their common conversation.

Surely if any time can be supposed wherein they might have left their knowledge and distinct hope of the Messiah, it must be since the time appointed for his coming is expired, when, by the Christians infulting over their vain expectations, they have been obliged (finding themselves disappointed by prophetic calculations) to set up that rash maxim, *Cursed is he that computes the times*; and therefore it is evident, that these notions were much more lively in them when their hopes were well grounded, and when they might pretend to see them accomplished.

It is no less certain, that the model appointed by God, by means of which the Messiah might be certainly known, did still subsist in the same manner as God at first had formed it: but that I may give a full light to this capital truth, I shall tie myself to consider the several arguments for it distinctly; and shall begin with those which shew that the commonwealth of the Jews did subsist according to the Divine model; and then proceed to others, which demonstrate that God had therein preserved all the distinctions necessary to his design.

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**CHAP. III.**

That the Commonwealth of the Jews did still subsist, and follow the Model which God had formed, in order to the certain Knowing of the Messiah.

There are two things which seem to contradict this proposition: the one is, the overturning of the Jewish State; the other is, the corruption of their religion: but it is easy to remove both these difficulties.

For the overturning of the state of the Jews did not draw along with it that of the Scripture, and the laws on which it was founded, and afterwards governed; wherefore the case of this republic is not the same with that of Athens or Lacedemon, which at present subsist no where but in books, because there are no people now that follow the laws of the ancient legislators of Sparta or Athens.

But, on the contrary, we find the Jews, in all parts of the world, keeping these laws with great carefulness, studying them with the greatest application, and flattering themselves that God will one day re-establish them in Judea, which they expect by means of the Messiah, whom God at first promiseth to them.

It is now above 1600 years that they have been scattered throughout the world, and yet we find not that their condition has made them change their measures or hopes; and though they have already been deceived by a great
a great number of false Messiahs, yet do not they for all that look upon the condition of their commonwealth as irrecoverable.

Now, if during so long a series of ages they have kept their laws with so much carefulness, if they still religiously observe all those laws which could be kept without the bounds of the Holy Land; who sees not but that in all probability they must have kept them more exactly at the time of Jesus Christ, and before his coming, when they could keep them with much more ease than since that time, and that for many considerable reasons?

For, first, Their dispersion then was in one only nation; whereas now they are scattered amongst Heathens, Christians, and Mahometans.

2. They had then Prophets, who exhorted them to the observance of these laws, which now they have wanted for so many ages.

3. They had often princes that were very favourable to them, such as Cyrus and Darius, who ordered that sacrifices should be offered for themselves, in the temple at Jerusalem; and Pompey afterwards had the same inclination for them: whereas, since the time of their dispersion, they have scarcely met with any one prince who has been favourable to them, if we except Julian the apostate; who, from an effect of his hatred against the Christians, did vainly strive to re-establish them.

4. They had a temple, to which the whole state of their republic was fixed; Herod, about the time of our Saviour, had most magnificently repaired it: whereas now, for so many ages, they have neither temple nor altar.

5. They had high-priests among them that were entrusted with the sovereign power, and were kings of their nation; whereas now they have neither king nor prince of their faith.

6. Their laws being translated into Greek since the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, it gave occasion to an extraordinary jealousy between the Jews of Egypt, who had the text of Scripture in Greek, and between those of Jerusalem, who had it in Hebrew; whereas now, all this is altogether sealed, all the Jews now, for many ages, making use only of the Hebrew text.

Since, therefore, we find that they, without prophets, without king, out of their own country, &c. have observed these laws for so many ages, notwithstanding their dispersion throughout all places, and amongst all sorts of people; how much rather may we conceive they did so since the time of Ezra, who placed the books of the Old Testament in the order in which we have them at this day? There are only 542 years from the time of the return of their captivity, which happened in the year 3468, to the birth of Christ; and but 259 years from their return, to the translation of the Seventy: and we know that above 1600 years are past since their general dispersion.

Moreover, it appears that the Romans had so well preserved the form of the Jewish government from Pompey's time, as well as that of their religion, that a Roman general sent to demand a kind of permission of the Jews, to let him pass with the Roman eagles through Syria. We know that those eagles were never set up at Jerusalem; but it was at a time when a Roman commander intended to stir up the Jews to sedition, and
and by that means to make the emperor their enemy. Yea, we find, that though the Romans referred to themselves the power of the sword, yet they permitted to the Jews the judgment of zeal, against those whom they called Heretics, whom they tore to pieces, to execute the rigour of the law.

If we find that a Roman proconsul would not concern himself with questions of their law, arising without the bounds of their own country, how much rather may we judge that they enjoyed an entire liberty within Judea? And, indeed, we find the priests sending their commissioners to Damascus (b) against the Christians, without doubt with design to execute the law against impostors. St. Paul was beaten several times with forty stripes, save one, which could not be upon any other pretence but to obey the law in that matter.

These proofs are sufficient to make out that the commonwealth of the Jews subsisted still in the same manner as God instituted it.

And as for what concerns the overthrow of their religion, as God had interwoven the laws that regulated it, with those of their government, so that their religion was nothing else but a religious policy; it is evident that, their government continuing at the time of Jesus Christ, we cannot doubt but that their religion, notwithstanding the corruption which the Pharisees and traditionary Jews, whom Christ continually censured, had introduced, did still continue pure enough to answer the model which God had framed.

They rejected the Samaritans, as appears from the ivth of St. John, and looked upon them as Heretics, having no commerce with them.

They lived in a perfect alienation from the Heathen: it is with this St. Peter begins his discourse to the assembly at the house of Cornelius, Acts x. 28.

They lived in an exact observance of the solemn feasts which God had prescribed them, viz. the passover, pentecost, the feast of expiation, and of tabernacles.

They observed the feasts which their ancestors had joined to these upon extraordinary occasions, as that of the dedication, that of Lots; and some feasts which they kept then, as they do to this day. This appears by the history of the Gospels, and by the Acts of the Apostles.

They asstiff at these solemn festivals with much regularity.

They did not till their ground till the seventh year, according to God’s command, which made the Heathen princes which were over them, to release them from paying any tribute that year, as may be seen in Josephus and other authors.

They taught the law in their synagogues, and that every sabbath day.

They were so scrupulous in their observation of the sabbath, that they accused our Saviour for healing the sick on that day.

It appears that lepers were fequestered, and that they observed the distinction of the several kinds of leprosy, according to the law of Moses.

We find, by the history of the Gadarenes, that swine were looked upon as unclean beasts.

(b) Acts ix. 4.
It is certain that they paid the tribute which was appointed for the use of the temple, according to the law of Moses, and the re-establishment of that custom, which we find II. Chron. xxiv. 5. *Josephus* (c) tells us that this practice was continued till the destruction of the temple. We meet with the same in *Tacitus*, and other Heathen authors of that time.

I acknowledge that at the same time they were extremely corrupt in their doctrines, with which Christ upbraids the Pharisees and Sadducees: but this corruption respected rather their morals, than the externals of their religion; as appears plainly from hence, that Jesus Christ upbraids the Pharisees with their tithing and cummin, that is, with their observance of outward niceties, whilst they neglected the very essentials of piety.

They held that Heathens could not pass for their neighbours: from whence it would follow, that God did not forbid them to bear false witness against a Heathen. Hence also they concluded that it was lawful for them to kill their enemies; and this somented their hatred and animosity against all other nations. It was on this account that the Disciples of Jesus Christ marvelled that he talked with a *Samaritan* woman.

Their decisions concerning adultery were no less corrupt, which they declared to be no sin, so long as it did not proceed to the outward act; which opinion of theirs was more gross than that of many Heathens, who had a truer idea of the purity of heart which God requires of us, as well as that of the body. But yet this did not altogether destroy their religion, though it obscured the excellency and sublimity thereof.

As for the Sadducees, besides that their errors were only speculative, amongst the greatest part of them, it is certain that what the Gospel faith of their denying the existence of souls and spirits, and the doctrine of the resurrection, must be understood with some qualification, as the learned have solidly proved, and, amongst others, Dr. *Lightfoot* on the Gospels.

And without repeating those things which secured the preservation of their state, and which also visibly tended to the preserving of their religion, I shall only observe, that the *Jews*, at this day, with very little difference, are found in the same practices and opinions, as to their religion, which they had at the time of our Saviour.

Seeing, then, that after so long a time of sixteen hundred years we find no greater change in their belief (though their traditions are considerably increased, the rules whereof they have infinitely multiplied, and thereby increased this corruption), how can it be imagined that the religion of the *Jews* was wholly lost, or had no being at the time of our Saviour Jesus Christ?

Let this therefore be established as a certain truth, That the commonwealth of the *Jews* subsisting entirely, it was easy to know whether the distinctions which were necessary to discover and make known the Messiah, were still found in the state of the *Jews* and their religion. This is that I am now going to make out.

**C H A P. IV.**

(c) *Antiq.* xviii. ch. xii.
That all the Distinctions necessary for discovering of the Messiah, still continued in the State of the Jews, at the Time of our Lord. 

I DO not know whether any man can deny that circumcision, which is one of the principal marks of the Jews, was practised at that time: if any one should dare to dispute this truth, we need only to represent to him, that the main dispute between the first Disciples of Jesus Christ and the Jews, was about the observation of this ceremony.

Neither were the Jews only obstinate in this belief; but we find also that those who first embraced the Christian religion, maintained that the Heathens themselves ought to submit to the yoke of circumcision, before they could enter into the Divine covenant, and enjoy the privileges of God's people, whom circumcision distinguished from the rest of the world.

One sees, that though God scattered the ten tribes, yet some of them still remained in Palestine, and were distinctly known as such. This appears from the Acts of the Apostles, where mention is made of a widow of the tribe of Apher; and St. Paul boasts of his being a Benjaminite.

They upbraided Herod, notwithstanding he was their king, with his being an Edomite, and not originally a Jew.

One sees, that about Tyre and Sidon there remained still a distinct knowledge of the Cannanites.

It is known that Galilee was less esteemed than Judea, because many of the Gentiles were settled there, by which means the Jews of that province were obliged to some commerce with them; from which those who lived more distinctly, thought that they had a right to undervalue those that were settled in Galilee.

One may also boldly assert, that all places were still distinctly known to what tribe they did belong. Thus it is observed that Capernaum was in the borders of Naphtali and Zebulun, that Bethlehem was in the tribe Judah, which is related as a thing publicly known.

It is known that the priests still possessed the cities which Joshua had assigned to them. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, dwelt at Hebron (d), a city belonging to the priests in the tribe of Judah.

One sees that even the Samaritan woman had a distinct knowledge of some famous places in the Holy Land, as Jacob's Well, and the possession which he gave to his son Joseph; and that those of her religion took a prejudice against the Jews, because Jacob had built an altar at Sichem.

One sees that they kept up the practice of redeeming their first-born, which at this day is still observed by Jews.

As also the practice of polygamy, which was so common amongst them, that St. Paul thought himself obliged to forbid the same to the pastors of the
the Christian church, that he might abolish it by little and little amongst those that embraced the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

One sees, from the nineteenth of St. Matthew, that divorces were publicly practised amongst them, as they are to this day.

If one makes any reflexion upon the objection the Sadducees made to our Saviour, concerning the woman that successively had seven brothers for her husbands, we shall perceive that the desire of posterity being predominant amongst them, was the cause of the continuance of this custom, which began in the time of the patriarch Judah.

We have elsewhere taken notice of the extreme carefulness of the Jews, in preserving the marks of their daughters virginity, which has constantly continued down, since the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Gospel, which informs us that the Jews were deprived of the power of the sword, doth notwithstanding sufficiently signify to us, not only the extreme horror which the Jews had conceived against adultery (thus we find Jesus Christ upbraiding the Pharisees, that adulterers, that is, the greatest of sinners, entered into the kingdom of heaven before them), but also that the laws against adulterers and adulteresses were severely executed.

In short, one sees, that by a judgment of zeal, as they call it, they brought a woman to our Saviour which was taken in adultery, before they went about to stone her; for one ought to know, that the law only subjected young women, who were defiled after a contract, to that sort of punishment; because, after they were once contracted, they were reputed the wives of those to whom they were betrothed; and such an one was she of whom we read in the eighth chapter of St. John, and not a person actually married, whose punishment, according to the law, was to be strangled.

One sees that St. Paul supposeth, that the law which subjected a virgin to the will of her father, and gave him power to make void her vows at pleasure, was still in force.

I will not mention here what the ancients tell us of the distinction which they say was made between virgins and married women, as well in the temple as in their synagogues; I shall only say, that this their tradition is not without ground.

It is known that the order established by David for exercising the priestly functions was exactly observed by them: Zacharias was of the course of Abia, which was the eighth in order, as is mentioned 1. Chron. xxiv. 11. and he offered incense according to the law, set down Exod. xxx. verse 7, 8.

One sees that the Jews would not suffer the dead bodies to hang upon the crosses after sunset, according to what we find was practised at the time of Joshua, in pursuance of that law which we find Deut. xxv. verse 23.

I only mention these particulars now, intending hereafter, that I may avoid tedious repetitions, to enlarge more expressly, when I shall come to shew, as to every article, the exact accomplishment of the ancient oracles concerning the Messiah, in the person of our Saviour Jesus Christ; together with the use of these distinctions which bar any other, except
except Jesus Christ, from attributing that title to himself, and from abusing the credulity of the Jews.

It would be an easy matter for me to make a numerous list of these characters, according to all the different oracles which God gave to the Jews on this subject, and to justify the exact fulfilling of them in the person of Jesus Christ. And indeed it was not without cause that God furnished his people with so great a number of prophecies upon this head, his design being thereby to give us such solid grounds for our faith, by granting to it all these supports, that nothing might be able to shake it.

But because all of them may be referred to certain heads, and that an explication of the chief of them is sufficient to illustrate the rest, I shall stop there now.

I begin therefore with the character of the time in which the Messiah was to appear, and in which Jesus Christ did actually come into the world. And it being utterly impossible for any man to choose the time of his birth, any more than to choose an illustrious forerunner, or a certain place where, or a certain family of which he is to be born, and much less of a virgin for his mother; these characters may satisfy us, that all those that ever pretended to the title of the Messiah, could not reasonably do it.

C H A P. V.

That the Time pointed out by the Prophets for the Coming of the Messiah, is the very Time in which Jesus Christ appeared to the World.

I HAVE made it appear, in the third part of these reflexions, that the oracle of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, contains a formal character of the time in which our Saviour was to appear. I am therefore at present to shew, that the Jews at that time had wholly lost the authority of which they had been possessed for so many ages, which will most evidently appear from these four Reflexions on the history of the Gospel itself.

The first is on the birth of Jesus Christ, which happened precisely at the time when Augustus had ordered that all the subjects of the Roman empire should be enrolled; when we find that Joseph and the Blessed Virgin went to Bethlehem, their own city, to lift their names in the register of the Roman magistrate, which is an authentic proof of the servitude of that people to the Romans.

It will not be amiss here to take notice, first, of Moses’s numbering the people by Divine authority; secondly, of the numbering which David undertook, and for which he was exemplarily punished by God. Now, as God caused the people to be numbered, to shew that they were all
all his subjects, and as David numbered them with the same respect, so we must consider this action of Augustus was a public testimony of his sovereignty over the Jews, who were subdued by Pompey.

When Tertullian appealed to the public registers of the Roman empire, in his apologetic addressed to the Roman magistrate who resided at Carthage, he gave a sufficient evidence that we have no reason to suspect the relation of the Evangelists. One may join to this, the manner of the relation of these facts which the Evangelists give us; as, for instance, in the baptism of our Lord, they determine the years in which they were done, not only by the year of the high priest, but also by those of Augustus and Tiberius, &c.

The second reflection may be made upon the character of one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, Levi, or Matthew; who, before our Saviour made choice of him, was a publican: and it seems as if our Saviour had on purpose taken him from that employ, to be one of his Disciples, to give a real instance, and such a one as went every where along with him, that the Jesus, by paying tribute to the Roman empire, had wholly lost their temporal authority, which was to continue till the coming of the Messiah.

Here also may be made a third reflection, which is very natural, upon a passage related by the Evangelists. They come and ask our Saviour, Whether it were lawful to yield obedience unto the Romans? For since God had chosen these people, and had given them judges and princes of his own choosing, they had always an extreme aversion for any foreign domination: of this we have an illustrious example at the time of the siege of Jerusalem, when, notwithstanding the remonstrances by Jeremiah, yet they could not consent to submit. This is that with which they are upbraided, Ezra iv. verse 19. Neither were they more content with this their state of bondage, at the time of our Saviour; and some of their zealots took this occasion to tempt our Saviour, that they might make him odious, which side ever he should take. Their question is, Whether it be lawful to pay tribute to Caesar? To which he answers, with a Divine wisdom, Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's; which words being joined with the money that he made them produce, which was stamped with the emperor's image, do evidently shew that the Romans were sovereign lords in Judea: it is known that the coining of money is the undoubted mark of the sovereignty of that prince who makes it pass for current.

But if we must give some further light to the foregoing reflections, we need only observe the manner of our Saviour's suffering, as it is described to us. The Jews do agree, as may be seen in the Talmud (e), that criminal judgment was taken away from them forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem; and the Gospel supposeth the same thing. The Jews did not put Jesus Christ to death, but they carried him to Pilate, and demanded that he might be crucified. When Pilate said, Shall I crucify your king? they answer, We have no other king but Caesar; which confession was the confession of the whole Jewish nation, who were assembled at the feast of passover. In short, one fees, that accordingly the Roman magistrate passed sentence upon him. He was

(e) Sanhedr. fol. 24. 2.
was scourged before they led him to be crucified, which was a punish-
ment amongst the Romans. His body is not taken from the cross but by
permission from Pilate; and the Roman soldiers are those dogs, that is,
profane heathens, who enclosed him and tormented him, according
to the description which David has made, Psalm xxii.

The Jews have here but one answer to make, which God's former
dealing with that people seems somewhat to countenance; which is,
that as their seventy years captivity under the Babylonian empire did
not hinder the deferring of the accomplishment of that prophecy of the
scripture's not departing from Judah, for some centuries after the said cap-
tivity, so neither is it necessary to suppose that the Messiah was to
succeed immediately upon the ending of the kingdom of the Maccabees,
and upon the loss of their liberty under Pompey.

But here is a very great difference; for, first, during the Babylonish
captivity, God still preferred amongst them some form of government,
the great lords of the country being chiefly carried away captives, whilst
the pooreff and most miserable were left behind.

Secondly, the captivity lasted only 70 years, whereas this last dis-
ersion hath lasted above 1600.

Thirdly, the first captivity did not at all abolish those necessary marks
whereby the lawful lords of Judea might be distinguished; those that
were of the tribe of Judah, as well as those of other tribes, were very
well known, though they were not in possession of the kingdom: whereas
now every thing is confounded amongst them; and if one looks into
Christian records, he may find that many of the kindred of Jesus Christ
were put to death, because they could pretend to the throne of Judea.

Moreover, during the captivity of Babylon, they had Prophets amongst
them who expressly foretold the end of it; whereas, nothing of that
kind has yet been since the last destruction of Jerusalem, since which time
no prophet has appeared amongst them, that advantage being transferred
to the Christians, some of which, who next succeeded our Saviour, did
foretell the most remarkable events that were to follow to the end of the
world.

But if any one should be so nice as to call in question the reasons of
the difference here alledged; at least the Jews will find nothing to object
against the prophecy of Daniel, concerning the week at the end of which
the Messiah was to appear, and afterwards to be cut off. In short, if it
be true that Jesus Christ was born under the empire of Augustus, it is no
lefs certain that he entered upon his ministry in the fifteenth year of
Tiberius, and was crucified the nineteenth of his reign, that is, in the
midst of the four hundred eighty-seventh year from the twentieth year of
Artaxerxes, that is, before the end of the last week pointed out by Daniel,
as I have shewed in the eighth chapter of the third part of this book.
C H A P. VI.

That Jesus Christ had precisely such a Forerunner as the Prophets had described to precede the Messiah.

ONE will easily judge that it was agreeable to the greatness of the Messiah, and the contemptible state wherein he was to appear to the world, that he should have a forerunner; accordingly, we find Isaiah expressing himself in this manner, the year of the world 3292, almost 700 years before the birth of our Saviour. Malachi had expressly foretold the fame in his prophecy, about 420 years before his appearance. If this be once granted, it is easy to conceive that the son of a priest, living without any worldly splendor, and dying a violent death, though very glorious for him, was a proper forerunner to that Jesus who himself was to be crucified.

Our business therefore is to inquire whether the characters which the Prophets give to the forerunner of the Messiah, do agree with John the Baptist, in whom the Christians maintain that this prophecy of Malachi was fulfilled. This may be easily made out.

First, John the Baptist was miraculously conceived, at a time when his parents could not promise themselves any such thing: the angel Gabriel, who had declared to Daniel the coming of the Messiah, by pointing out to him the number of weeks, was the messenger of the conception of this forerunner of the Messiah. Several things passed at his birth, and at the time when they gave him his name, which were very strange, and which could not but be generally known, as well because of the accident which happened to Zacharias in the temple, as of his quality, being a priest.

Secondly, the extraordinary life which St. John led, being a Nazarite, ought to be carefully considered. He lived in a solitary place, as the Prophet Elijah did before him.

Thirdly, his preaching also had the character of that ancient Prophet, being thundering, as his was: he neither spared great men, nor those who had the reputation of the greatest sanctity; as the Pharisees particularly, whose pride and hypocrisy he touched to the quick.

Fourthly, he set forth the coming of the Messiah as at the door; The kingdom of heaven, said he, is at hand; alluding to the seventh of Daniel, where the kingdom of the Messiah is represented as a kingdom which was to come down from heaven, whereas the former empires had their rise from the earth.

In short, nothing could be more illustrious than the ministration of this great man.

He baptized publicly, for the space of one year, such as came to him, solemnly engaging them to repentance, in hopes of the sudden appearance of the Messiah. This ceremony, which was an imitation of their custom of initiating profelytes in the Jewish religion, was plainly an essay to establish a new religion, or at least to reform those corruptions which time had introduced into the Jewish religion.
In a word, we find him so generally followed, that the great council of the Jews thought fit to send deputies to him, to know whether he were not the Messiah they expected: this great man was so far from abusing the great credit he had gained, that he solemnly protested that he was only the forerunner of the Messiah, who was already come, but was as yet concealed in the midst of them.

His glory became so illustrious, that it stirred up jealousy in the mind of Herod, who cast him into prison, and at last caused his head to be cut off in the castle of Macherom, to satisfy the lewd Herodias, whose marriage, or rather incest, with Herod, he had reproved.

Before St. John was beheaded, he sends his Disciples to Jesus Christ, to inform himself whether he were the Messiah; which our Saviour proves to them by the miracles which he wrought in their presence, and by the testimony of the Prophet Isaiah, which St. John had before alleged as a proof of his call.

All these facts were so illustrious, and so well known, that St. John constantly passed for a great Prophet amongst the Jews, the Pharisees themselves not daring to question it: he received public deputations from the Jews, who demanded the reason of his ministry; and he himself sent one to Jesus Christ, that his Disciples might be acquainted with him, and that they might give him a second public testimony; and last of all, he dies a glorious martyr for his purity, after he had made a vast number of Disciples, who were so well dispersed in all places, that St. Luke tells us, in the Acts, that some of them were found in Asia, who received the Gospel and the gifts of the Spirit, in which they had been as it were initiated already by the baptism of St. John.

It appears afterwards that St. John was looked upon as the forerunner of the Messiah: Jesus Christ faith he was the greatest of all the Prophets; and when Herod heard of the reputation of Jesus Christ, he supposed that St. John was raised from the dead.

The Jews not conceiving that John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Messiah, because they understood the prophecy of Malachi literally which also make the LXX add to the text the word Thisbites, in that passage of Malachi; therefore Jesus Christ declares, that it was indeed he of whom Malachi had spoken.

I acknowledge that John the Baptist did not do any miracle; but then he uttered, 1. so plain an oracle concerning the miraculous effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the Disciples, that we find nothing so great or so clear in all the ancient prophecies: He that cometh after me, faith he, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

2. He gave a second oracle, though not so plain as the former, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem: Whose foot is in his band, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will burn up the chaff with fire.

These two oracles contain the end of the old dispensation, and the beginning of the new: the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were given to facilitate the publishing of the Gospel among the Gentiles; and the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the temple, happened as well to punish the crime which the Jews had committed when they put the Messiah to death,

(5) Mal. iv. 5.
death, as to take away all their pretences of believing that the Messiah was not come, who was to appear whilst that temple stood.

But, before I conclude this chapter, I must observe three or four things, which are very necessary to confirm the authority of the testimony which this forerunner of the Messiah hath given to Jesus Christ.

It is a maxim amongst the Jews, that he who is acknowledged for a Prophet, may confirm the authority of another, by attesting him to be a true Prophet(g). And this is that which St. John did to Christ; he was generally accounted a Prophet, and he attested that Jesus Christ was so. This was that which confounded the elders of the Jews, when they demanded of our Saviour, By what authority John acted? Jesus Christ answered their question with another, Whether St. John had a call from God?

The first observation therefore is, That we cannot accuse him of acting underhand with Jesus Christ, for we do not find any correspondence kept up between them: one of them was the son of a priest, the other of a carpenter's wife; the one dwelt in Judea, the other in Galilee; the one concealed himself, whilst the other's reputation had got him a great many Disciples. The Disciples of the one were very jealous of the Disciples of the other, and endeavoured to inspire their matter with the jealousy that possessed themselves.

The second is, That the Disciples of Jesus are the persons that wrote the history of John the Baptist, which they do as those who were concerned for his glory and reputation; though at first they did not stand in the least by him, but rather by that means inflamed Herod's hatred against them, who contributed to the death of St. John, as well as of Jesus Christ.

The third is, That when St. John was beheaded, whomever had any correspondence with Jesus Christ, it is extravagant to conceive, that the Disciples of Jesus Christ should have forged the testimony which they say this great man gave to Christ, because this would have been to employ the authority of a man who, never having wrought any miracles, and being long since beheaded by the order of Herod, seemed to be quite forgotten.

The fourth is, That it is not probable that they could ever entertain a design of imposing on the world in such a manner as this, which related to public facts known to all Judea, to all the priests, yea, to the whole nation assembled at their public feasts, to Herod the king, and to the Disciples of John themselves, who would not have been wanting to refute and convince them; whereas, on the contrary, we see, that by the disposition which St. John had wrought in them, they were easily won to the faith of Christ. This is evident, from the example of Apollos, a Disciple of John the Baptist's Disciples, who became afterwards so excellent a preacher of the Christian religion.

(e) Maimond. de fundam. legis,
CHAP. VII.

That Jesus Christ was born of the Family of David, then reduced to a mean Condition, as had been already foretold by the Prophets.

We have considered the time in which our Saviour was to be born; let us now speak of the family from whence he was to proceed. It has been proved already, that this promise was made to the family of David by Nathan the Prophet, II. Sam. vii. 12. I Chron. xvii. 11. in the year of the world 2959. David repeats this his hope, Psalm lxxxix. 4. and Psalm cxxxii. 11. And about the year of the world 3292, the Prophet Isaiah adds further, that the Messiah should be in a despicable condition.

There are four things which fully confirm this truth.

The first is, the kindred which was between Elizabeth and the Blessed Virgin, whence it appeared that her relations were of the tribe of Judah, and that she was known to be of the family of David.

One ought to observe here a thing, which though at first sight seems to be of small importance, yet we cannot but think that St. Luke wrote it without design; and that is, the journey of the Blessed Virgin to one of the cities of Judah, after her conception, to visit Elizabeth her kinswoman, the wife of Zachariah, and the mother of John the Baptist. I shall not mention at present any other reasons of this journey, which may seem to be worthy of the Divine wisdom; and so I shall only observe at present, that this visit was made to Elizabeth in a city of Judah, which is a demonstrative proof that Jesus Christ was of the family of David, and consequently of that of Judah; so that this is far from being made use of as an objection against it, as some have done.

It is well known, that the priests had leave to take a wife of what tribe they pleased: but who sees not at first sight, that it was natural for a priest, dwelling in one of the cities of Judah, to marry in that tribe amongst whom he lived; besides that the priests had of a long time affected to make alliances with that tribe, before any other?

The second thing which ought to be joined to this, is, the manner of Elizabeth's expressing herself to the Blessed Virgin, considering her as bearing the Messiah in her womb; and upon this account she called her the Mother of my Lord, alluding to Psalm cx.

The third is, that the Blessed Virgin, in her song, where she speaks of herself as the person in whom the promise made to Abraham was accomplished, Luke i. verie 54, 55. which promise concerned the Messiah, sets forth herself as heir to the kings of Judah, and chosen before any of her ancestors, notwithstanding all their glory: He hath put down, faith she, the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted them of low degree.

The fourth is, that Zachariah the priest, who was well acquainted with the Blessed Virgin, at whose house she had been during the first three months of her being with child, and who could not be ignorant of
of her lineage, always owned her to be of the family of David. It is evident that he looked upon the Blessed Virgin as the mother of the Messiah, as well as Elizabeth his wife. He seems to have considered the infant that was to be born of her, as the Redeemer promised to Abraham, and the Blessed Virgin as the heirs of David; and therefore faith, That God had raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. There can be nothing more convincing than this observation; for, first, Zachariah was a priest, that is, one of those to whom the care of the genealogies of the Jews was committed. 2. He appears to have been very well versed in the prophecies which fixed the Messiah to the family of David. 3. He considered his son as the forerunner of the Messiah, when he proposed that the oracle of Malachi should be fulfilled in that son whom God had so miraculously bestowed upon him. 4. He needed only have examined the agreements of her marriage, and he would then certainly know whether the Blessed Virgin was not of another tribe, which would have cured him of any possible illusion.

In short, St. Luke observes very exactly, that this journey of the Virgin to her kinswoman, and all the circumstances which prove the Blessed Virgin to have been of the family of David, were things well known throughout all the hill-country of Judaea, that it might not be pretended that this important fact was any ways obscure.

But, secondly, this genealogy of Jesus Christ is carried up to David and Judah; and it is visible that this was a thing exactly known, especially since Jesus Christ always passed for the son of David, blind men themselves calling him so.

A third thing to be considered is, the Blessed Virgin's going to Bethlehem, to be there enrolled, according to the decree of Augustus Caesar. There had been several numberings of the people; the first was at the appointment of God himself; the second was by an order from David; and in both, an exact distinction was made between the tribes themselves, and the families of each tribe: and one sees that the same was observed in this last register, which was made by Augustus's decree in the 4000th year of the world.

Joseph and Mary went up to Bethlehem, which was the seat of David's family: nothing appears here of design or affection: they made no stay at Bethlehem, and the occasion that brought them thither was absolutely strange and unlooked for; and yet it was certainly an accomplishment of that prophecy of Micah, chap. v. verse 2. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, &c.

This remark upon the decree of Augustus is of great moment, because thereby the Virgin's being of the family of David appears to be the most indisputable truth in the world, as having been owned first by the whole family of Judah for three months; secondly, by the genealogy which subsisted entire, as the Talmudists themselves grant in the treatise de Sponsal. chap. iv. sect. 5. where they testify that the genealogy of the royal family was without difficulty; thirdly, by the public testimony of all their kindred, who met in a body before the Roman magistrate.

The fourth remark is, that when Herod knew of the birth of the Messiah at Bethlehem, where, by the confession of the Jews, he was to be born, he would have involved Jesus Christ in the massacre which swept away
away the innocent children, if the same Providence which brought him to Bethlehem, to demonstrate that he was of the house of David, had not withdrawn him from thence, to preserve him from that tyrant who was afraid of being cast from his throne by one of David's heirs.

The fifth is, that Jesus Christ did not only often allude to the place of his birth, in calling himself the Bread come down from Heaven, the word Bethlehem signifying the House of Bread, but he constantly owned himself for the Son of David. Upon this it is that he grounds the objection which he makes to the Jews; How is it that David calls the Messiah his Lord? And indeed this fact was so constantly owned by all, that even persons who were possessed with devils did not dispute it, as may be seen in the Evangelists.

The sixth is, that though two of the Evangelists set down the genealogy of our Saviour with some difference, yet the Jews never took occasion from thence to question Jesus Christ's descent from David; his Apostles always building on that foundation; which may be seen as a thing taken for granted in St. Peter's sermon, Acts ii. and in the epistles of St. Paul, where we find our Saviour always filed the Son of David according to the flesh.

To these already mentioned we may add the three following observations. The first is, that if the genealogy of our Saviour had not been distinctly known, the Apostles would never have troubled themselves to have set it down; much less would they have placed it in the front of their books, as knowing that the beginnings of books are always more examined than the ends, and would certainly be so by a people who always stuck very close to their genealogies. In short, either the genealogies of the Jews were at that time as confused as they are at present, and so they could not have served as characters to discover the Messiah by; in which case the Apostles would have contented themselves to have hinted that Jesus Christ always passed for the son of David, as they have done in several places of their writings, without giving us the whole series of his pedigree; or else they were at that time distinctly known, in which case it was the easiest thing in the world to have confuted them.

The second is, that the differences which are found between the genealogy of Jesus Christ set down by St. Matthew, and that by St. Luke, is so far from giving us an occasion to doubt of the Apostles faithfulness in this matter, that indeed it is a new proof of their exactness in a matter of so great importance; for it can scarcely be imagined but that, in so long a series of ages, there must have been some of the ancestors of our Saviour in which that law took place, which obliged the younger brother to marry the widow of his elder brother deceased without issue, and so to raise up seed to him, which gave occasion to a genealogy not natural, but legal, the children bearing the name of the deceased elder brother, and possessing his estate. Now the Evangelists have set down both these genealogies exactly, which is an invincible argument of their care and fidelity.

The third is, that it was so much the more necessary to make this remark in the genealogy of the Messiah, because, as we have observed elsewhere, it was with relation to the desire of giving birth to the Messiah, or of having children which might live under his empire, that God
at first permitted this kind of incest with the widow of a deceased brother, which otherwife was so severely prohibited by the law.

As to the low estate to which the family of David was then reduced, it is visible that David and Solomon reigned with great glory; but Rehoboam succeeding them, ten tribes fell from him to Jeroboam, in the year of the world 3029; and the posterity of Rehoboam was afterwards de-throned by Nebuchadnezzar, who carried Zedebiah the king into captivity in the year 3416.

After their return from captivity, they were entirely嘱th from the throne: the priests at first governing that nation; the Maccabees, who were of the family of Levi, reigning in Judea, from the return of the captivity of Babylon, until Herod the Edomite, who was made master of Judea by the favour of the Romans.

2. The family of David was at that time removed from their ancient seat, and was now fixed at Nazareth, where Providence seems to have removed them from Bethlehem, to take away that object of Herod’s jealousy, which would have offended him; as we see it did, when the wise men acquainted him with the birth of Jesus, which obliged him to make a diligent inquiry after the place where the Messiah was to be born; that Messiah whom he conceived to be a prince, who would rob him of the sovereignty to which he was raised.

In the third place, the Blessed Virgin was betrothed to a carpenter. Justin Martyr tells us that Jesus Christ made ploughs. See what the heirs of the kings of Judah were reduced to.

Fourthly, when she came to Bethlehem, she lodged in an inn, her kindred being not in a condition to afford her better accommodation.

It appears that the Divine Providence was very careful in executing this design. There were some decays of the family of David, which the Blessed Virgin expreses in her song. She was descended from the younger brothers of deposed princes, and reduced to a private state: she speaks of nothing but of lowness and meanness, not only in a way of humility, but to demonstrate the fulfilling of the prophecy concerning the throne of Jesse.

But that this might appear more evidently, and confirmed by the law, as it was her duty to present her son in the temple after the seventh day, with an offering, so she does not offer what is prescribed to the rich and wealthy, but an offering which is appropriated by God in the law to poor people, as appears Lev. xii.

One sees, by the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee, that the kindred of Jesus Christ were not very rich: their wanting of wine on such an occasion was no great mark of plenty.

One sees also, that Jesus Christ frequently represents himself as not having where to rest his head: on the cross he recommends his mother to one of his Disciples, and was himself maintained by those who followed him.
That Jesus Christ was conceived by the Virgin Mary, without any Operation of Man.

As this article is one of the most important of our religion, so it is well worth our attentive consideration. We may take notice here, that, according to the observation of Justin Martyr (b), the fable of Perseus took its rise from the prophecy of Isaiah. However, that prophecy being very express, according to the translation of the LXX, we are to consider how it was accomplished. It will not be enough here to say, that ordinarily extreme poverty is a sufficient bar against the suspicion of adultery; and therefore we desire the reader only to call to mind the observations set down in the second chapter of the second part of these Reflexions on the Books of the law of Moses. For

1. Polygamy and divorces were very frequent in the time of Jesus Christ, as appears from several passages of the Gospel, where God was pleased to give us examples thereof.

2. God was willing to give us instances of his severity against adulteresses, amongst which those were reckoned who suffered themselves to be defiled after they were betrothed. We have an example hereof in the eighth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, which I have illustrated in the fourth chapter of this fourth part.

3. It appears that the same laws which engaged parents to preserve the virginity of their daughters, did continue, and were still observed by the Jews, as well as those other laws which constituted the body of their religion: when Jesus Christ upbraids the Jews for having changed the true sense of the law, yet he never reproaches them upon this account.

4. The relation set down in the eighth chapter of St. John, makes it appear that the waters of jealousy still retained their virtue; that which Jesus Christ writ on the ground being probably nothing else but the curses which the law denounced against the woman that should violate her honour.

I have made it very evident, in the twentieth chapter of my second part, what was the use of those laws concerning the marks of virginity, to prevent any doubts that might arise concerning the same: it remains now to consider the several passages of the Evangelists, and to see what proofs we can find there to confirm this point, that Mary was indeed a virgin when she conceived Jesus Christ, and how we may answer the objections which the enemies of Christianity make against this truth.

The Evangelists tell us that this remarkable fact was declared by the Angel Gabriel, who had before foretold to Daniel the coming of the Messiah, and signified the exact time thereof. The conception of Isaac by a barren mother, as well as that of Samuel and John the Baptist, had been already

(b) Dial. cum Typb. p. 297. Isa. 5.
already declared in the same manner; and one miracle ought to serve as a preparation for the belief of a greater.

When the Disciples of Jesus Christ speak of the fact, they speak of it as a thing known throughout all Jerusalem, and which had no relation to their matter. Besides, we know the jealously that was between the Disciples of St. John and those of our Saviour.

But we have a further account besides of the message of an Angel to Joseph, after he had perceived that his betrothed wife was with child; for when he was ready to divorce her, either by exposing her to the rigour of the Divine law, Deut. xxii. 23. or else by exempting her from that extremity, he is diverted from his intention by this warning from heaven. In all which we meet with nothing but what is very probable; for Joseph expresses his hatred and distaste, as conceiving her to be debauched, and was resolved not to receive her, but by an order from heaven.

Moreover it is very remarkable, that we find all things recited in such a manner, as it was necessary they should come to pass, on supposition that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin of the house of David.

For, first, we find this event appeared incredible to the person herself who was designed to effect it, because she could not easily make the application at first.

2. It caused exceeding joy to the person who saw herself chosen by God to fulfill so glorious a promise, whereby the family of David was to be restored to its ancient lustre. This is evident from the hymn of the Blessed Virgin; which if we compare with the Psalms of David, we shall see that that family still retained all the piety of their ancestors, with all those signs of acknowledgment which an event of such a nature did justly require.

3. It appears that Joseph acquiesced in this truth, he who otherwise did not seem very credulous, till he was instructed from heaven concerning a matter so rare and difficult to be conceived. He retires for some time into Egypt, and affords Mary and her son all the service they could reasonably expect from him.

St. Jerome alleges three reasons why it was needful for the Blessed Virgin to be betrothed to Joseph (i).

1. That the original of the Blessed Virgin might be proved by the pedigree of Joseph, to whom she was related.

2. That, according to the law of Moses, she might not be stoned as an adulteress.

3. That in her flight into Egypt she might have the comfort of a guardian rather than of a husband.

Neither can any thing be opposed to the belief of these matters, but some very weak conjectures: the first is, that her being contracted with something obscure the distinct notion of virginity; and secondly, that the Blessed Virgin did always pass for the wife of Joseph, even according to the style of Jesus Christ himself; and lastly, that the relation which the Evangelists give of this matter, was not known till long after the death of Jesus Christ.

(i) Contr. Helvidium.
But it is an easy matter to satisfy the mind of any reasonable reader in this thing: It was necessary that the Blessed Virgin should be betrothed:

1. To secure her life, which would have been in danger if she had been delivered whilst she was reputed to be a virgin; for she would have been accused of whoredom, and consequently have been put to death.

2. It was necessary she should be betrothed, and pass for the lawful wife of Joseph, that her son might not be banished from the congregation of Israel, as a bastard, in the rigour of the law.

As for the other objection, I easily grant that the Blessed Virgin always passed for the wife of Joseph: the herself faith, and thy father sought thee. But withal, at that very time, Jesus Christ unveiled that mystery in the presence of all the Jews, maintaining that he was the Son of God, in whose house he was at that time: it was at a solemn feast of the Jews, where the whole nation was assembled, and in the midst of an assembly of their Doctors, that he declared the temple to be the house of his Father, as he afterwards constantly called it.

We find him, at another time, declaring the same in the presence of his family at Cana in Galilee: Woman, what have I to do with thee? faith he to the Blessed Virgin (k); to put her in mind of some passages which could not but preserve in her a very particular respect for him.

He gives yet a further degree of light into this matter, when, his mother seeking to come at him, he faith, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? that is, kinsmen. It is probable that Joseph was dead before our Saviour entered upon his ministry; however, his making no mention of his reputed father, he knew how careful he was to avoid any thing that might obfusc his miraculous birth.

Last of all, it is very consideralbe, that this passage being not the only character which was distinguished the Messiah from all others, but was to be confirmed by the miracles of Jesus Christ, by his resurrection, and those other proofs of his Divine nature, it was at first not much insisted on, because there was a necessity that it should continue veiled for some time, upon the account of the frequent apparitions of Angels, and of God himself in a human form, that so the truth of his humanity should be established by his life and death, before the publication of his miraculous conception.

For it is certain that the Apostles preached up this truth, and that the Evangelists had put it in writing before the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth; and yet we do not find that it was ever contested. The Evangelists describe the methods which the Jews took to make the resurrection of Christ to be doubted of, and to flight his miracles; and do we think they would not as well have given us the objections of the Jews against a thing of which till then never any instance had been known in the world?

I know very well that some of the ancients have told us that the Jews were offended, that the Blessed Virgin, after she was delivered of our Saviour, should seat herself in the place appointed for virgins; and that, because Zacharias the priest maintained her in so doing, he was thereupon

(k) John ii. 4.
thereupon killed by them between the temple and the altar, with which our Saviour upbraids the Jesus. I know also that they affirm that she was forced to confirm the truth of her virginity, by submitting herself to a search of matrons; yet I cannot believe that she ever underwent any such examination, of which the silence of the Evangelists, and St. Luke’s in particular, fully convinces me; and therefore I am inclined to think that no such objection was ever made against her.

In the mean time, it is well worth our noting, 1. That the Blessed Virgin had Zachariab the priest as an examiner and witness of her behaviour from the beginning, at whose house she abode during the first months of her being with child, and who publicly divulged the miraculous birth of his own son, and his leaping in his mother’s womb at the salutation of the Blessed Virgin.

2. That the Blessed Virgin lived many years after the passion of our Saviour, that she might undergo and answer any accusations of that nature.

3. That she also had for witnesses of the miracles which attended her conception, all the Disciples of St. John, as well as those of Jesus Christ, though the Disciples of St. John did not agree with the Disciples of Jesus Christ.

4. That what she declared of herself, was not a fact which had no traces whereby it might be examined in the Old Testament.

5. That the Jesus had thirty years to examine the several particulars which had relation to the Messiah, and the miraculous manner of his birth, at the time when he published this particular passage of her life.

6. That we cannot call in question the veracity of the Blessed Virgin in the account which she gives us of what concerned herself, of which no witnesses could be produced, forasmuch as the accomplishment of that part of her prophecy, that all nations should call her blessed, clearly shews that she had received the spirit of prophecy; no more than we can suspect any forgeries in the relations of other Prophets, though we have no other testimony concerning them, but that of the Prophets themselves.

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**CHAP. IX.**

That Jesus Christ lived and preached after the same Manner as the Prophets had foretold the Messiah should do.

I HAVE clearly shewn that Jesus Christ was born of the posterity of Adam, by Seth, by Noah, by Abraham, by Isaac, by Jacob, by Judah, by David, as it was foretold of the Messiah by the most ancient oracles, the increase of which I have already taken notice in my third part.

I have afterwards shewed, that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, whereby
whereby those oracles, The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head (l), and A virgin shall conceive and bear a son (m), seemed to be clearly accomplished. Let us now see, according to those oracles, what kind of person the Messiah was to be, from his birth to his death, according to those ideas which the Prophets have given us.

Moses expressly tells us, Deut. 18. that the Messiah was to resemble him; The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me (n): which place, as I have observed before, has been so constantly applied to the Messiah, that it appears that not only John the Baptist, when he sent his Disciples to Jesus Christ, Philip speaking to Nathanael, and the Disciples when they were asked by our Saviour who he was, but also the Samaritan woman, understood it to without the least hesitation, and said, That when the Messiah should come, he would tell them all things.

In short, one sees an exact proportion between Moses and Jesus Christ; not only because our Saviour was saved in his infancy from the hand of Herod, and from a river of blood, like another Moses; or because Egypt served for a retreat to him, as Moses had hid himself in Arabia; or because he was rejected by his brethren, those of Nazareth, who would have thrown him headlong from a rock, because he declared himself to be the promised deliverer and Messiah, by applying to himself the words of Isaiah, The spirit of the Lord is upon me, &c.

Neither shall I now take notice of his being despised and disowned by his brethren, and called a Galilean, whereas indeed he was of Judea; for indeed the Messiah was to be treated as a Nazarene, that is, a contemptible person, and a man of no consideration: for we may find that because our Saviour was brought up at Nazareth, though he was born at Bethlehem, he was therefore looked upon as a person incapable of anything that was great; Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? said Nathanael to Philip (o); and the Pharisees to the officers whom they had sent to take Jesus, Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet, much less the great Prophet, the Messiah, who by way of eminence is so called. It is upon this account that he was called a Galilean, not only by the Heathens, but by his own Disciples too; for the word Galilean seems to have been a name for one of an impure extraction, because many of other nations dwell among the Jews in Galilee. But I shall take notice of several other more important resemblances between them, and such as have relation to the ministry of Moses rather than his person, by referring all to his preaching, his miracles, his predictions, and some other heads of that nature.

First, then, Jesus Christ, that he might at first maintain the character of the Messiah, appears in the temple. John the Baptist had heard him called the Son of God, by a very peculiar witness, a voice from heaven. Wherefore we see that, at his first entry upon his ministry, he drives out those that profaned the house of God, whom he called his Father, with a scourge; and this he did at the feast of the passover, before the whole nation of the Jews (p).

Here is another character of the Messiah; he was to begin the exercise of

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(l) Gen. iii. 15.
(m) Isai. vii. 14.
(n) Deut. xviii. 15.
(o) John i. 46.
(p) John ii. 13, 14, 15, &c.
of his ministerial functions, in the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulon, according to the prophecy of Isaiah (q): and this our Saviour exactly accomplished by his beginning to preach at Nazareth, which was in the tribe of Zebulon; and he conversed much at Capernaum, which was in the tribe of Naphtali, according to the observation of the Evangelists.

But I proceed to consider some circumstances of his ministry. Isaiah had foretold that the Messiaih was to preach the Gospel to the poor; which Jesus applies to himself in the synagogue at Nazareth, declaring that in his person that prophecy was fulfilled; viz. The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, wherefore the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, &c. (r).

The choice which he made of his Disciples from among the meanest of the people, and the basest of the crowd which followed him wherever he went, ought to pass for a sufficient accomplishment of this prophecy.

The Messiah, according to the representation which Isaiah gives us of him, was to publish the tidings of the remission of sins; and was not this that which Jesus Christ did, during the course of his ministry?

The Messiah was to preach the remission of sin, in such a manner, as that he might dry up the fountain of it, at the same time, in calling men to the study of sanctification: this was admirably performed by Jesus Christ; 1. In correcting those abuses which the Jewish Doctors had introduced into the law; 2. In declaring that the effect of sanctification was to be looked for in the heart, rather than in the eyes or hands.

One may see afterwards, 1. That he knew the heart of man; which proved that he made it. This he testifies upon several occasions, in the answers which he made to those that spoke to him, and indeed in all his discourses, which were suited to the dispositions of the heart of those to whom he addressed them.

2. That he made use of parables, which are moral lessons, very easy indeed, but withal fitter for the subject than fables, and more worthy of God; parables, also, which were to ordinary and familiar amongst the Jews, that we find most of them at this day in the writings of the Jews, though they apply them to no other use.

3. That he descended to particulars, without using anything mean, which men are apt to do when they divide things minutely.

4. That he forgot no one precept of morality.

5. That he examined all the duties of religion, and made them infinitely recommendable by suggesting such excellent motives.

After all, we are to consider four things in the preaching of our Saviour, which will fully prove that he was the Messiah.

1. That his doctrine appeared to be wholly Divine: he had never been brought up at the feet of any Doctor; but had his breeding in a carpenter's shop.

2. That no crime was ever objected to him, notwithstanding that he upbraided the Pharisees with theirs; but he supported his doctrine by the holiness of his conversation.

3. That

(q) Isa. ix. 1. (r) Isa. xi. 1.
3. That he insensibly disposed the people to receive him as the Messiah, by the characters which God had given of him in the Prophets.

4. He prepared his Disciples and his auditors to expect that one day the Gentiles should enter into the church.

In short, can any thing be so surprizing, as to see a man who had lived thirty years as the son of a carpenter, to declare himself all at once a Doctor, to preach publicly, to censure the Doctors of his nation, to speak of the law and prophets with more depth and authority than all that ever went before him? Who can, without surprize, conceive that a man of the lowest quality should, from a carpenter’s shop, come and determine questions about the law, and tread under his feet the authority of all the great Rabbins every where, only by an I say unto you, so that none was able to contradict him! Certainly, when one sees our Saviour upon the mount explaining and defending the moral part of the law from the corruptions into which it was fallen, he appears not only as great as Moses on mount Sinai, but even as God himself, when he published his laws to that his ancient people.

Neither ought any one to have lefs admiration for that perfect innocence which shone through the whole course of his life. What crime had they to charge him with, when they put him to death, he who accused his enemies of so many? Who of you, faith he, accuses me of sin? We find him only accused of words ill understood, which they were resolved to misinterpret: his saying, That if they destroyed that temple, he would rebuild it in three days, was laid to his charge as a crime; and yet these words could not have been heightened into crimes, if they had been spoken in the same sense which they put upon them. This was an essential character of the Messiah, who was to be the reforer of holiness, according to the idea which the Prophets gave of him.

I should take notice afterwards that our Saviour, in his sermons, did by little and little diffuse the minds of his auditors and Disciples to conceive and believe him to be the promised Messiah. The first act of his public ministry, was an effect of his zeal for the holiness of a temple consecrated to his Father: he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, at the feast of the passover, which action of his was a solemn profession that he was the Son of God. Soon after, at Nazareth, he applies to himself that prophecy of Isaiah, The spirit of the Lord is upon me, &c. He explains himself yet more distinctly in Jerusalem, at the second passover, which he celebrated during the time of his ministry, that they might understand that he was the Messiah, according to the account which the Evangelists give us; and he explains himself yet more particularly upon John the Baptist’s message to him. By which means this truth became already so illustrious, that the multitudes would proclaim him King, that is, publicly own him for the Messiah, and obey him as their rightful Sovereign. And lastly, he explains himself in this matter by a question, when he asked his Disciples, What censures were past upon him in Judea, and what they themselves thought of him? (s)

In short, it is certain that Jesus prepared the minds of his Disciples to look for the calling of the Gentiles, which also was the character of the Messiah. Jacob had prophesied of old, To him shall the gathering of

(s) Matt. xvi.
the people be (t). But I shall pass by the oracles which foretell this matter. What signifies the history of the prodigal, unless it be the calling and the return of the Gentiles? the eldest son (the Jew) being extremely troubled at it. What means that saying of our Saviour, that he had other sheep, &c. or his prediction, that many should come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, when the children of the kingdom should be cast forth? I shall take notice, in another place, of the frequent repetition of such like oracles, and their exact accomplishment. These are sufficient at present to justify the solidity of this last reflexion, and the truth of this conclusion at the same time, that if one examines the life and preaching of our Saviour, he may find all those characters by which the promised Messiah might be known. Let us now proceed to the consideration of his miracles.

C H A P. X.

That the Miracles wrought by our Saviour clearly prove that he is the Messiah.

As the Messiah was to be very clearly distinguished from all others by his miracles, and as the Prophet Isaiab, chap. xxxv. sets down the power of working miracles as one of those characters by which he was to be known, so it is of great importance to us, to examine the miracles of our Saviour with great attention, whether they have the character of truth, and whether they come up to the idea which the Prophets give us of those wonders which the Messiah was to do.

The Evangelists, who tell us that he wrought almost an infinite number of them, have described more than thirty several sorts of them. He changed water into wine at the wedding at Cana; he healed the fick son of a courtier; he delivered one that was possest in the synagogue at Capernaum; he healed St. Peter's mother-in-law; he caused a vast number of fish to be caught; he cured a leper with a word, and with a touch he healed one sick of the palsy; he cured a woman of an inveterate issue of blood, and raised the daughter of a ruler of the synagogue from the dead; he cured the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda; he cured him that had a withered hand; he delivered a possessed person that was blind and dumb; he recovered the centurion's servant, and raised to life the son of the widow of Nain.

Neither are these that follow any less considerable: he restores sight to two blind men, he casts forth a dumb devil, he assuages a tempest by his word, he delivers two possest persons, and permits the devil to go into the herd of swine of the Gadarenes; he feeds above five thousand persons with two loaves and five fishes; he walks upon the sea, and calmeth a second

(t) Gen. xlix. 10.
a second tempest; he casts forth a devil from a daughter of a woman of Canaan, who was possessed; he cures one deaf and dumb; he feeds four thousand persons with seven loaves; he restores sight to a blind man of Bethsaida; he casts out a devil, after his Disciples had in vain attempted it; he restores sight to one born blind; he cured a crooked woman; he cures one of the dropy on the sabbath day; he raises Lazarus from the grave, after he had been dead four days; he heals ten lepers afterwards; he restores sight to a blind man at his entering into Jericho; and cures the lame and blind in the temple itself.

There are several characters which assure us of the faithfulness of the Evangelists in these their relations: 1. They wrote these things to convert the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem. 2. They marked the circumstances very exactly; and none could be ignorant of them, since they all went thrice a year up to Jerusalem. 3. The facts which they relate were lasting, and such as might be examined. 4. They speak of facts which they suppose that Jesus Christ was willing should be beyond all contest, that they might be better examined. 5. They speak of those facts which they maintain to be the accomplishment of the oracles concerning the Messiah whom the Jews expected.

But there are not fewer characters of truth in the miracles of our Saviour, to buoy them up. The first is, that most of the diseases which Jesus Christ cured, are described as absolutely incurable: this observation is of great moment, as well to discover to us the infinite power exerted by Jesus Christ, as to make known the extraordinary wisdom of the Apostles, who being men without learning, did notwithstanding set down the symptoms of the diseases which their master cured, far beyond what might be expected from their natural capacities.

The second reflexion belongs to the subjects upon whom these miracles were wrought; for we scarce find any of them, except his curing St. Peter’s mother-in-law, to be wrought upon persons who had least relation to Jesus Christ: he heals the servant of the high-priest, the son of the ruler of a synagogue, the son of a Roman centurion, and several others.

A third reflexion may be drawn from the places where they were done, and from the witnesses that were present. In short, they were wrought in public places, in the midst of cities and synagogues; some in Judea, some in Galilee, some at Jerusalem, at Nain, Sidon, &c. they were submitted to the examination of the most implacable enemies of Jesus Christ, the people of the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles, who dwelt in Palestina.

One may add also, that these miracles were of very different kinds, wrought in several places, and with very considerable circumstances, at the most solemn feasts, the passover and pentecost.

One ought to consider also, that Palestina was full of those whom our Saviour had cured; and that all the Jews who came up three times in a year to Jerusalem could not but take notice of them.

One ought afterwards to observe, that Jesus Christ communicated to his Disciples the power of working miracles in the second year of his ministry, which none else had ever done.

And lastly, it must be observed, that these miracles were lasting; the three
three dead men, whom our Saviour raised to life again, who were very young, and who in all probability lived longer than decrepit old men, were in the sight of all Judaea; and other sick and infirm persons, that he had healed, enjoyed life and health. 2. In short, the relation of Christ's miracles, which Pilate sent to Tiberius, sufficiently testifies that they were facts generally known; and, 3. That the certainty of them could so little be contested, that the Jews rather chose to accuse him of doing them by some magical secret, than to dispute the truth of them.

These reflexions sufficiently confirm the truth of the Evangelists relation, and of the miracles of Jesus Christ. To agree to what has been said, we need not refute the folly of those who have compared the miracles falsely attributed to Apollonius Tyaneus, with those of Jesus Christ. One hardly knows at this day whether ever there was such a man as Apollonius; whereas, ever since the Apostles, there have been Christians who have read the history of the miracles of Jesus Christ, and who have believed them after a due examination. Which of Apollonius's disciples was ever so bold as to say to Heathens, as Tertullian did in the second century, in his Apologetic, Bring to us what possessed persons you please, and we will heal them in the name of Jesus Christ?

But we ought also to add one thing more, That these miracles of Jesus Christ were exactly such as ought to have been made, to prove him to be the Messiah.

1. They were exactly such as Isaiah had foretold concerning the Messiah, chap. xxxv. as may be seen by comparing them with the text.

One ought only to observe, that this character is so peculiar, that it distinguishes the Messiah from all the other Prophets who went before him; for none of those to whom God had given power to work miracles, had either given sight to the blind, or power to the lame to walk.

2. They perfectly came up to the end of his ministry, as he was the Messiah; for it was his design to assure his Disciples of the immortality which he promised to them; and these cures, and these resurrections, which were wrought only by his word, were sufficient to convince them, as well of the sovereign power he had to execute his promises, as of his goodness, which was necessary to confirm the faith of his followers.

3. Some of his miracles were such as evinced his likeness to Moses: he changes water into wine at Cana; he feeds many thousands in the desert; he walks on the water, and makes one of his Disciples to walk with him; as Moses changed the waters to blood, and had caused manna to rain down upon the Israelites, and had opened the sea for their passage.

4. One ought to observe here, that if Jesus Christ's miracles were not like those of Moses, two only excepted, viz. his curving of the barren fig-tree, and the drowning of the swine, this was to shew that he was not come, like Moses, to execute the judgments of God, but to exercise acts of grace and mercy; those now mentioned being sufficient to evince it was not for want of power.

If the Samaritan woman argued very rationally when she said con-
cerning Christ, When the Messiah shall come, will he do greater signs than these? we may with more reason urge it now, since we know not only that Jesus Christ hath wrought such great miracles, but also conferred upon his Disciples a power of doing greater miracles than himself ever did.

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C H A P. XI.

That the Predictions of our Lord Jesus Christ clearly prove him to be the Messiah.

ONE might have observed, that John the Baptist foretold many things concerning the person of our Lord, and the glory of his ministry; that Simeon foretold that he was to be a sign which should be spoken against: and it is known how exactly these things were fulfilled.

But it will be more for our purpose to examine those prophecies which were pronounced by Christ himself.

I pretend not to repeat them all here, nor to shew by how many ways, and upon how many occasions, Jesus Christ did reiterate them: this would take up too much time. I shall only set down the chief of them, and add some few reflexions.

When Jesus Christ calls the fishes to follow him, he foretels that he would make them teachers of the world; I will make you, faith he, fishes of men. He promises to make them famous by miracles, and to lend them the gifts of his Holy Spirit, which the people of Israel had now for above 400 years been deprived of.

He promised to give them an authority over the consciences of men; so that what they should forbid us on earth, should be forbidden in heaven.

He foretels the calling of the Gentiles to his religion; Many, faith he, shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; which is the more considerable, because he seemed himself unwilling to shew any favour to the Gentiles, whom he called Dogs, according to the language of the Jews.

He foretels the rejection of the Jews; The children of the kingdom, faith he, shall be cast out into outer darkness.

He foretels the persecutions which were to happen to his Disciples from the Jews, as well as from the Roman governors; They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings, &c.

He foretels, that notwithstanding all these persecutions, yet his church should not only continue, affuring them that the gates of hell should never prevail against her; but also should greatly flourish and increase, according to what David had foretold, Psalm cx. verse 3, alluding to the sudden fruitfulnes which is caufed by dew.

He
He above thirty times foretels his suffering and death.
He foretels his resurrection the third day.
He foretels that "Judas should betray him, St. Peter deny him; that his Apostles should be scattered, as soon as they should see him smitten. He foretels the martyrdom of St. Peter, which he was to suffer for his sake; and to St. John, that he was to survive the destruction of Jerusalem. He foretels, that after his ascension to heaven, he should begin the call of all the nations of the earth; When I shall be lifted up from the earth, faith he, I shall draw all men unto me.

He often foretels the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; Behold, faith he, your house is left unto you desolate.

He foretels that many false Messiahs should come after him, whom the Jews should receive, though they had rejected him as an impostor.

Several reflexions may be made upon these predictions of our Lord. In short, one may observe at first, that there are three sorts of them in the New Testament: some of them were fulfilled soon after they were pronounced; as those concerning the as which he sent his Disciples for, those of his death and resurrection, of St. Peter's denying him, and the flight of his Apostles, &c.

The design of these was to establish the belief of those which were further off; which is the method of God himself, the Father of our Lord, in the Old Testament, as I have observed.

Some of them related to matters which were more remote; as the wars, for instance, which Christ foretold, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews.

Lastly, there were some whose accomplishment was at a very great distance, after many ages, some of them reaching to the end of the world.

One sees plainly that this mixture of our Saviour's predictions, which are of so very different sorts, is of use to confirm the belief, and ascertain the truth of them, the exact fulfilling the first oracle making way for the belief and expectation of the second, and so on, till all be fulfilled.

One may observe afterwards, that Jesus Christ and his Apostles, on whom he (according to his promise) after his ascension, poured forth the spirit of prophecy, did ordinarily follow the same notions and expressions which the Prophets of the Old Testament made use of.

Thus we find Jesus Christ makes use of Daniel's notions, where he speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem; thus we see that he imitates the most illustrious actions of the Prophets; and, to make his predictions the more observed, in accomplishing the prophecy of Zachariah on Palm-Sunday, in the midst of the acclamations of the people he weeps over Jerusalem, as if its destruction were already come. Thus Jesus Christ, faith to St. Peter, When thou shalt be old, another shall guide thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not (n); thus foretelling his death: thus he instructs him in the calling of the Gentiles, under a representation of all sorts of beasts, commanding him also, even as to the impure animals, Slay and eat. All the Revelations are full of such prophetic ideas, taken from the Old Testament, from Genesis, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zachariah, &c.

But

(n) Joh. xxv. 18.
**Reflexions upon the**

But here are other reflexions of as great importance as the former.

The first is, That the greatest part of these predictions are nothing but a continuance and more distinct explication of the oracles of the *Old Testament*, concerning the sufferings of the Messiah, the calling of the *Gentiles*, the destruction of the commonwealth of the *Jews*; and besides, they are continued to the last day of the world, which is the end of prophecy.

The second is, That these predictions had not the least probability upon which they might rationally have been grounded. What likelihood was there, that *Jesus Christ* should be crucified, he who raised the dead, who commanded the sea and winds, he whom they would have taken by force to make him their king? What likelihood was there, that the Apostles, a company of poor miserable *Jews*, should bring over the *Gentiles* to the religion of a man who was accursed by the synagogue of the *Jews*, and crucified like a slave by the authority of the *Roman* magistrate? What probability was there of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, whilst the *Jews*, accustomed to the *Roman* yoke, made it their business to avoid all manner of occasions that might stir up the indignation of their masters against them? *It is expedient, say they, rather that one man perish (meaning *Jesus*) than to hazard the welfare of the whole nation.*

The third is, That these oracles were written by the Apostles, not only amongst discourses of another nature, but also linked together in such a chain, that their connexion will not permit us to believe that they were contrived after the matters which they relate to were past; and also that they are constantly related by three Evangelists, long time before the things came to pass, St. *John* being the only witness of the destruction of *Jerusalem*.

The fourth is, That these oracles gave the Apostles as much grounds to expect calamities and violent deaths, as to *Jesus Christ* himself; so that there is no pretence of doubting that they were not faithfully recorded by the Evangelists; and that therefore, seeing the accomplishment has exactly answered to the oracle, we ought to look upon them as Divine oracles.

I confess that these oracles, no more than the books of the *New Testament*, were ever committed to the public custody of the *Jews*, as formerly the oracles of the Prophets of old were; but this cannot really diminish their authority.

I will not observe at present, that because the temple was to be burnt, it was not proper to depose them there; and it was for this reason God thought fit to cause the oracles of the *Old Testament* to be translated long before.

Nor yet, that it was very proper that these predictions, as well as the books of the *New Testament*, should be put into the hands of the *Gentiles*, who thenceforward were to be the people of God, and his temple.

But this I observe, that nothing can be imagined more solemn than these prophecies of our Saviour and his Disciples, as well as never any thing was more exactly fulfilled.

*Jesus Christ* was born at *Bethlehem*, according to the oracles. Now, as no man is master of the place of his birth, so it is plain that here is no
no room left for imposture: neither is a man any more the master of his death; wherefore, to give a certain character to his prophecy, he foretels his dying at Jerusalem; which accordingly was accomplished in all its circumstances. Can any thing be more exact?

But one may say, that it was easy for the Disciples to forge predictions suitable to the event, in like manner as Virgil hath done, in the sixth of his Æneids, of Marcellus. One may indeed contrive an imposture which shall be possible, and which may answer to some few oracles; but I shall hereafter shew the folly of that thought, when I come to prove the faithfulness of the Apostles and Evangelists.

But can we conceive such a suspicion concerning the conversion of the Gentiles, the ruin of Paganism, the victory of Christianity after ten perfections? It is now above 1600 years that the Christian Religion subsists; whereas, who could have assured the Disciples of Jesus Christ, that their doctrine would have had so much as one or two followers after their death? The greatest empires, that of the Chaldeans, of the Persians, of the Grecians, and that of the Romans, have been overthrown; and none of them singly have been of so long continuance as the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which nevertheles was attacked by all that was great and powerful in the world. Who sees not that this is the empire whereof Daniel speaks in the seventh of his Revelations, which was never to have end.

Jesus Christ foretold, as it is set down by his Disciples, according to the prophecy of Daniel, that the temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed, and never built again: who could tell the Apostles, if they had forged this oracle themselves, that the endeavours of Julian to confound this prophecy, when he began to rebuild the temple, would be in vain, as indeed they proved, by an effect of the Divine vengeance against the Jews, who were engaged in the rebuilding of it, under the authority of that emperor? (x)

Indeed, if one reflects on the oracles of Jesus Christ, one shall find them a thousand times more known than those of the Jews.

1. The greatest part of them were penned at one and the same time.
2. They were writ by several authors, who lived in different places.
3. They were read over the whole earth every Lord's day: they have been explained and commented upon soon after, every one endeavouring to take notice of their accomplishment.
4. They have been alluded in disputes against Jews and Gentiles, and have served for a foundation to the faith of the Christian church, whose teachers have made it their business to shew their uniformity with the oracles of the Old Testament, which are in the hands of the Jews, though the Jews have always considered the Christians as their most mortal enemies.

But one may also find that these oracles being for the most part much more clear and express, their accomplishment also hath been so much the more easily discernible: from whence it evidently follows, that Jesus Christ ought to be acknowledged as the Prophet that was like unto Moses, as is mentioned in the eighteenth of Deuteronomy, that is indeed the true Messiah.

(x) Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 25.
That Jesus Christ died precisely in the same Manner as it was foretold that the Messiah should die.

I have shewed, in my third part, that God had given to his church several oracles to explain distinctly this great truth concerning the Messiah.

1. He had set this up for a rule by Moses, Cursed is he that hangs on a tree.

2. He had proposed by David the idea of the Messiah, as having his hands and feet pierced; the Gentiles and Jews uniting themselves against him.

3. He had foretold by Isaiah, that the Messiah was to be accounted a malefactor, and put to death.

4. He had repeated the same ideas by the Prophet Zechariah, who describes the manner of his being pierced, which has a natural reference to the notion of crucifixion.

I have also set down the reasons for which God separated the several parts of those prophetical descriptions of so surprizing an event: the difficulty there was on the one hand to make these ideas to be received, which seem full of contradictions, the Messiah having been at first set forth as the Fountain of Blessing; and, on the other hand, their seeming incompatibility with the glory which God had promised to the Messiah, and by him to the Israelites.

And at last, I have shewed that these oracles do exactly and clearly describe the things which were to happen to the Messiah; which was to be so, because of the nature of those events, which were so strange, and at such a distance from the common ideas which men have, for the most part, of such things.

Our business therefore only is to consider at present, whether indeed Jesus Christ died in the same manner as the Prophets had foretold that the Messiah should.

This character is a very illustrious one, to confirm that Jesus Christ is the Messiah; for it is well known that a prisoner is no longer master of the things that happen to him, neither of the kind of his death, nor of the manner of his burial.

In short, nothing can be imagined more foolish than to suppose that the Disciples of Jesus Christ should apply to their master, that he might pass for the Messiah, such oracles as had not usually been applied to the Messiah by the Jews, amongst whom they lived, and whom they endeavoured to dispose for the receiving of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.

Now we cannot conceive any thing more exact than the agreement which we find between the prophecies and the event.

1. When Jesus Christ, by his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, riding on an ass, had put his Disciples in mind of one passage in Zachary, he obliged them also to cast their eyes upon another, when he foretold his death,
death, and their flight, as the accomplishment of this oracle; I will smite the shepherd, and the flock shall be scattered, Zach. xiii. 7. (y).

2. He was beset with a band of Roman soldiers, and the servants of the principal men amongst the Jews, who apprehended him, under the conduct of Judas; which exactly answers, first, to the description which we find Psalm xxii. Dogs, that is Heathens, whom the Jews treated as such, and strange Bulls, what is Jews, represented by clean Beasts, have beset me round; and secondly, to that other prophecy, He that eats bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

3. He offers himself freely to death, according to that of Isaiah, that he gave his soul an offering for sin. This appears, not only by his going into the garden, where he knew that he should be taken, but also by his telling the soldiers that he was the man they looked for. He opposed St. Peter's attempts towards his rescue, and declares that he did not fly from death, but was willing to satisfy the intent of the prophecies.

4. He is forsaken by his Disciples, as he himself had testified of it as foretold by the Prophets, Zach. xiii. 7.

5. He is struck on the face before Annas, as Jeremiah had foretold, Lament. iii. 30. He gave his cheek to him that smiteth him.

6. He appears before Caiaphas, surrounded by every thing that was great amongst the Jews, whether lawyers or churchmen, according to Psalm ii.

7. He is silent before his unjust judges, and neglects to answer the accusations which the false witnesses deposed against him, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, As a sheep before his shearsers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth, Isaiah lii. 7. and the description which David gives of him, Ps. xxxi. and xxxix.

8. They opened their mouths against him, in accusing him of blasphemy, as David had figuratively expressed it, Psalm xxii. 13.

9. They spit in his face, they buffeted and abused him the whole night, according to that oracle of Isaiah, xlix. 6.

10. When Judas saw that Jesus Christ was delivered to Pilate by the Jews, who demanded his crucifixion, he returned the thirty pieces of silver, wherewith they purchased the Potters field, afterwards called the Field of Blood, and set apart by the Jews for the burial of strangers, as was foretold by Zechariah, xi. 12. and by Jeremiah, xxxii. 25.

11. He is accused before Pilate, and brought before Herod, without justifying himself of the crimes laid to his charge, as it is Psalm xxxviii. and xxvii. 12.

12. Pilate and Herod agree in conspiring the death of Jesus Christ, according to the description of Psalm ii.

13. Pilate desiring to save Jesus, the Jews demand Barabbas might be released, and Jesus punished, as David had foretold, Psalm xxii. 14.

14. Jesus Christ was scourged by Pilate's order, which was foretold, Psalm xxxviii. and lxix. Isaiah lii. ver. 5, and chap. lxiii.

15. He is brought forth by Pilate to the people with an Ecce Homo, Behold the Man, which was foretold by Isaiah: When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him; he is despised and rejected of men: we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Gg 4

(y) Matth. xxvi. 31.
16. He is afterwards delivered to the soldiers, who, before they crucified him, insulted over him with a thousand indignities, and scourged him again, according to the prophecies so often before alleged.

17. They crucify him with two robbers, which answers to that prophecy, Isaiah liii. 12. He was numbered with transgressors.

18. They give him gall and vinegar to drink, as was foretold Psalm lix.

19. They pierce his hands and feet in nailing him to the cross, which answers to Psalm xxii. 17, 18.

20. They part his garments, which is represented in the same Psalm, verse 19. and cast lots on his vesture, according to the same Psalm, in the very same place.

21. He suffers a thousand reproaches upon the cross, according to what we find Psalm xxii. verse 8, and Psalm lxix. verse 8, 10.

22. And in particular, the Jews and Scribes reproach him in the very words of Psalm xxii. verse 8.

23. Jesus Christ cries out, applying to himself the beginning of Psalm xxii. My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me? as he had before applied to himself the prophecy concerning the Messiah in the third of Daniel.

24. He commends his soul into the hands of God, in the very words which we read Psalm xvi.

These are the principal circumstances of the death of Jesus Christ, which one sees to be exactly agreeable to the prophecies going before concerning them: let us now consider those which followed his death, which we shall not find to be less particular.

1. The bones of Jesus Christ were not broken, as those of the two thieves; which one may see foretold, Psalm xxxiv. verse 21.

2. They opened his side with a spear, according to the idea of Zechariah, chap. x. verse 12. They shall look upon him whom they have pierced.

3. His body is buried by Joseph of Arimathea, in a new sepulchre; which answers to the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. liii.

These remarks do, in my judgment, clearly prove, that in the death of Christ all the characters by which the Prophets have distinguished the death of the Messiah, are actually found.

But, that we may yet be more sensible how justly these oracles are applied to Jesus Christ, here are some reflexions upon the application which the Apostles make of these particular facts which happened to Christ, to those oracles which I have now mentioned.

The first is, That the relation of these facts is joined with an account of the weaknesses whereinto they all fell: they relate their own flight, and forsaking their master, with St. Peter's denying of him; whilst they set down the courage of those women, and that entire love which they shewed to the person of Jesus.

The second is, That the account of the accomplishment of these ancient oracles is interwoven with the accomplishment of those which were uttered by Jesus Christ, which alone are sufficient to make good his claim.

The third is, That our Saviour did never on any occasion more openly stand to his pretension of being the Messiah, than when he applied to himself
himself those oracles which by their public consent were referred to the Messiah, which the Jews at that time more obstinately contested than ever.

The fourth is, That there never was a more exact description of all circumstances which might assure us of the truth of any relation, than that which the Evangelists have given us of the death of Jesus Christ, in which we find the places, the time, the persons, their discourses, and other things of that nature, set down with extreme care.

The fifth is, That as this fact, with all its circumstances, is the most exactly described of any thing that ever was, so it was a matter concerning which it was scarce possible to impose upon any one. All was done in the face of the whole nation, who were met together at their most solemn festival: all was done in the presence of the sovereign Heathen magistrate, of the council of the Jews, of Herod, and of those who followed him to Jerusalem.

The sixth is, That we find an account of some miracles interwoven with this relation of the Evangelists concerning the death of Christ; and those miracles as public, and as little subject to suspicion, as the death itself of Jesus Christ, if we take the pains to examine them.

They who come to take Jesus, fall down backward to the ground; Jesus Christ restores the ear of the high priest’s servant, which was cut off: there was darkness over all the land, from nine o’clock in the morning till noon; the vail of the temple is rent. These are miraculous actions, and such as the Jesus might easily have refuted, wherefore they had been proposed, if the truth of them had not been beyond all question.

From all these remarks it evidently follows, That it is impossible to dispute the application which the Apostles make of these oracles, which are so particular, to the person of Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah: we find every part of their relation exactly answering to the prophecies. How then can any one doubt of their being fulfilled in him? especially seeing it is evident, by so many other proofs, that he was indeed the Messiah, and that God has been pleased so many other ways to confirm the same truth.

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CHAP. XIII.

That Jesus Christ was raised again the third Day, according to the Prophets, and afterwards ascended into Heaven.

HAVING shewed, in the foregoing Chapter, that Jesus Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate, for maintaining that he was the promised Messiah; I am now to shew, that, according to the prophecies set down in my third part, he rose again the third day, and afterwards ascended into heaven. As these two facts are the most important
portant of all that are contained in the Gospel; because, if they be denied, all the Divine worship given to Jesus Christ, by the Apostles, and a great number of Jews and Gentiles, who received him for their matter in matters of religion, is absolutely unlawful; so we ought solidly to prove, that they are indisputably true. Of which we shall be fully convinced, by making some observations upon the relation which the Evangelists give us concerning them; and we shall easily find therein all the characters of truth.

There is no necessity of observing, that a resurrection from the dead is a fact which can hardly be believed; and that, though the Jews did not all of them look upon it as an impossible thing, yet there were Sadducees amongst them, whose doctrine was publicly taught. It is certain that though the Disciples had seen Jesus Christ raising three persons from the dead, and amongst others Lazarus, a little before his death, yet we find that they were not thereby more disposed to believe that Christ was to rise from the dead.

In short, though the Evangelists tell us, that Jesus Christ himself had foretold that he was to rise again the third day, which was a thing so commonly known, that the priests, to elude the prophecy, desired of Pilate, that a guard might be set on Jesus's grave; yet they expressly tell us, that the Disciples, none excepted, were in such a conformation at the death of Jesus Christ, that they had entirely loft the hopes of seeing the accomplishment of that prophecy. Some pious women, who had accompanied him to the cross, and were desirous to shew some marks of their veneration after his death, came indeed to his sepulchre, but with spices to embalm his dead body; so far were they from expecting to find him risen from the dead. Though these holy women were convinced of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, by the apparition of an angel, by the discourse of our Saviour himself, and by the repetition of his order, that they should go to Galilee, where they should see him, yet the relation which they give of these things is accounted fabulous; so that two only of all the Apostles had the curiosity to go to the grave, and inform themselves. Here is a great unbelief amongst the Apostles, which was to be cured: this was a condition wholly inconsistent, if we suppose them impostors, and that they intended to impose upon the world.

A second thing we may observe is, That as the incredulity of our Saviour's own Disciples was extraordinary, so we cannot imagine any more efficacious means than were employed to overcome this their doubtfulness. If one joins the relations of the Evangelists together, one may find several degrees of evidence in those proofs which confirm the truth of the resurrection of our Saviour.

The first is, the manner of their being informed of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Angels at first declare his resurrection to some women; Jesus Christ afterwards appears to Mary Magdalen, all alone; afterwards he appears only to two of his Disciples, then to St. Peter; afterwards he appears to seven of them at once; then, to all his Disciples, except Thomas; and soon after, to the eleven, Thomas being one of them. After all this, he appears to a greater number of his followers; till at last, having been several times seen of them all, he appears to them all assembled together, and is taken up into heaven in their sight. It is evident, that
as they were informed of this truth one after another, so they were more obliged to examine the fact more attentively when Jesus Christ appeared to them.

The second degree has relation to those marks and characters by which they were assured that it was Jesus Christ himself. The Angels repeat to the women the command which Jesus Christ, before his death, had given to his Disciples, to go into Galilee; Jesus Christ, appearing to Mary Magdalen, repeats the same to her, and gives her a particular commission for St. Peter, to comfort him in his affliction, for having denied his master. Appearing to his Disciples, as they went to Emmaus, he refers them to the prophecies which spoke of his death and resurrecitation; and moreover, when he broke bread with them, they hear the same prayers which he ordinarily used at the blessing of it. He appears to them the same day the fifth time, and shews them his feet and his hands; he repeats the grant of the authority which the Father had given him; he breathes upon them, saying, Receive the Holy Ghost; a week after, he lets Thomas touch him; he appears afterwards to seven of his Apostles upon the lake of Tiberias, where he confirms St. Peter in his charge, from which his denying of Christ might seem to have excluded him, after he had wrought a miracle in the draught of the fishes, which was like some miracles which he had wrought before his death. Afterwards, he appears upon the same mountain in Galilee, where, in all probability, he had been transfigured before, and is there seen of five hundred of his Disciples at once. And last of all, he appears to them at Jerusalem, after their return from Galilee; and from thence goes with them to Bethany, where, after he had told them of the absolute power which God had given them, he commands them to go and baptize in his name, he foretells the miracles which they should work, and the gifts which they should receive at Jerusalem. All these so very different circumstances were only designed to assure their eyes, their hands, their minds, their consciences, that was the same Jesus whom they had always followed.

It is worth our taking notice of the diversity of these circumstances, for the certainty of this fact, which absolutely prevent all pretences of doubtfulness. Jesus Christ appears ten several times after his death: he appears five times on the very day of his resurrection; he appears at several hours, to different persons, in several places, but always to persons to whom he was familiarly known, to those who were not at all credulous. The first news they had of his resurrection seemed only to raise their scruples, if the testimony of their senses, which saw him and touched him, had not removed all suspicions. Jesus Christ appears to them in places where he had wrought many miracles, and where he had often before conversed with them.

But one may make another more important reflexion, upon the time and the day wherein our Saviour rose again. Of the ten several times in which he appeared to his Disciples, he appeared five times on the day of his resurrection; he appeared to them eight days after; and after that, the eighth day, which he signalized by his frequent appearing to his Disciples, was consecrated to celebrate the memory of this event every week: one finds certain tokens hereof in the writings of the Apostles; and it is known that all Christians after them did inviolably observe this law.

Now,
Now, let any one consider, whether it would have been possible to introduce this custom in the time of the Apostles, if the resurrection of Christ had not been a fact confessed on all hands. Can any one conceive, that the Apostles and their Disciples, who were witnesses of the death of Jesus Christ, and who celebrated the memory thereof by a sacrament, could have been so stupid as to establish a custom which would put people upon examining the fact, and have convinced them in a little time, since none of those that followed them would have submitted to this practice, if they had not been convinced by their eyes, and their other senses, and by a thousand other proofs, of the truth of so capital a fact, which was so much disputed by the Jews, of which they were obliged to make a solemn commemoration two and fifty times every year, as long as they lived?

Let us add to this remark, which we have elsewhere urged, with reference to the creation, another reflection upon a fact which the Evangelists tell us: they tell us, that though the resurrection of Christ was accompanied with very peculiar circumstances, sufficient to convince both Jews and Gentiles of the truth of it, being ushered in with an earthquake, with apparitions of angels to the soldiers that guarded the sepulchre of Jesus, and were frightened thereby, yet the council of the Jews contrived, with the soldiers, a most impudent lie to outface it; and accordingly the soldiers, coming before Pilate, tell him that the Disciples had stolen away the body of Jesus whilst they slept; and his Disciples tell us, that, since, this hath been the common opinion of the Jews.

I will not so much as take notice here of the palpable falsity of this deposition; for, if the soldiers were asleep, how could they depose concerning a fact which was done at that time? if they were not asleep, why did not they hinder the Disciples from taking the body of their master away? How could they affirm that thieves had taken him away, when the linen clothes wherein his body was shrouded being left in the grave, and the napkin that was about his head being folded up in a place by itself, so absolutely evince that he was not taken away by persons that were in fear of a surprize? What probability is there, in short, to suspect that his Disciples, who forsook Jesus Christ whilst he was yet alive, who fled from him at that time, should undertake such a hazardous attempt, to have his body only?

Neither will I insist upon a representation of the Apostle's sincerity, which made them give us in their histories a plain account of the report which was spread against the belief of the resurrection of Jesus, before ever that the Disciples had attested the same.

But I observe another very particular character in their relation, which is, that it was impossible for them to establish this fact of the resurrection, without accusing thereby the whole council of the Jews, of the most shameful and crying imposture that ever was: to write a thing of this nature against the heads of that religion, was to sacrifice themselves to the hatred of the public, and to expose themselves to inevitable ruin. In short, let us imagine whether, after a charge of this nature, it was easy for the Apostles to publish their books, and preach publicly that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead? And yet this was what they did with a surprising diligence, when they inserted this terrible accusation into
into their books and sermons; which alone is sufficient to demonstrate that they were infinitely convinced of the resurrection, and also in a condition to convince all gain-sayers, as we shall shew hereafter.

One may add to this proof the conversion of St. Paul, and the care which he afterwards took to confirm the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was a declared enemy of Jesus Christ, and of the Christian religion; and yet, soon after the death of Christ, he preaches him up for the Messiah. How came this sudden change? He afferts that he had seen in heaven this Jesus who was risen from the dead, and received from him the Apostleship; accordingly we find him preaching by these orders, without any communication had with the first Disciples of Jesus Christ. He relates these matters in a manner so little affected to advance his ministry in the minds of the Galatians, who preferred St. Peter and the other Apostles before him, that there is no ground left to doubt of them.

One ought to make a like reflexion upon the conversion of Cornelius the centurion: he was a proselyte, that is, a Gentile by birth, but a Jew by profession; and by the employment he was in, he had occasion of being more particularly informed of the deposition of the soldiers, who probably were not unknown to him, for he was in the garrison at Caesarea, which was not far from Jerusalem. Yet, however, this Cornelius, after he had a vision which commanded him to send to Joppa, a place made famous, because Jonah the Prophet set sail from thence, who was a type of the Messiah in his death and resurrection; this Cornelius, I say, embraced the Christian religion, becomes the first bishop of Caesarea, and died a martyr for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The great affection which St. Luke had for St. Paul, confirms the same truth. St. Luke had never seen our Saviour; he was born at Antioch, where in all probability he exercised his profession of physic; yet he was converted to Christianity, and followed St. Paul in all places, and writ the history of his miracles and preaching. Who doubts but that the reason hereof was, because he had seen the dead whom Christ had raised to life, and had seen St. Paul, whom Jesus Christ had dignified with the Apostleship, raise others also from the dead?

It is certain that those who were first convinced by the relation of the Apostles, must needs have had very evident proofs of the truth of it.

The Jews had Sadducees amongst them, who denied the possibility of the resurrection in general: the council of the Jews especially had made it their business to decry the conduct, the doctrine, and the miracles of Jesus Christ, and in particular to make the belief of his resurrection suspected; and so much the more, because Jesus Christ had foretold it, and his Apostles maintained that it was come to pass accordingly. If, in opposition to these strong prejudices, there had only been the deposition of two or three persons to confirm this fact, there would have been reason to doubt of it; but we find that this thing, which of itself seems hard to be believed, and was otherwise so much contested, is, 1. Proved by ten several apparitions; 2. It is attested by above five hundred Disciples; 3. It was publicly preached by the Disciples of Christ at Jerusalem itself, and throughout all Judaea, where it was most of all disputed; 4. It was received by the very enemies of Jesus Christ, as St. Paul and Cornelius,
Reflexions upon the

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telius, and by thousands of those who, having demanded his death, were converted by the preaching of the Apostles; 5. It was confirmed by the martyrdom of the greatest part of them; and 6. It was not only authorized by the presence of the three persons whom Christ had raised to life, and who lived, one of them at Bethany, fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, where Jesus ascended to heaven, another at Naim, &c. but it was further verified by several resurrections wrought by the Apostles, to whom Christ had vouchsafed that astonishing power.

It was also a very considerable thing, that the commonwealth of the Jews continued near forty years after the time that the Apostles undertook openly to preach up the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the capital article of their religion; and yet in all that time it was never opposed by any public writing either of the Jews or Gentiles. If the Jews, in their unjust intrigues again Jesus Christ and his religion, endeavoured to abuse the world, in this matter, with calumniating stories, neither have the Apostles been wanting to accuse the principal men of their nation of imposture; and they have despised their most cruel of the punishments, to maintain the justice of their charge; and yet none of them would undertake to justify the calumnies of their council, though they saw Christianitv spreading itself not only over all Judea, but in all parts of the world. To speak of it as it is, this conduct of theirs was a manifest betraying of their caufe, or rather an open acknowledgment that what they had published against the innocency of the Disciples, and the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, was without all ground.

I foresee only one probable difficulty which can be opposed to the solidity of these reflexions. A Jew may demand, why Jesus Christ after his resurrection did not converse as openly amongst the Jews as before, that so he might have been known by those who had crucified him, which would have put the truth of the resurrection out of doubt?

But, to speak truth, this objection is not reasonable: for, 1. Jesus Christ had threatened the unbelieving Jews, they should see him no more; and he ought to make good his threatening. 2. Who sees not that they would have looked upon his appearing amongst them as a fantastick apparition, after they had seen him work so many miracles, and had attributed them to the devil? 3. I say, that such an apparition was not agreeable to our Saviour's doctrine in the parable of the rich man: They have Moses and the Prophets; if they hear not them, neither will they be persuaded, though one rise from the dead (z). 4. Jesus Christ having for the most part conversed in Galilee at Nazareth and Capernaum, it was to the Galileans and his Disciples that he was chiefly to shew himself, to be acknowledged by them, as being the persons who were particularly to bear witness of this truth. After so strong a preemption as the governors of that people had of Christ's resurrection, founded upon the earthquake which accompanied it, and upon the deposition of the soldiers to whom the Angels had appeared, had not they all the reason in the world to believe the testimony of the Apostles concerning this truth, which they heard several times attested by them in full council, and saw confirmed by miraculous cures which they could not question in the least?

Lastly, Is not this objection the most ridiculous thing in the world? For,

For, let us suppose that these considerations are not strong enough to justify our Saviour's conduct when he gave these proofs of his resurrection, doth it follow, because he did not make choice of means (in order to persuade the Jews) which they preferred before others used by him, without any solid reason, that therefore we must reject the deposition of so many witnesses who unanimously attest it? Since Jesus Christ had raised three persons to life again, which then lived in Judea; since Jerusalem had continued forty years after the death of Christ; since sixty solemn feasts were celebrated in that time, where all the Jews had an occasion to examine the truth of these facts, and the truth or falsity of the accusation charged upon the Apostles by the council of the Jews; and that multitudes of Jews and Gentiles were converted at the preaching of the Apostles, who reduced all to this question of the fact of the resurrection of our Saviour; is not this an invincible proof against all the accusations and suspicions of the Synagogue? Forasmuch as the witnesses who maintain the resurrection of Christ, are the very same that attest his ascension into heaven, and that they assert it with the same proofs, and the same zeal, the reflections here set down may serve for that also; and the rather, because I am next to consider the sending of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which is an undeniable proof, both of the resurrection of Christ and his ascension; and that these very gifts of the Holy Spirit enabled the Jews to write, preach, and publish throughout all the world, the truths of that Christianity which we now profess.

CHAP. XIV.

That Jesus Christ sent to his Apostles, and to the Primitive Christians, the miraculous Gifts of his Holy Spirit, as he had promised in the Ancient Prophecies.

I have shewn that the prophecies of the Old Testament speak very plainly of this sending of the Spirit, as a preliminary to the calling of the Gentiles, which was the great design of God. The Prophet Joel speaks of it as such, and makes this wonder to precede the destruction of Jerusalem, as St. Peter observes in the second of the Acts. Isaiah speaks very particularly of it as such, in the eleventh chapter of his prophecy, where he sufficiently intimates that the spirit of prophecy should from thenceforward rest upon Jesus Christ, that it would not be found any longer among the Jews, whose city and temple should be destroyed.

At present my business is to shew that this thing has been exactly fulfilled, according to the design which God had laid down in the Prophets. To be convinced of this, we need only make some reflections upon the relation which St. Luke gives us of it in the Acts.

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He tells us therefore, that fifty days only after the death of Jesus Christ, the Apostles having continued at Jerusalem, and being assembled there, they received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, that is, the power of speaking all sorts of languages, to make them fit to preach the Gospel to all nations, and to explain the most sublime mysteries of our Saviour's religion.

Every thing is considerable in this relation of St. Luke: 1. That he relates this fact as happening fifty days only after the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified; the whole nation of the Jews having been witnesses of his death. 2. That he relates it as happening in the same city where Jesus Christ was condemned, that the same multitude who after fifty days were again assembled there at this feast, might be witnesses of this miraculous event. In short, it plainly appears that this new law from mount Sinai, was solemnly promulged in the presence of all the Jews, who were assembled from all parts of the world; as the old law was, when all the people assisted at the foot of mount Sinai. 3. That these gifts were granted to all the Disciples of our Saviour: gifts which till that time had been wholly unheard of, and whereof some part only had been granted for some Prophets, and to some Priests, and of which none had been made partakers since the time of Malachi; God having so ordered it, that the desires of the Jews might be the more inflamed for the Messiah's coming, as also that upon his coming he might the more easily be discerned. 4. That this was a fact openly known amongst the Jews, and differently interpreted by them; some saying, They were full of new wine. 5. That the Apostles asserted, by the mouth of St. Peter, that this was an accomplishment of the ancient oracles, as well as of the promises of Jesus Christ. 6. That they declared that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his ascension into heaven, and this miraculous donative, had been foretold by David and Joel. It is certainly therefore very natural to make these following reflexions upon the relation of so considerable an event.

The first will confirm the truth of this miraculous fact, if we consider that it is absurd to suppose that St. Luke, a wise man, should be so rash as to relate a matter of this nature, if he had not been fully convinced of it, and if it had not been an easy thing to have convinced his readers thereof also; nothing more being required for their conviction, but the presence of one of those first Christians, and to make a trial of this supernatural virtue bestowed on them, for which there were frequent occasions.

2. We must observe that this relation of St. Luke is, as it were, the foundation which he lays down, to make his book of the Acts to appear just and reasonable, and to justify the Apostles conduct in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, not only contrary to the opinion of the Jews, who looked upon them as wholly excluded from the privileges of the covenant; but also contrary to the seeming maxim of Jesus Christ, who acted only as the minister of circumcision; and contrary to the pretensions of many Christians, who, after the mission of the Holy Ghost, took it very ill that St. Peter had preached to the Gentiles.

3. St. Luke supposes that this fact came to pass in such a manner, that it was followed by consequences as illustrious as they were incredible. Twelve poor fishermen undertook to go and preach to all the world,
that their master, who fifty days before was crucified at Jerusalem, at the prosecution of the whole synagogue, and by order of one of the magistrates of the Roman empire, was not only living, not only ascended into heaven, but that he also had given them the power of speaking all sorts of languages, of curing all diseases, and even of raising the dead.

4. They go yet further; they boldly maintain that Jesus Christ had given them a privilege of communicating the same power to all those who would believe that he was the promised Messiah; and this, without any other mystery but the bare laying-on of their hands, after they had received them by baptism into the profession of Christianity.

Nothing could have been more easy than to convince them of the contrary, unless they had confirmed the truth of their assertion by the miraculous consequences of that first miracle. The fact was publicly acknowledged: Simon Magus is convinced thereof; and he who had made himself famous by his forgeries, becomes a Disciple. St. Luke, in a history of the actions of thirty years, relates the continual miracles wrought by the Apostles, and particularly by St. Paul, whom he constantly followed.

It seems to me, that if one considers the history itself, and the person who made it, it will appear to be a true and faithful relation; however, there are other testimonies which invincibly establish the same truth.

1. The Gospel was, in effect, established in most of the provinces and great cities of the Roman empire. St. Paul writes to the Christians of Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus, to the Galatians, Colossians, &c. which is an evident argument that there were Christians everywhere, that is, Disciples of these twelve fishermen, who understood nothing but their native Syriac language. How then were all these nations converted, without supposing the truth of the miracle at the Pentecost?

2. The Apostles speak to them of these miraculous gifts as of a common thing; St. Paul employing some part of his first epistle to the Corinthians, to regulate those disorders which arose in the church, by reason of the abuse of those gifts. St. James speaks of the power that the priests had to cure the sick; and St. Paul wishes for an opportunity of going to Rome, to communicate those gifts to the Romans.

3. They take occasion to raise the dignity of the Gospel above that of the law, in calling it the ministrv of the Spirit, in opposition to the letter of the law, notwithstanding the tables of the law had been given to Moses in so very illustrious a manner.

It is of great moment here to consider three things, which alone are sufficient to confirm the truth of the Christian religion.

The first is, That this mission of the Spirit is alone sufficient to convince mankind of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. God gave to Adam a power of speaking one language; and afterwards he divided the same, to make a confusion among the builders of Babel: and Jesus Christ doth the same thing, to confirm the glory and belief of his Divinity. God vouchsafes the power of miracles to some, Jesus Christ communicates it to a far greater number; miracles not having been so generally wrought, because no people ever had that power in all the foregoing ages. The Father wrought so few miracles, that he might leave to the Son this means of

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making himself known. The Son had the glory of pouring forth the Holy Ghost in a greater abundance than the Father, thereby to supply the shame of his humiliation. This is the true reason why the Scripture faith, That the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus Christ was not yet glorified.

The second is, That from this miracle one ought to infer these two conclusions: the first is, That God was fully pacified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Apostles constantly representing the passion of our Saviour as a sacrifice offered by him; the other is, That from that time forward mankind was consecrated to God at his temple. Jesus Christ, in his prayer before his death, expresseth himself much in the same manner as Solomon did at his dedication of the first temple, and fire from heaven falls down on his sacrifice: Jesus Christ consecrates his Apostles to be the living stones of his temple, and causes the heavenly flames to fall down upon them, as had formerly been granted at Solomon's dedication of the first temple.

The third is, That the Jews themselves cannot conceive a more glorious or magnificent accomplishment of the ancient oracles concerning the effusion of the Holy Spirit at the time of the Messiah, than what we find related by St. Luke; whereof the whole world may see the visible effects, in the calling of the Gentiles to the Christian religion: from whence one may rationally conclude, That Jesus Christ must be acknowledged for the Messiah whom God had promised.

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**CHAP. XV.**

That, according to the Prophecies, the Apostles of Jesus Christ have called the Gentiles to the Profession of the Christian Religion.

We have already seen what was the design of God, and that the distinction which he made of the Jews from other nations, was only that the Messiah might by that means be the more certainly known, in whom all mankind had a right, as being promised to Adam.

God renewed the idea of this truth in a very lively manner, when he assured Abraham, before he gave him the law of circumcision, That in his seed all nations should be blessed. Jacob, enlightened by the spirit of prophecy on his death-bed, plainly takes this truth for granted, when he says that the Messiah, whom he calls Shiloh, was to be the expectation of the Gentiles, Gen. xliv. Why doth he not say, that he was to be the expectation of the Jesus, but because he supposeth that they were to be rejected, and the Gentiles called in their stead?

One sees in the Psalms, and in the Prophets until Malachi inclusively, a thousand declarations of this future calling of the Gentiles to the faith
faith of the Messiah; and though the most part of the ideas which the Prophets make use of, seem to be very figurative, describing the Messiah as a conqueror, who was to subdue the whole world to his dominion by the force of arms; yet we find a great many others interwoven with them, which only relate to the profession of the religion of the Messiah, and which, not being capable of any other sense, sufficiently determine the others, so as not to perplex the reader with those seeming obscurities. But Jesus Christ very distinctly declares this in divers places, and above all in the xxivth of St. Matthew; This Gospel, faith he, shall be preached throughout the world.

Now, nothing could ever be more exactly fulfilled than these ancient oracles have been. Let the Jews cavil as long as they please about our application of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament to our Saviour; let them put a sense upon the Scriptures, which treat of this subject, contrary to what the Jews, who were contemporary with Jesus Christ, ever did, and to the most of those with whom the first Christians, as Justin, Tertullian, and others, from time to time disputed; yet at least they cannot deny, but that the thing has been exactly fulfilled.

It is clearer than the day, that nothing could be more exact. All Christians, from one end of the world to another, worshipped the God of Israel, according to the prophecy of Malachi: Jesus Christ subjected them to the moral part of the law of Moses. The Mahometans themselves have learnt of the Christians to acknowledge no other God but the God of Israel. The multitude of false Gods which the world worshipped, are vanished from all places where Christianity has been planted; and very few are left in comparison of those which are already destroyed; so that we must consider the thing as already gone very far. In truth, while things continue thus, one may reasonably maintain against the Jews, that our Jesus and his Disciples have taken away all the glory which could be reserved for that Messiah whom they expect. They must, if they be jealous for the glory of him whom they look for, endeavour to make the world forfake the worship of the God of Israel, to make way for the accomplishment of those oracles which can have no place in that state wherein the world is at present.

But though this reflexion upon the exact accomplishment of the oracles concerning the call of the Gentiles to the religion of the Messiah may suffice, yet I think myself bound to make some further observations upon this subject. In short, every thing deserves to be considered in this calling of the Gentiles to the knowledge of the Gospel.

I do not take notice at present that the person first employed in calling the Gentiles, is St. Peter, to whom Jesus Christ had promised the honour of founding his church amongst the nations, and who himself at first thought that the thing was unlawful, and who, after a vision given him for that very purpose, observes the Jewish customs, and obliges the Gentiles to do the same; neither do I observe that the first who was called was Cornelius, a Roman officer, who resided at Caesarea, where he became a profelyte. Behold here a man engaged to examine that which he had a better opportunity to do than any one else, by reason of the nature of his charge, whether what the soldiers had deploied concern-
ing the Disciples stealing away the body of our Saviour, were true or no.

I am obliged to confine myself to some general reflexions upon this matter. I consider first the difficulty which was upon all accounts in this design of calling of the Gentiles, and the prodigious success which this call of the Gentiles met with, according to the Prophets.

To make us understand this difficulty better, we need only consider, 1. What were the prejudices of the Jews, even those who were become Christians; 2. What was the state of the world at the time of Jesus Christ. The Heathens enjoyed each their several religions for a longer time than any history could trace it: they attributed the happiness of their states and families to their gods. 3. We must observe the nature of that preaching by which the Gentiles were converted: its subject was the strangest thing in the world. If the cross of Jesus Christ had proved the scandal of the Jews, who looked upon the Messiah as the fountain of blessing, and the cross as an accursed punishment; it was looked upon no otherwise than as an heap of follies by the Greeks (who boasted themselves to be the wisest men of the world), as well as by the other Gentiles.

Yet, after all this, one sees a prodigious success, and a surprizing extent of this call. Within a little time the world was filled with Christians: St. Paul writes to those that were in Asia, Greece, and Italy; St. Peter, to those of Pontus; St. John, to those who were among the Parthians. There were not wanting some in the very emperor’s court, even that of Nero, who put St. Peter and St. Paul to death in the sixteenth year of our Lord.

One cannot attend to a success of this nature, without being extremely surprized: let us conceive of a dozen, or thereabouts, of poor beggars, a dozen of unlearned men coming out of Judea, who should accuse the whole world of folly and impiety; every one opposing them, especially the Jews, who were incensed to see them go about to establish the belief of the cross in the world, as a doctrine which would explain the accomplishment of the promises of God concerning the Messiah, of those promises wherewith the Jews had filled all the East, and which had rendered them at this time doubly ridiculous.

When, instead of persecuting the Apostles, they hearken unto them; or even when in the midst of chains and prisons they are examined, they declare that true godliness consists in knowing Jesus Christ, even the same Jesus who was crucified in Judea, for whose name’s sake they had been publicly scourged by order of the council of the Jews. Thus we find St. Paul boasting of his severe usage.

If persons question them more particularly about the actions of this Jesus, they answer coldly, That the Son of God came down from heaven; that he took upon him our flesh in the womb of a virgin; that when he was become man, and yet an infant, Herod sought to kill him, to avoid which he was carried into Egypt; that after having lived thirty years obscurely in a carpenter’s shop, he was taken by the Jews, scourged, mocked, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, where they gave him vinegar to drink; that there he cried out, My God, my God, Why hast thou...
thou forsaken me? that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day, as he had promised before his death.

But what is it that this JESUS teaches to those that would follow him? His Apostles, in his name, require all men to renounce the pleasures of this life; to abhor polygamy and fornication; and, instead of revenging an affront, to turn the other cheek to him that fmites us; and to leave our cloak also with him who takes our coat from us; to go two miles with him who constrains us to guide him one; to love our enemies; and to wish well, and pray for those that despitefully use us, and persecute us.

But what rewards will he give to his servants? The Apostles answer, That he promises nothing that is considerable in this life, but an everlasting happiness in the world to come.

It is visible that nothing seems to be worse contrived to gain credit than this story. The weakness of Jesus Christ is visible; he was crucified. What ground is here to believe that he was able to perform his promises? The service he prescribes is very rough; the reward he proposes is at a great distance; and, moreover, it is such as appears very doubtful to those who are not furnished with strong impressions of the immortality of the soul, and of a life to come.

But, on the other hand, the Apostles solidly demonstrate that he is GOD, and not a mere man; that he can raise the dead, and that he can perform his promises. Though they do not say, Bring hither the blind, the lame, and the deaf, and we will heal them in his name; present your dead to us, and we will raise them in the name of that Jesus who is born of Mary, of that Jesus who died, and cried out on the cross, My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken my? (for I acknowledge that this miraculous power which they had received, was only exerted upon certain occasions, which the Spirit of God made choice of); yet they did that which was equivalent: for when blind men were brought to them, they said, Ye blind, in the name of Jesus, recover your sight; and in like manner to the lepers, to possessed persons, to the sick of the palsy, to the dead. Upon this, all were converted, and the crosses of Jesus Christ triumphs.

There are three sorts of people in the world, wise men, men of a middle sort, and such as are of a lower capacity; and several of these three orders of men made profession of the Christian religion, as well amongst the Jews as Heathens.


C H A P. XVI.

That the Christian Religion is founded on Proofs of Fact, and that consequently nothing in the World is so certain as the Truth of it.

This reflexion ought to be made more than once, because there is nothing so proper to establish the truth of the Christian religion beyond all contest, or that will confound Atheists, profane persons, and Jews, who endeavour to oppose it, more effectually.

I say then, that the chief articles on which the whole Christian religion is grounded, are confirmed proofs of fact, that is, by witnesses whose evidence cannot be questioned, without shaking all the certainty which we can have of any thing in this world, and without rejecting all the means whereby we can allure ourselves of the knowledge which we enjoy.

Many particular events which were perfectly divine, happened at the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah; they were known throughout all the hill country of Judea; they happened to a priest, that is, a public person, and it was when he was employed in his public function in the temple; they are seconded by miracles which were known to the whole nation of the Jews; they are followed by the public ministry of John the Baptist, a man who censures all Judea, who openly declares himself the forerunner of the Messiah, and who hath a great number of Disciples, who are distinguished from those of our Saviour, who were spread throughout all Judea, and who continued after the death of our Saviour; these were Disciples of a man who, besides all this, doth not keep up any correspondence with our Saviour, and who at last falls by the hand of Herod for censuring his incect and lufts.

Jesus Christ is born in Bethlehem, under Augustus; a fact of which the Roman commissioners were witnesses, and which the records of that empire preserved as long as they were in being.

That the Angels testified their joy at his birth, is a fact which was confirmed by the shepherds of Bethlehem, long before Jesus Christ had any Disciples.

That a new star conducted the wise men of the East to Bethlehem, was an illustrious fact, and of which Herod, and the priests, and great men amongst the Jews, were exactly informed; and the Apostles would have found it a very difficult matter to impose this upon them, if the thing had not been distinctly known.

That the birth of Jesus Christ, and the arrival of the wise men, affrighted Herod, was a public thing, confirmed by the murder of the infants of Bethlehem, and reported to Augustus, together with the death of Antipater; whereof Macrobius, a Heathen, who was qualified for the knowledge of such a story, hath preserved the memory. Neither can this fact be called in question, because Josephus makes no mention of it, since so famous a Heathen attests it. Augustus, faith he, having heard that amongst the infants which Herod the king of the Jews had caused to be killed
killed in Syria, under two years of age, he had killed his own son, said, That it was better to be Herod’s hog than his son.

That Jesus Christ was in Egypt, and that he returned from thence, is a fact with which the Jews to this day reproach our Saviour, as if he had learned there the secret of working miracles.

That he confounded the Doctors at twelve years of age, is a fact of which the whole nation of the Jews were informed, because it happened at one of those three solemn feasts which brought up the whole nation to Jerusalem.

That Jesus Christ was baptized by St. John, and that he received a most glorious testimony from him, is a fact of which all those Jews whom the ministry of St. John had drawn to the river Jordan were witnesses.

That Jesus Christ chose for his Apostles men without learning, and of the meanest of the people, that he lived with them three years and an half, preaching his doctrine, correcting the traditions of the Jews, working miracles, and foretelling things to come, are facts of which the whole people of the Jews were witnesses; and all the Romans that were in Judea were fully informed of them; yea, they were known to all the world. The Jews could not be ignorant of them, who came up to Jerusalem from all parts of the world, to celebrate ten solemn feasts according to the law, during the time in which these things were acting, and from thence carried the report of them into several parts of the world where they were dispersed.

It is evident also that Jesus Christ laboured to persuade men that he was the promised Messiah: this was the most considerable fact in the world to the Jews, and which had relation to the most important point of their religion, and touched them the nearest; a fact which happened at a time when all were in expectation of the Messiah, as appears by the consultation of Herod, when the Jews, who were oppressed by the Romans, did most earnestly fight for his appearance; a fact confirmed by public oracles, and known to the whole nation, yea to the Heathens themselves, for near three hundred years.

That Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all his miracles, was crucified at the pursuit of the Jews, and by the order of Pontius Pilate, is a fact of which the whole people of the Jews were witnesses, because it happened at the feast of the passover, that is, at a solemnity where the whole nation of the Jews was assembled: it is a fact which no Heathens ever went about to deny; they reproached the Christians with it, who are so little ashamed of it, that, according to the orders of the same Jesus, they celebrate the memorial of it in the sacrament of the eucharist.

That there was thick darkness over all the land at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ from the third hour till the sixth, that is, from nine of the clock till twelve, according to our way of computing the time, was a fact of that nature, that the whole nation of the Jews might easily have convinced the Apostles of this imposture, if it has not been as confessed a truth as the darkness in Egypt, before the departure of the Israelites.

That Jesus Christ was raised the third day, is a fact attested by a great number of witnesses, the memorial whereof they celebrated every
eighth day, as long as they lived, by a constant law, because they con-
dered this resurrection as the seal of those truths which Jesus Christ had
 taught them; it is a fact, the truth whereof they have maintained before
magistrates, before the people, in all parts of the world; it is a fact which
they have publicly preached up, notwithstanding all prohibitions which
have been made; in short, it is a fact which they have ascertained in the
midst of the most cruel torments, and even until death.

That Jesus Christ sent down upon his Apostles the miraculous gifts of
the Holy Spirit, is a fact of which all Jerusalem was a witness fifty days
after the feast of the passover, when Jesus Christ was crucified; it is as
remarkable a fact as ever happened: twelve fishermen of Galilee main-
tain, in the face of the whole Jewish nation, that the same Jesus whom
the whole nation had demanded to be crucified but fifty days before, and
who did actually suffer upon an infamous cross, is risen from the dead,
and ascended into heaven, after he had eaten and drunk with them, and
had appeared several times to them after his resurrection; and that he
had given them the power of speaking all sorts of languages, and of
healing all manner of diseases.

That they spoke divers languages, is a fact most notorious, the truth
whereof appears from the conversion of the world, which was bound to
be filled with their Disciples, but a few years after this fact was done.

That they had the power of healing all diseases as well as their matter,
is a fact the truth whereof is established upon indisputable testimonies,
inasmuch as their successors received the same gift by the laying-on of
their hands. Two hundred years after, Tertullian mentions this gift, as
being at that time well known amongst Christians.

That the Apostles, after they were rejected by the Jews, preached the
Gospel to the Gentiles, who also received it, is a fact of which there are
so many proofs in the world, that it cannot be called in question.

That the converted Jews strongly opposed themselves against the
preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, pretending, as the Jews now do,
that the Messiah with his gifts and graces was confined to their nation,
is a fact so well attested, that it cannot be called in question; if we con-
sider the first dispute, which gave occasion to the first council of the
Apostles, and to the contests of St. Paul with those of his own nation.

That since that time the Apostles and their Disciples have maintained
by their writings and disputes, and finally by their martyrdom, that Jesus
was the Messiah; that they have constantly stood to this claim, alleging
the facts which the Gospel proposes, and maintaining that the matters
there related were exact accomplishments of the promises of God, and
of the ancient prophecies: that all this is unquestionable, one needs only
read their sermons and speeches set down by St. Luke, and their epistles;
one needs only peruse the Heathen history, and the works of those that
succeeded the Apostles, who followed their footsteps in establishing the
truth of the Christian religion.

That the Apostles discharged their followers from the ceremonies
which Moses prescribed, obliging them only to the essentials of morality;
that they annulled the law which permitted divorces without sufficient
cause, and polygamy; these are things which none, who have read
their
their writings, or those of their first Disciples, can in the least question.

Lastly, That they foretold many things, as well as their master; that they published their predictions, which they have extended to the end of the world, and the return of Jesus from heaven to judge the world; and that they have recorded the particulars of many considerable events, observed by the Christians, which have happened from time to time; these are facts as well known, and as incontestable as any thing can be in the world, of such a nature: whole nations are witnesses of it. Differing facts, interpreters who have several opinions concerning these prophecies, the contents of the Jews, the opposition of Atheists, the cavils of Heretics, the cruelty of tyrants, all these concur to prove clearly that the Christians received these prophecies from the Apostles, as well as the truth of them, since even these oppositions were foretold, as well as the persecutions.

Thus I have given you a view of the greatest part of the most important articles which are contained in the Christian religion; and I think that they are so solidly grounded upon proofs of fact, that I can assert with reason, that no facts in the world can be produced, so well established as these are, which are the fundamentals of our religion.

What facts are there which are attested by whole nations, as the miracles of Jesus Christ were? What facts are there about which men were so careful to inform themselves, as when a man pretends to the title of the Messiah? What thing can we suppose that requires a stronger conviction, because of the difficulties it involves, than that of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? for those who were eye-witnesses of his crucifixion, that is, who had seen him punished by the magistrate, the horror of all his own people, and in all appearance forsaken of heaven.

To speak the truth, as there cannot be a greater instance of fanatical folly, than to attribute to twelve poor fishermen, whose master was crucified at Jerusalem, by public order, and by an effect of the hatred of the whole nation—I say, to attribute to them the design of persuading that people, and the Gentiles also, that this man was raised again from the dead, that he rules in heaven, that he has bestowed upon them the miraculous gifts of speaking all sorts of languages, and healing all manner of diseases—if this Jesus had been never raised from the dead, nor had bestowed such gifts upon them, the mind of man not being capable of so great folly; so we have all the reason in the world to conclude, that since they have attested this fact, and confirmed it by all the proofs which might convince those who, though they were not prejudiced, yet were astonished at the difficulty of the things themselves, so nothing can be more certain than facts so confirmed, as we pretend that these actually were.

CHAP. XVII.
Before we alledge those arguments which will invincibly confirm the truth of the books of the New Testament, I desire the reader to make these three or four reflexions, which seem to be very important to our present design.

The first is, That we can scarcely conceive a more simple and strong way of proving a fact, than what we find in the books here mentioned. The design of the four Evangelists, for instance, is to prove that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the promised Messiah; and that, in his birth, his life, his doctrine, his death, and resurrection, we meet with all the characters which the Prophets attributed to the Messiah. How do the Evangelists execute this their design? In the most proper way imaginable to convince others, and most proportionable to their design: they simply relate the facts; and facts so clear, that if we do not question the truth of them, we cannot doubt that Jesus is the Messiah. They relate the most important of their facts, as things that happened in the face of the whole nation of the Jews, as I have shewed in the precedent chapter; they relate them as facts for the most part owned by the Jews, from which the malice of the Jews extorted other consequences: they give us an account of the judgment which the Jews made concerning the miracles that he wrought on the sabbath day, upon the Disciples gathering the ears of corn; of the answer which the Jews made to Pilate, We have no other king but Caesar.

The second is, That the Apostles, supposing a general expectation of the Messiah, when Jesus Christ appeared, shew that there was a very great knowledge of the prophecies that respected the Messiah, and a great impossibility of applying those oracles to particular facts, if the truth of these facts had not been beyond content. Now we find very few oracles of which they did not make an application to the life and actions of our Saviour. We will suppose the Apostles to have been men of great abilities, and who had long studied the books of the Prophets, that they might tear out such small passages as they fancied might be applicable to Jesus Christ: however, it cannot be denied, that it does not appear by their writings that they had such an exact knowledge of the prophecies; whence it might follow that they judged them to be applicable to Christ, by comparing them with the facts which they relate. 2. That they had this knowledge in common with the rest of the Jews, who at this day apply the same texts to the Messiah, if they are not constrained by their clearness to wrest them some other way.

The third reflection is, That, in the relation of these facts, they give us all the marks of an extraordinary sincerity; they represent indeed whatsoever was for their master's glory, but they do as well relate those things which seem to be shameful to his memory. They tell us of the Angels that attended at his birth, and at his death; but tell us withal, that
that he was tempted of the Devil, and in all appearance forsaken by God at his death. They tell us, that the multitudes were resolved to take him by force, and make him their king, as acknowledging him for the Messiah; and they tell us, that the same multitude, some time after, demanded him to be crucified.

The fourth is, That they represent very naturally all the judgments of the synagogue against Jesus; they represent him as excommunicated and crucified by them; they describe the reports that were current among the Jews; that the disciples had taken away his body out of the sepulchre; that the soldiers had deposited the same in the forms of law, before Pilate. From all which it appears that they were faithful historians, and not at all prepossessed; and that they used no invectives against the authors of these false reports, contenting themselves to establish the truth of the matter, by specifying the places, the time, the witnesses, and other circumstances, which are proper to establish the truth of the facts they relate.

These four reflections being once supposed, I say, it is impossible to dispute the truth of these books, or to call their authority in question: to be convinced of which, one needs only consider these two things; the first is, that the Apostles are the authors of the books which pass under their names; the other is, that their faithfulness is not to be suspected by us.

The former of these is so universally received, that nothing will be certain in matters of this nature, if this be questioned.

The four Evangelists have published their writings in populous cities, where they have been constantly read every Lord's day in Christian assemblies; as St. Justin Martyr assures us, in his apology, which was writ about the middle of the second century.

The Apostles write their epistles to numerous churches, to whom their hand, as well as the persons by whom they sent them, were well known. Can we inatten in any writing in the world that hath been preferred with the like carefulness? Let the Jews tell us what they please concerning the care and faithfulness of their ancestors to preserve the books of the Old Testament, they can allude nothing, but we can allude the fame in favour of the books of the New Testament. They tell us, that Moses, under the penalty of a curse, had forbid the adding any thing thereto; and do not we read the same threatening in the last book of the New Testament? The philosophers of each sect have nothing of this weight to allude, as an argument that the books which they ascribe to their masters are really theirs: we find only a few men in every age who made it their business to study the books of the philosophers, physicians, and lawyers; but, ever since the Apostles, there have been Christians who made it their business to peruse and preserve their writings, as considering that they are the fountains of eternal life.

One may upon this occasion take notice of two things which deserve some attention: the one is, That the design of some Heretics, as of Marcion, for instance, to corrupt the copies of the writings of the New Testament, which were found in the hands of those of his sect, is a good argument to prove that they could not be corrupted. In short, we find all the world opposed themselves against this corruption, and confuted them.
them by the agreement of all the other copies in the world which were exempt from this corruption.

The other is: That if there are some books whose authority was doubtful for some time, by those who otherwise were accounted orthodox, yet this cannot justly prejudice the truth of the New Testament: the reason is, because this happened only to some few epistles, which were written, not to particular churches, but to whole nations. And indeed it is plain, from common sense, that when writings are sent to whole bodies (as the epistle of St. Jude) without communicating the copy to particular men, that they may with more justice be suspected, than those whose hand was known by many, and particularly by those to whom the epistles were sent.

Moreover, the account which the ancient fathers of the church give us of the uncertainties of this nature, sufficiently shew that they were very careful in examining these things; and when at any time some particular men did not use care enough in examining these books, as it once happened in the church of Rofa (a), where a book which was falsely attributed to St. Peter was preferred, supposing it to have been his, the other churches not consenting to it, that abuse was soon remedied, the writings abolished, that there is scarce a weak remembrance left of them.

One sees that these remarks are sufficient to assure us, that the Apostles are the authors of those books which bear their names: and if this way of confirming a matter of this nature be accounted good and solid, when we speak of the books of Aristotle or Hippocrates, it must be infinitely stronger when it is applied to the writings of the Apostles.

In short, these books were written to be read by persons of the meanest capacities, by women, by children, as well as by Doctors; and they treat of matters of which the whole world hath reason to be informed. If some Jews suffered martyrdom under Antiochus, to preserve the books of the Old Testament, we have like examples, and as numerous, of those who have done as much for the preservation of the books of the New Testament. Lastly, if the Jews have looked upon those as traitors and apostates, who gave up those books to the fury of their persecutors, the Christians have testified no less aversion for those who delivered the books of the Apostles to the fury of Heathens, even to the subjection of them to the utmost rigour of ecclesiastical discipline, in the third century, and before.

(a) Euseb. lib. vi. cap. 12.
CHAP. XVIII.

That one cannot doubt of the Faithfulness of the Witnesses of the Apostles concerning those Facts which they relate.

Neither is it more difficult to establish this second truth, That the faithfulness of the Apostles cannot be reasonably questioned. To be convinced of this, one needs only consider the character of the Apostles, the character of their writings, of their sermons, of the sufferings, and of their martyrdom; and, last of all, the character of those amongst whom they wrote these things, and preached them to their death.

As to their sermons, the Apostles were contemporaries with Jesus Christ; they spoke of things which they had seen, and distinguished them carefully from those which they had learned another way. They were honest men, simple, and without learning, very fit to bear witness in matters of fact; they were persons that preached nothing but love, and the study of truth; they protested, in the midst of their sufferings, that they could not conceal the things which they had seen and heard; they are men without covetousness or ambition; they forswear all that they possess in the world; St. Matthew leaves his house and goods, to follow Jesus Christ. Their epistles speak nothing more than instances of Christian poverty, of the loss of their goods, and of mighty instances of their charity.

These witnesses are sufficiently numerous; they preach and write in several places, and yet they agree admirably in their relations of the same facts: it appears they had such lively and distinct impressions, that they frequently make use of the very same words. The difference which is found in some part of their books, is a manifest argument that nothing but the force of the matter made them agree in their relations.

And, indeed, how is it otherwise conceivable that four such authors as the Evangelists, should agree about so many opinions, so many miracles, so many prophecies, so many disputes, and, in a word, about so many matters of fact? Shall we say that the second took his copy from the first, the third from the second, &c.? This appears to be evidently false, by perusing of their works, and by the difference of their style.

And certainly there appears so great ingenuity in their writings, that we cannot accuse them of having had a design to deceive the world: they tell you plainly of the meanness of their condition and original; they sincerely discover their own weaknesses, their ambition, their vanity, their disputes, their heats, their murmurs. St. Matthew tells us that he was a publican, that is, a servant of the Roman power, whom the Jews looked upon as an excommunicated person, and as an enemy of their own nation: he relates the ridiculous pretension of the sons of Zebadiee, founded on the carnal notion of their mother concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. They set down St. Peter's denying of his matter; they do not dissemble their common ignorance, which made
them expect a temporal king in Jesus Christ; they frankly publish their own incredulity, when Mary Magdalen brought them the news of our Saviour’s resurrection; and they describe the obstinate resistance of St. Thomas about this matter, against the unanimous testimony of all his companions.

They do not content themselves with saying in general that some illustrious facts have happened, but they punctually set down all the circumstances; so that it clearly appears their design was to have their writings examined, and that after an exact search men might acquiesce in the conclusions which they draw from thence. For instance, they do not tell us that Jesus Christ raised a great many from the dead; they only tell us of three, describing the circumstances of their resurrection, the time, the place, the age, the persons, the attendants; and all these, with other particulars, which impostors care not to enter upon, lest they should contradict themselves, or be easily confuted.

I have already shewn, that the nature of the things themselves which the Disciples of Jesus Christ have written, is such as will not permit us to accuse them of having had a design to impose upon the world: they are facts, and not discourses, which are left upon record; and facts relating to the most important matter in the world, than which none was ever more thoroughly examined; they are facts which are linked so closely, and which have so strict a dependence upon the other, and so interwoven with the most public transactions, either in civil or religious affairs, that it was impossible for them to form the design of such an imposture.

In short, it is very remarkable, that these facts were publicly known to the kings of Judea, to the Roman magistrates, to the principal ministers of state, and of their religion, and to the whole nation of the Jews assembled ten several times at their solemn feasts; to the several sects of the Jewish religion, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essens, who are attacked, confurred, and confuted, in these books.

One ought to consider, after all, that the Apostles at first preached and wrote in Judea, where were the witnesses of those miracles which they related; the impotent, the blind, the deaf, which Jesus Christ had restored; the dead whom he raised, the Scribes and Pharisees whom he confurred, the Sadducees whom he confuted, the auditors who had heard him preach, the towns wherein he had conversed most familiarly, the same people that followed him, the same enemies that conspired his death, the same judges, and the same authority which condemned him to death.

St. Luke, in the relation he gives us of the speeches and apologies which the Apostles made before kings, before the great council of the Jews, and in the midst of their synagogues, brings them in speaking of the facts contained in the Gospel, as of matters publicly known and attested by a vast number of witnesses: thus St. Peter speaks of them in the tenth of the Acts; and the other sacred writers spake of them in the same manner in their epistles.

Here is a new character which we ought carefully to observe: we find no temporal interest which obliged the Disciples to adhere to Jesus Christ; and we find yet less reason to suppose, if Jesus Christ had not been raised from
from the dead, and they had not seen him after his death, that they should have had any concern for his glory: they would certainly have condemned and anathematized him as an imposter, who by means of some false miracles, and an affected holiness, had abused them; whereas indeed we find that they defended the glory of Jesus Christ with so much heat, and that with so constant a testimony to his resurrection, that they exposed themselves to all manner of reproaches, to all sorts of punishment, and most cruel deaths, to confirm the belief of that fact. They deserve the anathemas of the Jewish synagogue, they contemn their public obloquies, they value not the hatred of their whole nation: they preach this crucified person in Judea, they preach him also in other countries, that he might be equally adored by Jews and Heathens: they leave their employments, to follow this Jesus; and after they had accompanied him three years, they depart from Judea, to go and confound the idolatry of the world, and within Rome itself to decry the gods they worshipped, obliging them to acknowledge him whom the men of Jerusalem had crucified, for their God; him, who had been the detestation of the Jews; him, whom the Roman magistrate had given up to their fury, in making him undergo the punishment appointed for slaves.

Lastly, one ought to observe it as a thing of great weight in this whole question, that this testimony of the Apostles, which is so uniform, so solemn, so well confirmed by all manner of means, and sealed with their deaths, is not contested or contradicted by any historian of that time. There was nothing more easy, either for Jews or Gentiles, than to convince the world of the falsehood of the facts related in the Gospels; they had the books of the Apostles in their hands, they were masters of the public records: it was a matter of general concernment to the Jews, to oppose themselves to an imposture of so terrible a consequence as the history of the Evangelists was, if it had been entirely false; neither was it less the interest of the Romans to expose a fact, of whom Pliny the younger tells us, that all sorts of people joined with them, though they were persecuted with incredible violence. In the mean time we find nobody that hath contradicted the relation of the Apostles, nor any author that has writ against Jesus Christ or his Apostles. A long time after indeed there was a book seen, called The Acts of Pilate, published by the order of the emperor Maximian, which endeavoured to overthrow the truth of the facts that are related in the Gospels; but those acts are contradicted by all the Heathen historians yet remaining that were contemporary with the Apostles. Finally, a vast number of Jews and Gentiles were immediately convinced by the authority of the Apostles; and a belief in the Gospel hath passed from Judea to the ends of the world, according to the predictions which God gave by the ministry of the Prophets, and by the mouth of our Saviour.
WHAT I have already alleged might be sufficient to establish the faithfulness of the Apostles; but, for a fuller conviction of the reader, concerning so weighty a truth of our religion, I shall superadd some few more reflections.

First of all, it cannot be denied that the form of the writings of the New Testament is vastly different from those which may be suspected as forgeries. When the four Evangelists had related the miraculous birth of John the Baptist, they next set down that of our Saviour Christ, with the actions of his life, until his death, which does not comprehend above four or five years.

St. Luke writes the history of the Apostles, and in particular that of St. Paul, and takes in only the space of about thirty years: now let any one judge whether they who confine themselves to so narrow limits in respect of time, place, and persons, have any design to impose.

The remainder of these books is composed of two sorts of writings, one epistolary, and the other prophetical: for the prophetical parts, time must prove the truth of the predictions which are contained in the Apocalypse, as well as of those which are found in some of the epistles of the Apostles.

As for the epistles, besides some moral instructions, they are almost all employed in deciding some questions which the calling of the Gentiles to the Gospel, and the abolishing of the ceremonial law, had raised in the minds of the Jews who were converted to Christianity. We know that, of all writings, epistles are the most certain monuments, and those which men endeavour to forge least.

After all, it is certain that the sacred writers have with great care set down the time in which every event happened, as well according to the style of the Jews, in pointing out to us their solemn feasts, as that of the Gentiles, by setting down the year of the Roman emperor, and the character of the Roman magistrates.

A second character, which hinders us from accusing these books as forgeries, is this, that we cannot deny but that these books are of a very particular nature: they contain several considerable oracles which were to be fulfilled in the same generation, as that of the destruction of Jerusalem; they contain a continued series of miracles, of which all Judea was witness; they contain a great number of sermons, preached upon several illustrious occasions in the synagogues, in the temple of Jerusalem, and before thousands of people in the wilderness. Let any one judge whether it would be an easy thing to make these writings to be received, if we should suppose them to be lately forged.

This third reflexion is also considerable: it is certain that the Gospel was preached in the greatest cities of the empire, by the Apostles, and the Disciples of Jesus: the history of the Apostles, and their epistles themselves, make it evident, that there were numerous churches at Rome, Corinth,
Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, Ephesus, Antioch, and several other famous places: it is also known that there were Jewish synagogues in the same places; now if this be the case, what possibility is there of suspecting the least imposture in the books of the Apostles, if we consider how they were drawn up? The Disciples of Christ did not only preach in the synagogues the same things which they have put in writing, but they also engaged the Jews to examine them, because they affirmed them with a constancy which the Jews could not but look upon as incredible obstinacy: first of all, that these were things beyond dispute, and could not be doubted of. Secondly, That they had been long since foretold by the Prophets. Thirdly, that they were an exact accomplishment of other prophecies which had relation to the promised Messiah. Fourthly, That seeing they could not question the facts contained in the Gospel, they ought to renounce Judaism, to receive baptism, and become Christians.

'Tis also of great importance to observe further, as I have already done, that the books of the New Testament were penned before the overthrow of the commonwealth of the Jews. There are only some of the works of St. John, which were writ after the destruction of Jerusalem. I have before observed that the Divine Providence ordered it so, that all the Jews for five-and-thirty years together, repairing thrice a year to Jerusalem at their three solemn festivals, might have greater opportunities to inform themselves of the truth of the facts contained in the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.

To this remark I shall now add two weighty considerations; the one is, That the Christians for some years submitted themselves to the ceremonial law, and repaired with the Jews to Jerusalem, and by this means were engaged to examine the facts contained in the Gospel. The other is, That after the council of Jerusalem, they were dispensed with as to that custom, as well as the observing of all the other parts of the ceremonial law, which set the Christians in a greater opposition to the Jews, and so increased the necessity of examining very scrupulously on both sides, whatsoever was for or against them in those matters of religion.

This observation leads us naturally to another, That it is absolutely impossible that an imposture of this nature should not be discovered, when there ariseth a difference between those, who may be looked upon as the authors of the forgery, and those who after them endeavoured to gain credit to it. Now if we find that one Disciple of Jesus Christ betrays him without accusing him of the least crime or imposture; if we have seen the Christians at first united in the same assemblies with the Jews; and that there were several contents and disputes between the Apostles and those first Christians, yet without calling those facts which are contained in the Gospel, in question by either side: S. Paul takes notice of the contents which happened betwixt him and S. Peter; S. Luke relates the heats between S. Paul and Barnabas, upon very slight occasions, he sets down also the dispute which arose about the distribution of alms to the Greek and Jewish widows: one sees that there arose a dispute amongst the Apostles themselves, about the calling of the Gentiles to the Gospel; one sees afterwards the obstinacy of some of the Jews.
of the sect of the Pharisees, who maintained the absolute necessity of submitting to circumcision, and S. Paul's opposition set down in his epistle to the Galatians. We need no more to make it evident, that there could be no concert nor collusion between them, to deceive or impose upon those to whom they preached the Gospel.

Let us go a little further; a dispute happens about a capital point of Christian religion, about the resurrection: insomuch that S. Paul thinks himself obliged to write concerning it to the Corinthians, so that there was a necessity of examining the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ again.

Now we find that S. Paul, to confirm this doctrine in general, chiefly makes use of the instance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which he proves by arguments taken from the fact itself, that is, by witnesses whom he produceth. Whereupon I make this considerable reflection, That in comparing this dispute of S. Paul with the writings of the Evangelists, it clearly appears that they did not allege all the proofs they might have done. None of them relates in particular the number of those who saw Jesus Christ in Galilee upon the holy mountain; but S. Paul who had examined the faithfulness of their relations, and knew the witnesses, specifies the number, and observes that many of them were yet alive, if perhaps any of them were already dead.

I shall add only two considerations more, which prove that it was even impossible for the Apostles to impose upon the world on this occasion. The first is taken from their state and condition. They are no great lords, whose power might terrify any one from examining their writings; or whose reputation could not have been called in question without danger: on the contrary, they were men of mean condition, employed in base professions, often cast into prisons, and from time to time obliged to appear before magistrates for the same doctrine and the same facts which they published to the world. Let us consider then whether it were an easy matter for S. Paul for instance, I say for this S. Paul, a maker of tents, this S. Paul without reputation, without riches; this S. Paul who was seized at Jerusalem after divers persecutions, this S. Paul who was sent a prisoner to Rome, and imprisoned there under the power of the Roman magistrate, and who at last left his life by Nero's order, to make those blindly believe all he said, who were at liberty to examine, whether all that Luke related as happening to him at Jerusalem, at Maltha, at Philippi, at Athens, were indeed true, or only a framed story.

The second thing we ought to observe is, That not only the books of the Apostles were publicly read every Lord's day, by a constant law, of which we have most authentic witnesses in the writings of the Apostles themselves, and in other ancient books, which are still extant; but also that they were all of them written, not in Hebrew, which at that time was a dead tongue; not in Syriac, a language spoken in very few places; but in Greek, which at that time was the language commonly received throughout all the Roman empire; and besides was the language into which the Divine Providence had caused the Old Testament to be translated about three ages before, that men might compare the ancient oracles and their accomplishment together.
CHAP. XX.

That the whole Model of the Religion and Commonwealth of the Jews is at this Day so entirely destroyed, that the Messiah could no more be known.

WHAT I have before set down to establish the truth of those facts which serve for a foundation to the Christian religion, is certainly sufficient to answer the design which I formed in writing those reflections upon the books of the holy Scripture; and I believe I may with justice conclude, That as nothing is more uncontrollable than the truth of those books, and of the facts in them related; so there is nothing more certain than the truth and divinity of the Christian religion. So that now I have only two things to do, with which I conceive it will be necessary to conclude these reflections: The one is, to shew the absolute impossibility of conceiving any other accomplishment of the ancient oracles than what is set down in the Gospel: The other is, that concerning the divisions amongst Christians, which are a scandal to the Jews, and especially concerning the difficulty of the mysteries which the Gospel proposes, which are so many stumbling blocks to them which hinder them from discerning those characters of truth in the Gospel, which by the fulfilling of the ancient oracles, appear therein with so much luftre. The former of these shall be the subject of this, and the latter of the next chapter.

As the pulling down of the scaffolds which were only set up to build a palace, is an infallible sign that the building is finished, so one may say, that the total defacing of the model, which God had formed in the law, that the Messiah at his coming might be certainly known, is an unanswerable proof that he is already come. It is worth our pains to make some reflections on this overthrow, that we may conclude against the Jews, that if the Messiah was yet to appear in the world, it would be impossible to know him, according to the characters which God had given of him before his appearing.

In the first place therefore, whereas God had confined the Jews to the land of Canaan, that they might be visible to all the posterity of Noah, of whom one part, that is, the offspring of Cham, possessed Egypt and Africa; the posterity of Japhet, Europe and the lesser Asia; and those of Shem, the rest of Asia; the Jews at present are driven from that country; and far from being restored to it after seventy years, as they were by Cyrus, they have been for ever banished thence, by a decree of the emperor Adrian, who forbade them so much as to turn their eyes towards Judea, which was in the year of Christ 135. The Heathen Celsus insults over them in these remarkable words: They have no more, faith he, either land or house remaining to them.

Secondly, so far were they from having any remainders of a temporal power, that they were then wholly deprived of it. See what Tertullian
faith of them in the year of our Saviour 204. (b) They wander up and
down the world like dispersed vagabonds, banished from their climate and
country, without men, without God for their king, and are not permitted, as
strangers, to set foot on their native soil. We read a decree of Honorius
the emperor, which deprives them of the right of nominating their pa-
triarchs, or of paying them any tribute; which shows that their autho-


Thirdly, Their temple at Jerusalem being destroyed in the seventieth
year of our Lord, as that in Egypt called Onion was the year following,
it could never be built again, notwithstanding that Julian the apostate,
out of his hatred to the Christians, favoured that enterprise in the year
of our Saviour 363. There is a letter still extant which Julian writ to
the Jews, to assure them of his protection, and to encourage them to that
work, but it was not so much his death which daunted that undertaking,
as a very memorable opposition from Heaven.

Marcellinus a Heathen gives us this account of it (c). And being desirous
to propagate the memory of his government by the great ends of his works, he with
wast expense designed to rebuild the splendid temple which was formerly at Jeru-
alem, which after many and bloody battles, being besieged by Vespasian, and af-


In the fourth place the observation of some of their laws was absolutel-
ly forbidden, as being contrary to those of the Roman empire. Thus
they were not suffered to have many wives.

Upon this overthrow many inconveniences followed, which it will
be convenient to represent at one view.

1. They no longer knew those persons who at the first division of the
land, by Joshua, were owners of the different parts of the land of Ca-
nan.

2. Their families and tribes are confounded; their jubilee, which

(b) Dispersi, palabandi, &c. eti & soli sui extorres, vagantur per orbem, sine
hominum, sine Deo rege, quibus nec advocarum jure terram patriam salutare
conceditur. Apolog. cap. 21.

(c) Lib. 23. Imperiique sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare,
ambitio propter Hierofolymam templum quo post multas & interneceas cer-
tamina, obsidionem Vespasiani, polslaque Titus, egregie expugnatum, inflaurere sumpti-
bus cogitabat inmodicum: nego adique maturo mandam Alypiio declarat Antiocheni, qui
olim Britannias curaverat pro propretatibus. Constatque se idem fortiter instaurat
Alypius, juvaretque provincie Rege, metuendi globi flammamur prope fundamenta
eretibus affutibus erumpentes. feere locum exspectis habitibus operatis inaccessum:
sube vo modo elemento definitione repellente, eflurait inceptum.
3. The family of David is at this day utterly unknown.

4. They have no more lawful priests to observe the primogeniture, to examine the tokens of virginity, tho' it appears that, according to God's design, these laws were given on purpose to ascertain the knowledge of the Messiah, and to be like inclosures about this important truth, in the compass of which it might be the better examined.

Certainly if the Jews were still in possession of Judea, if they had their kings of the tribe of Judah, if they had their priests, if they were assured of their genealogies, if they still enjoyed all the other necessary means for establishing the certainty of their descents, if their temple had still subsisted in its former lustre, and that the sacrifices appointed by the laws were still offered there: the Jews might boldly answer that the Shiloh was not yet come, that is, they ought not to despair of seeing the Messiah born at Bethlehem, of the seed of David, and entering the temple of Jerusalem. Then the prophecy of Daniel, which determines 490 years for the term in which the Messiah was to appear, and be cut off by a violent death and punishment, would seem to be eluded.

But the term of the Messiah's coming is past; the commonwealth of the Jews is overthrown, the temple of Jerusalem is destroyed 1600 years since: there are no more genealogies among the Jews; they do not know their tribes, much less their families: how then can it be supposed that God should be true in his oracles (as we must acknowledge him to be) if they were never answered by the event?

To speak the truth, it is impossible to consider the arguments we have alleged to prove that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and especially those demonstrations which the Apostles have given us, without acknowledging these two things:

The first is, That it was very easy at the time of Jesus Christ's appearing, to examine whether he who declared himself to be the Messiah, were so indeed; so it is absolutely impossible to examine it, or know it, since the destruction of that model, if we suppose that God at first framed it for the determining of this question, as we have no reason to doubt it.

The second is, That the Christians exactly followed this Divine model, and being convinced of the truth of the facts which exactly corresponded with it, and which answered it in all its parts, they had all the reason imaginable to believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

In short, if we consider it well, we shall find that the whole Christian religion is nothing but a question of fact between the Jews and Christians: but such a question as the Jews at present are not in a condition to maintain against the Christians.

Both Jews and Christians agree in the characters of the Messiah, or at least about the most of them. According to these characters the Messiah ought to be come: the Christians maintain that they may be found in Jesus Christ, and they prove it by matter of fact; wherefore we must conclude, That either these characters attributed to the Messiah, are not proper characters to know him by, and so the wisdom of God will be eluded, and both Jews and Christians equally deceived, in taking that for a character of the Messiah which is not; or else that both the Messiah...
The greatness of the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, and the Division which is amongst Christians, cannot be any prejudice to the Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I come now to examine the double stumbling block which the Jews pretend against the Christian religion. This religion, say they, propounds doctrines that are inconceivable, and contrary to reason: for instance, that of the Trinity, that of the Incarnation and the Divinity of the Messiah. These are the doctrines which the Jews reject, as absolutely incompatible with the books of the Old Testament, which we have received from their hands.

But it is an easy matter to answer this objection. 1. It is founded upon a total forgetfulness of the solidity of those proofs of fact, which I have alleged. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead; this is a fact confirmed by several witnesses. It appears from Tacitus, that Jesus Christ suffered death under Tiberius, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea. It is known that Claudius banished the Christians from Rome, in the year of our Lord 54. It is evident from Tacitus, in his life of Nero, that he accused the Christians of burning the city of Rome, which himself was the author of; the Christians therefore made a considerable body in the capital city of the empire, and this happened in the year of our Lord 64. Suetonius says the same thing. 2. It appears that Pliny, in Trajan’s time, takes notice of the manner of their meetings. 3. Dion Cassius lets down the accusation brought in against Flavius and Domitille, as against Atheists; which is the title Julian the apostate gives to Constantine, because the Christians rejected the worship of the Heathen gods. 4. It appears by the latter end of the Acts of the Apostles that this book was writ in the year of our Lord 63; and yet this book supposes the Gospel of S. Luke to have been written before it; and S. Luke’s Gospel takes it for granted, that some of the other Gospels were already published. 5. It appears from the writings of Clemens Romanus, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was then written; and the same may be gathered from the books of S. Ignatius, Polycarp, and S. Justin. These facts, which are certain, are sufficient to prove that immediately after the death of Jesus Christ, his Apostles, and their Disciples, as eye-witnesses, maintained the truth of his resurrection. After this it may indeed be disputed, by what power he was raised, whether by a Divine power, or by his own; but it is ridiculous to dispute the fact by reasonings drawn from pretended absurdities which one may think to find in the doctrines of the Gospels.

Secondly, These mysteries, as for instance that of the Trinity, relates
lates to the Divine nature, which is incomprehensible, so that it is no strange thing if an idea of it be proposed to us, which not being distinct-ly known by us, may raise difficulties and perplexities in our minds. If I would discourse with one born blind, of the sun, of its light and heat, and should attribute to the sun the production of light, and afterwards of heat, he would find an infinite trouble not to imagine three suns. It is known how the philosophers, who agreed about the unity of the soul, have notwithstanding been obliged to attribute several faculties to it, which the common people look upon as very different things, and which seem to oppose the ideas of its unity and simplicity.

In the third place, The Christians prove very solidly, that these myste ries have been clearly proposed by the Apostles, who received their light from heaven as to these truths, and so might necessarily be believed upon their word, for the same reason that the Prophets of the Old Testament were formerly believed.

Moreover, they assert that these doctrines were first expressed, tho' not so clearly, in the Old Testament, which is in the hands of the Jews, the mortal enemies of Christians.

I add to these remarks, that most of those facts whose truth is so in-vincibly established, suppose these doctrines; and that the whole frame of the religion doth so necessarily require them, that we rob it of a con-siderable part of its glory in questioning or contesting any of them.

These reflections may suffice in general to resolve this difficulty of the Jews; and, for a more particular satisfaction, we refer the reader to those books which purposely treat of these mysteries, desiring him to observe carefully, that commonly the most difficult objections of Heretics against these matters, do rather oppose the terms which are made use of, or the notions which men follow in speaking of these truths, than the proposi-tions contained in the writings of the New Testament.

At least one may be assured, that the Jews are constrained to resolve several parallel objections, to which one can scarcely give a satisfactory answer, without borrowing some distinctions and notions from the Chris-tians.

Neither can the second objection of the Jews give us any more dis-turbance. It is true that there have been divisions amongst Christians, and are still to this day. What can we conclude thence? Can we rea-sonably conclude that therefore the first founders of Christianity were doubtful concerning the truth of those facts which are the support and foundation of it?

On the contrary, upon an attentive observation one may find,

1. That heresies have only served to render the truth of these facts more incontestable, by obliging those that had considered of them, to examine their certainty with more care and application. This is the judgment one ought to make upon all those heresies in the second age, about the truth of the flesh of Jesus Christ, or about the truth of his death: from thence men took occasion to take notice of, and collect with great care, all the circumstances that prove the truth of both these facts.

2. We find that the greatest part of these contests do not concern the truth of the facts, but the several consequences drawn from them, the truth of those matters continuing still beyond dispute. This we find in the
the dispute raised about the millennium, the truth of the promises of Jesus Christ being equally believed by both the disputing parties; but differently understood, according to the temper of those that considered of them; some forming gross and sensuous conceptions concerning them; others having a more spiritual relish, which they had acquired by studying the prophecies, and their true sense.

3. We find that this division which had sprung up amongst Christians, is one of the most solid proofs of the truth of the books of the New Testament. If some fools have endeavoured to decry some of them, or to falsify some particular places, we see that both parties unite to repel that violence, by producing their copies, and beating back the impostors with their united strength. One sees that Tertullian, thro' a Montanist, writ prescriptions against Heretics; and Epiphanius takes notice (without any respect to some that were orthodox) of their crime in blotting out of their copies, that Christ had wept.

It is known that the division of the Jews into Karaites and Talmudists, the jealousy between the Jews and Samaritans, and the division between the Jews and Christians, is a means of preserving the Scripture, and hindering its corruption, each party being very vigilant to hinder their adversaries from attempting any thing to its prejudice, in corrupting a book which they consider as common to them all.

I might observe many other advantages which accrue to the truth from their human failings; but I will only instance in one, which has always seemed to me very considerable; and that is, That these Heretics distinctly prove the truth of the predictions of our Saviour. An impious person would have reason to accuse our oracles as false, if there had never been any heresies. But truth triumphs in seeing so great a multitude of them, who the more they increase, the more she sees herself confirmed and established. This is the reason induced God to permit so great an increase in the first ages, when the truth, meeting with the greatest opposition by prosecutions, stood in the greatest need of sensible characters by which it might be known.

I conclude this work with desiring my reader to consider these reflections upon the holy Scripture here propounded, with a serious attention, and to examine the coherence and indissoluble connexion of them; and with prayer to God that it may please him to make them serviceable to advance the glory of his name, which is the only end I have proposed to myself in the writing of them.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.