John Adams Library.

IN THE CUSTODY OF THE
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

SHELF N°

ADAMS

1811

V1
A COLLECTION
OF
THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,
IN SIX VOLUMES.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.
Lord Bishop of Landaff,
AND
Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge.

VOL. I.

CAMBRIDGE:
Printed by J. Archdeacon, Printer to the UNIVERSITY; for J. & J. Merrill, Cambridge; T. Evans, London; and J. & J. Fletcher, Oxford.
M.DCC.LXXXV.
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 Majes-
ty is the highest Ornament, for the first principles of
Religious Education; and as one of the main objects of
DEDICATION.

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 tho' 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 sought 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 Nureberg 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.
PREFACE.

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 extensive plan of study for young divines, and to have made a great show 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 nescire; for what Quintilian observes of historical, is certainly very applicable to an abundance of Theological writings.—Persue quidem quod quisque umquam vel contemptissimorum hominum dixerit, aut nimiae miserie, aut inanis jacliantiae 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 inconsiderable 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 skilful 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 stocked 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 stops short, giving himself up to rural amusements, mis-spending 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 willing to divert the attention of the Under-graduates 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 honorably 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 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 becometh
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 infinuating, that it will suf-
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 Scrip-
tures.

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
persevere 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 existencies, 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 faltidiously reject the
instruction of the Eternal God! Or, if this is saying too much,
that he should haftily, and negligently, and triumphantly con-
clude, that the Supreme Being never had condescended to induct
the race of man. It might properly have been expected, that a
rational being, so circumstanced, would have sedulously inquir-
ed 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 jeffings, 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 conscientious 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 excepting 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 hopes 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 everlafting Preserver. This is a frame of mind so perfecutive 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 pressing upon the minds of the unlearned in Scripture knowledge, the authorities of Bacon, 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 characters 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, Lyttleton 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 converted 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.

Discrete, O Miseri, et causas cognoscite rerum
Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimus: ordo
Quis datus;—quem te Deus es
Julit.

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

fo\lly or vice, without ever reflecting upon the providential dis-
penation under which they live, without having any sublimer 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 sandy 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 enquiry 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
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 wisdom 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 dissolve 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 they 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 of Christianity, into an irrefragable 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 sciolists, 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,
Christiannity, 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 obstructing 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 Romonists 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 master he standeth or falleth, his wrong judgment may affect his own salvation, it cannot affect your's; for, in the words of Tertullian— nec alii obeis aut prodest 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 proselyte—a proselyte! 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
there 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 choaked 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 warrant-ed 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 Chrift his Lord and his God, or by you?— rash ex-
positors of points of doubtful disputation; intolerant fabricators
of metaphysical Creeds, and incongruous Sytems of Theolo-

gy! Do you undertake to measure the extent of any man's
understanding except your own; to estmate 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 ne-
cessary to your's, 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 Christians 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 Jesus Chrift; as to a resurrection from the dead; as to
a future state of retribution; nor with respect to other important
questions concerning which the wisest of the Heathen Philo-
phers were either wholly ignorant, or had no settled notions.
But there are other subjects on which the Academicorum στοχα
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 hu-
man soul; the state of the dead before the general resurrec-
tion; the resurrection of the same body; the duration of fu-
ture punishments, and many others of the same kind. Some
one will think that I here speak too freely, and accuse me, pro-
bably, as an encourager of sceptical and latitudinarian principles.
—What! Shall the church of Chrift 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 neft 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 in-
vestigate 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 froward 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,—Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra—Churchmen as well as Dissenters, and dissenters as well as churchmen are apt to give a degree of affent to opinions beyond what they can give a reason for; this is the very essence of prejudice: it is difficult for any man intirely 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 appellations, those who cannot measure the rectitude of the Divine dispensations by his rule, nor seek their way to heaven, by insifting 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 extinguiished 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

Vol. I. b OF
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 proselyte 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 unsheathed 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 Vitziliputzli 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 foretell, from observing the signs of the times, that the æra 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, confinements, imprisonments, tortures, of all the unjust and fan- guinary efforts which they have severally made use of to procure it. They perceive too that a diversity 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 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 conspicuousness 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 fort 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 judgments. A fameness of doctrine might indeed have been secured by the Professor, without whose approbation no question can be proposed for disputation; 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.
QUÆSTIONES QUÆ DAM THEOLOGICÆ
IN ACADEMIA CANTABRIGIENSÌ,
AB ANNO 1755 USQUE AD ANN. 1785;
Publicè disputatæ sub Presidio S. Theologiæ Professorum Reg.
THOMÆ RUTHERFORTH, RICARDI WATSON.

QUÆS.

1 ON fuit Deo indignum mortis pæna sancire, ne primi hominum generis parentes unius cujusdam arboris fructu veserentur.

2 Quod genus humanum sit laboribus et morti subjéctum propter Adami peccatum, docetur in sacra pagina, nec est rationi contrarium.

3 Lapsum olim fluísse Angelorum patet ex facris literis.

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

5 Univerfus serpunt cultus apud Gentiles ad confiremandam genera- lem interpretationem Diaboli sub serpenti forma latentis, prout in facris Scripturis traditur, apte convenit atque inde derivari videtur.

6 Praescientia divina non erat caufa lapsus Adami.

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

8 Lapsus Adami humanam naturam ad peccatum procliorem red- didit.

9 Christus ante erat quam humana natura ab eo induebatur.

10 Non fuit indignum Filio Dei, hominum generis redimendi causa, hu- manam naturam induere.

11 Sacrificia Juffu Dei principio sunt constituta.

12 Sacrificia principio constituta sunt ut essent typi mortis Christi.

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

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

15 Christum ipsum infontem, a Deo ad mortem datum esse profontibus, est credibile.

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

17 Christiana revelatio rationis inventa superat rerum divinarum nume- ro et certitudine.

18 Ratio fola nullam potest invenire conditionem, qua Deus velit homini-ibus dare peccatorum veniam et impunitatem.

b 3

19 Mors
Mors Christi est propria et plena satisfactio pro peccatis hominum.

Chriftus pro omnibus est mortuus.

Opera juftorum vitam æternam per se non merentur.

Juftitia Christi non sic hominibus imputatur, ut Dei judicio, ipfi confeuntur eam profeftifile.

Coram Deo homo reputatur juftus non propter meritum suum, sed propter meritum Jesu Chrifti, per eum in ejus nomine.

Neque sacrae Scripturae, neque articuli Ecclefiae Anglicane, Chrifti juftitiam nobis imputari in juftificationem, sed idem.

Paulus et Jacobus, quanquam de hominum juftificatione verbis discrepare videantur, sententiis tamen non discrepant.

Juftitia non fide nec paenitentia potefi comparari, nec fidei et paenitentiae fructibus conservari.

Sacrae Scripturae nullibi docent homines per idem solam, bonorum operum fru6i:ibus carentem, supremo die juftificandos.

Non fuit ea religionis Chrifti ratio, ut omnibus qui per eam jufti apud Chriftum habeantur, certa falutis consequendae fiducia in hac vita ingeneretur.

Fides Chriftiana nec cum ab hominibus fusciptiatur, nec postquam fuccepta fit rationis usum apernatur.

Lex Mofica nonideo Deo indigna cenfenda est, quia docet, Deum iniquitatem Patrum in filios vifitare.

Poena talionis, quam lex Mofica constituit, non fuit Deo legislatore indigna.

Licentia falsos Deos colendi non fuit Israelitis concedfa.

Quod religio Judaica fit minus perfecta quam Chriftiana, id nihil pro- bat contra divinam hujus et illius originem.

Israelitae spolis Agyptiorum auferendis, legem naturae non violabat.

Non erat Deo indignum Canaanæos Israelitis exscindendos tradere.

Filia Jephthae non fuit immolata.

Per legem Moficae Judæis non licuit pro victimis homines immo-
lare.

Mandatum Abrahamo datum de immolatione Ishaai ad mortem Chrifti reprefentandam, haud alienum fuit divinae sapientiae aut jufticie.

Nulla in libro Psalmorum obnunciatur diræ, quæ offendant eos non fuifte divino inffinctu conscriptos.

Scriptura
46 Scriptura qua docemur "Deum Cor Pharoahonis obfirmasse" nihil in se continet contra Dei benignitatem; quantum ex ratione aut revelatione tunc temporis Israelitis concepsa colligi potest.

47 Hominibus qui ante diluvium vixerunt non licuit, ece causa, animalia maetare.

48 Diluvium olim fuifle univerfale traditur, in facra Scriptura, nec est historiae vel civili vel naturali contrarium.

49 Veritas miraculorum, que in veteri testamento traduntur, curri Idololatria moribusque depravatis Judaeorum constare potest.

50 Vaticinia quibus denunciavit Mosis, Palestiam ob inobedientiam Judaeorum incultam ab is sterilemque futuram esse; hodie inplentur.

51 Deus cum dixerit Israelitis, se prophetae Mosis similem ex fratribus eorum excipitur, hoc pro illos salui mea deo.

52 Aliquae extant praelectiones, temporibus Mosis antiquiores, quae ad Chrifiim sunt referenda.

53 Ex veterum prophetarum praelectionibus duo Messiae, alter Davidis alter Josephi filius, non erant in mundum venturi.

54 Sceptrum quod non ante erat a Juda disceflurum quam Shiloh administravit, potestatem tribus regendae designabat.

55 Israelitis circumsicionis ritum ab Aegyptius non receperunt.

56 Mare rubrum, Israelitis per illud transeuntibus, ad utrumque latus infar muri per miraculum setit.

57 Confusio linguarum Babylonica absque Dei interventu explicantur.

58 Miracula sunt idonea argumenta divinae Missionis.

59 Miracula fuifle olim edita satis probati potest ex humano testimonio.

60 Credibile est, Deum possse miracula facere, et interdum velle, et humano testimonio patet feciffe.

61 Miracula non nisi a Deo aut a Creatura, particulari ejus jus suffit et potentia agente, efficientur.

62 Magi Aegyptii vera coram Pharoahone miracula fecerunt.

63 Tentatio Christi in deserto fuit visio a Deo missa.

64 Tentatio Christi in deserto non fuit visio a Deo missa.

65 Nec per visionem, nec per Diabolum, sub qualibet externa forma, similiiter autem ac homo Christus tentabatur.

66 Miracula in Evangelis tradita hitoriam eam ipsis conjunctam adeo non infirmant, ut absque illorum ope rerum geftarum series explicari nequeat.

67 Christi Apostoloris vita defunctis credibile est ceffasse miracula.

68 Extraordinaria spiritus fancti dona statim potest tempora Apostolorum in Ecclesia Christiana ceffaverunt.

69 Spiritus sanctus est persona.

70 Christianorum est officium spiritum sanctum colere et precari.

71 Dantur in Christo fidibus certa quedam spiritus sancti auxilia.

72 Fidei et virtutis adjuncta quae homines a spiritu sancto habent, eorum libertatem non tollunt.
PREFACE.

73 Spiritus sanctus interiora fidei ac virtutis adjumenta hominibus ita suppeditare solet, ut nullo animi tacitu percipiantur.
74 Interiora quaedam, Christianae Religionis sufficiendiæ ac praestandæ adjumenta, hominum animis a spiritu sancto subministrantur.
75 Ad Theologiam Christianam plene et perfeâte intelligendam animo opus est litteris doctrinisque imbuto.
76 Veritas Christianae Religionis evidentia non a spiritu sancto inspedit, sed ex recto rationis usu pendet.
77 Diversa revelationum genera, pro varia rerum et hominum conditione, diversis hominum moribus et ingenii accommodantur.
78 Consilium divinum de redimendo hominum generè, prout Christi tempora accedebant, gradatim aperiebatur.
79 In libris veteris Testamenti prædictur Christiana Dispensatio.
80 Christus et Apostoli abroganda leges Mosaicæ de divina legislatoris auctoritate non detrahunt.
81 Religio quam Christus humano generi tradidit non continetur legè naturali denuo promulganda.
82 Non est res indifferens quam quia religionem colat.
83 Error in doctrinis religionis speculativis non est innocens.
84 Post Canonem Scripturarum signatum nova revelationes non sunt expectandæ.
85 Messias per veteres prophetas Judæis promissus non futurus erat rex terræris.
86 Veritas Christianæ revelationis patet ex impletione prædictionum veterum prophetarum.
87 Jesus Nazarenus fuit verus Messias a Deo promissus.
88 Prædictiones veterum prophetarum non ita citantur in novo testamento, quasi singule eorùm a cæteris ostenderent Jesum esse Messiam.
89 Clades Hierofolymitana et status populi Judaici hodiernus pro magno argumento est veritatis Christianæ Religionis.
90 Deus nulla lege aut vaticinatione significavit, sæc. dolore Judæorum quenquam in ullam Christianorum civitatem civem adscriptitium recipi.
91 Propagatio fidei Christianæ ante Constantini tempora probat auctoris ejus divinam.
92 Convertio Divi Pauli ortum suum non debuit superfitioni, sed miraculis a Deo editis et veritati Christianæ Religionis.
93 Ex vita et moribus Christi et Apostolorum Christianæ religionis veritas probari potest.
94 Miracula Christi una cum doctrina probant divinam ejus missionem.
95 Miracula Christi ipsa per se valent ad probandam divinam ejus missionem.
96 Ad stabilendam revelationis doctrinam non fatis valet interna evidentia.
97 Diffensiones Christianorum, de rebus quæ in religione Christiana contineantur, non ostendunt religionem ipsam esse falsam.
98 Variantes lectiones et menda auctoritatem sacrae Scripturae non labefactant in rebus ad fidem et mores spectantibus.
99 Diffensiones
PREFACE.

99 Diffensiones inter Apoftolos de circumcitione gentium divinam Christianae religionis auctoritatem non impugnant.
100 Caeteri Apoftoli cum Paulo consentiebant, Judaeos fine obtempe-randa lege Moseica posse per Christum salutem consuequi.
101 Auctoritas Testimonii quo Religio Christi confirmatur temporum longinquitate non imminuta est.
102 Nihil in Evangelio Matthaei traditur ex quo probari possit, id Scriptum fuiss poft excidium Hierosolymitanum.
103 Apostoli nihil tradiderunt, ex quo intelligamus credidisse eos mundum suis temporibus finem finisse habiturum.
104 Religio Christiana non ideo vituperanda est quod nihil de amicitia vel amore patriae prescriptur.
105 Divina Christianae religionis auctoritas non imminuitur quod nondum universis innotuit.
106 Jesuitae Christi causam malam agunt tolerando ritus et ceremonias, quas apud Sinas in honorem Confusi, parentum, caeterorumque majorum est celebrare.
107 Non est libertati Christianae alienum ut in rebus indifferentibus ad cultum Dei spectantibus Ecclesia auctoritatem habeat.
108 In fidei controversiis nullius auctoritas qua just tollit privati judicis.
109 Christianorum hominum qui se ad civitatis suae religionem confor-mare nolint, justum nullum violatur si e munerebus civilibus lege lata excludantur.
110 Indulgentia Pontificis nuper concepsa nec rationi, nec sacris literis, nec reipublicae salutis repugnat.
111 Vis externa non est hominibus adhibenda propter religionem quam prostantur.
112 Unaquaque ecclesia jure postulare potest, ut ii quibus publice docendi munus committat, religionis Christianae institutionibus, ejus auctoritate comprobatis, afferentiant.
113 Et rationi et sacris Scripturis consentaneum est ut homines ecclesi-astic i potestatis civili subjiciantur.
114 Non est Christianis interdictum, ut quavis de causa sidem suam ullo jurejurando ne astringant.
115 Nulla in civilibus hominum officiis mutatio est facta per Christi religionem.
116 Non est a Christi religione alienum civili auctoritate recipi ac stabilitri.
117 Christiana religio incrementa sua in primis ecclesiae saculis non debuit caufis, ut vocantur, secundis, sed partim internae sac celentiae, partim auctoris suae potestatis divinae.
118 Perfpicuitas sacrorum librorum non efficit ut supervacaneum sit homines ad religionem Christi instituere.
119 Ministris ecclesiae debetur aliquod stipendium.
120 Forma regiminis in ecclesiae Anglicana constituti, et verbo Dei et ecclesiae primitivae usu sanctitur.
122 Ecclesiasticici
P R E F A C E.

122 Ecclesiastici regimini in Anglia et in Scotia constituti, neutra forma, aut juri hominum naturali aut verbo Dei repugnat.

123 A Christi et Apostolorum institutione patet, ordinem suisse Episcopatus a Presbyteriatu diversum, eoque superiorem.

124 Statæ precum formulæ sunt maxime conformes sacris Scripturis et ecclesiæ primitivæ præxi.

125 Liturgiæ in diversis ecclesiis diverse, modo sacris literis haud adversentur, non sunt improbandæ.

126 Precatio Dominica est formula quam omnes Christi Discipuli in Deo precando adhibere debent.

127 Precatio Dominica est formula quam omnes Christi Discipuli in Deo precando adhibere debent.

128 Eucharistia uisque ad secundum Christi adventum ab ejus Discipulis celebrari debet.

129 Calix Laicis non est denegandus.

130 Christus omnino cultu, quem Deo Patri reddimus colendus est.

131 Christi qui Mediator novi fæderis est adequantum objectum cultus religiosi.

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

133 Myæteria revelationis non ostendunt earn non esse a Deo traditam.

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

135 Poffitive religionis præcepta non minus obligant quam moralia.

136 Duo tantum novi fæderis sacra menta instituit Christus.

137 Confirmatio, pænitentia, ordo, matrimonium, et extrema unctio pro fæcramentis Evangelicis non sunt habenda.

138 Coena Dominicæ Epuli sacra
Aqua asperio seu affusio in baptismate administrando non irritum reddit sacramentum.

Omne peccatum quod Christiani post baptismum committant, si pænitendo corrigatur, eos a salute non excludit.

Sabbatum crat, ante legem per Mosem traditam, a Deo constitutum.

Præcepta Mosâica de modo observandi Sabbatum Christianos non obligant.

Sabbatum ab ultimo die septimanae recte est inter Christianos ad primum translatum.

Ad diem Dominicum religioso observandum cuncti Christiani tenentur.

Doctrina absolutæ prædestinationis cum divinis pugnat attributis.

Doctrina prædestinationis et electionis ad futurum aut miseriae aut felicitatis statum ex sacra Scriptura colligi nequit.

Prædestinationis Paulina tota spe lât:at ad Gentium vocationem.

In libris novi sæculi nihil de prædestinatione traditur quod diligentiam hominum in officii præstantijs jure imminuat.

Sacrae Scripturæ nullibi docent eos qui de Christo nunquam audirent non possunt salutem aeternam conscribi.

Salus nostra in fide in Christum redemptorem consistit.

Doctrina ecclesiæ pontificiæ de purgatorio nullis vel sacrae Scripturæ vel rationis nitiur fundamentis.

Sanctorum et Angelorum cultus et invocation apud pontificios est: idolatria.

Ipse jejunandi actus per se et sua natura vim et rationem religionis non habet.

Confessio privata fæcrodii facta non est ad salutem necessaria.

Plebi et indocitis fæcorum librorum lectio non est interdicenda.

Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus constitutus fuit a Christo totius ecclesiæ monarcha.

In sacris libris continentur omnia quæ sunt ad salutem necessaria.

Sacra Scriptura est unica Christianæ fidei norma.

Nullus est in ecclesia judex insallibilis controversiarum.

Characteres hominis peccati in posteriore Paulina ad Thessalonicensibus epistola expressi Pontifici Romano apprime conveniunt.

Pars historica Novi Testamenti quae continet eventus divinam opem non expressentes jure fidei nostram vindicat.

Datur status medijs inter mortem et resurrectionem.

Non datur status medijs inter mortem et resurrectionem.

Nec felicitas beatorum perfecta nec miseriae impiorum extrema erit ante resurrectionem et generale judicium.

Jobi de vindice suo videndo fiducia ad ftemp vitæ futuræ referenda est.

Resurrectionis Christi probatur testibus sibi dignis.

Resurrectionis mortuorum patet ex parabola Divitis ac Lazari.

Anima a corpore soluta in status separatum manet ad resurrectionem.

Resurrectionis quæ patefæcta et promissa est in Evangelio est resurrectionis corporis.

Æterna felicitas non patet nisi ex revelatione.
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 enlarged 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
In 1634 were published at Cambridge—*Determinationes Quæstionum quarundam Theologicarum, in Academia Cantabrigiensi publicæ disputatarum*—by Doctor Davenant, then Bishop of Salisbury, and formerly Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity.

**INDEX QUAESITIONUM.**

**Quæst.**

1 **CONCUPISCENTIA in renatis est peccatum.**
2 Papistarum preces pro defunctis sunt inanes.
3 Veræ credentes certe esse possunt de sua salute.
4 Nulla est temporalis Papæ poteftas super reges in ordine ad bonum spiritualis.
5 Infallibilis determinatio fidei non est annexa cathedræ Papali.
6 Caeca Jesuitarum obedientia est illicita.
7 Non licet Proteftanti salva conscientia missae interesse.
8 Opera pænalia non sunt divinae justitiae sufficiens.
9 Non datur liberum arbitrium in non renatis, ad bonum spiritualis.
10 Opera renatorum labo peccati sunt inquinata.
11 Civilis jurisdictiio jure conceditur perfonis ecclesiasticis.
12 Renuente magistratu, non licet populo reformationem ecclesiæ moliri.
13 Missæ pontificiae non est sacrificium propitiatorium pro vivis et moruis.
14 Antiqui Patres non meruerunt Christi incarnationem, nec aliaqu ejus circumftantias.
15 Tota poteftas facerdotum est spiritualis.
16 Bonitas ad malum non fluit ex principiis integræ naturæ.
17 Jesuitici pontificii non possunt effe bona subditi.
18 Cultus religiosus creature est Idololatria.
19 Rex in regno suo est minor folo Deo.
20 Ecclesia Anglicana justissime obligat ad ceremonias.
21 Ecclesia Romana est apoftatica.
22 Decretum non tollit libertatem.
23 Sacramenta non conferunt gratiam ex opere operato.
24 In effentia divina nec alid nec accidentes.
25 Praeicientia divina non erat caufa lapsus humani.
26 Subiectum divinæ praedestinationis est homo lapsus.
27 Papæte tenetur interesse facris Proteftantium.
28 Papæ jurisdictio non est universalis.
29 Fides implicita non est salutifera.
30 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
31 Omne peccatum est sua natura mortiferum.
32 Conflitia, quæ vocantur Evangelica, habent quandoque vim praecipi.
PREFACE.

Remissa culpa remittitur pena.
Nemo potest de congruo mereri primam gratiam divinam.
Ecclesia invisibilis non est Idea Platonica.
Christi victima sola vere expiatoria.
Fides justificans est fiducia in Christum mediatorem.
Fides justificans non potest a charitate disjungi.
Laici non sunt arcendi a lectione Scripturarum.
Superbia fuit primum peccatum Angelorum.
Publica Religionis exercitia sunt lingua vulgari peragenda.
Diversitas graduum in ministris Evangelicis, verbo Dei non repugnat.
Celibatus non est necessario sacris ordinibus annexus.
Sancti non sunt invocandi.
Ignorantia non excusat peccatum.
Sancta ecclesia Catholica quam credimus, ex folis constat electis.
Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus constitutus fuit a Christo ecclesiae totius monarca.
Censura ecclesiastica non tollit vincula officiorum.
Non datur omnibus auxilium sufficiens ad salutem.

Doctor Tuckney was elected Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge in 1655; his Praelectiones Theologicae, nec non Determinationes Quesitionum variarum insignium in Scholis Academicis Cantabrigienses habitæ—were published at Amsterdam in 1679.

QUÆSTIONES DETERMINATÆ.

Agistratum gerere non repugnat Christi institutis.
Humana Christi natura non est ex unione hypostatica Divinarum proprietatum particeps.
Religio non est vi et armis propaganda.
Infalibilitas nulli competit creaturæ.
Electio est prorsus gratuita.
Omne peccatum est sua natura mortale.
Ad ministerium ecclesiae suæciendum ordinarie requisitum legítima vocatio.
Christiano licet ex intuitu mercedis operari.
Meritum Papisticum ex S. Scriptura non probatur.
Purgatorium Papisticum est fictitium.
Pæne propter peccatum æternae non sunt iniquæ.
Nec ratione fundatur nec Scriptura.
Peccata præterita et futura non simul remittuntur.
Fraudes quæ vocantur piae sunt illicite.
Nullus alienius constituit rationem Ædei justificantis.
PREFACE.

Ad redemptionis nostræ autem tam activa quam passiva Christi spectat obedientia.

Deus reputat pro justis non nisi revera justos.

Rectitudo primi parentis non fuit donum supernaturale.

Beati in statu gloriae se mutuo sunt agniti.

Avredemptionis noftrae autem tam activa quam passiva Christi spectat obedientia.

Deus reputat pro justis non nisi revera justos.

Rectitudo primi parentis non fuit donum supernaturale.

Beati in statu gloriae se mutuo sunt agniti.

16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

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 system, 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 Cocceius; and by his Aphorisms contra Socinianos et contra Pontificios; by the Syllabus Questionum practicarum, quae inter Socinianos reliquisque Ecclesiae Reformatae, simul ac Pontificiae Theologos ventilantur, published in Bishop Barlow's Remains; by a small tract intitled Questiones praeicipue, earque rude propositae, de Universa Doctrina Christianorum, Bremæ 1617; by the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas; for notwithstanding the ridicule which usually, 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 Scripture, not a few Theological questions of great moment stated with clearness and judgment; by Doddridge's Lectures, by the Theses Theologicae of Vossius, and of Le Blanc, by the Syn tagma Thesum in Academia Salmuriensis disputatarum, by the Works of Episcopius, Limborch, Turretin, Curcellæus, Buddeus, Calvin, Arminius, Beckius, 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 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
The PREFACE.

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 subserviency to the best interest of Mankind.
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 revele 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 consigned to writing is also very fit and proper; as this, in fact, is the surest method of preserving them
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 traditionary 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 disfigure it, and make the commandment of God therein of no effect. Infomuch, 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 consistency 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 connection with the whole discourse. The occasion, coherence, and connection 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 unsatisfied 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 enquire, 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, delizeing 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 afflift 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 with thee, [lay them up as a treasure 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, and ranfack 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 of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: [which of all understand-
ing 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 connection with a sincere endeavour
to view agreeably to it. For should a person, under the greatest advan-
tages of learning, and with the utmost affiduity 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 spec-
culation, but practice and experience, which renders a man truly skilful
in any business. So in Religion, no man can be truly wise and know-
ing, but he who liveth wifely and virtuously. If ye continue in my word
(faith our Lord, Job. viii. 31.) then shall you know the truth, and the truth
shall make you free [from the darkness of ignorance and error, and the
fervitude of absurd lufts and passions.] Job. VII. 27. If any man will do
his, God’s, will, be shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. [He
shall fee 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 di-
vine truths.

III. To the effectual study of Scripture, it is necessary, that our minds
and hearts be unbyaffed, 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 preengaged, 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 honor one of anoth-
er, whose principal rule is the desire of temporal honor, and the fa-
vor of men, and seek not the honor, which comes from God only, the honor
of a good conscience, and of upright conduct? Or, if we resign our
understandings and consciences to the authority of human decisions and
decrees; or imbibe the bigotry of a party, which determines a person
to retain pertinaciously a sort of religious notions, without considering,
or examining how far they are agreeable to the word of God, our un-
derstandings 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
enquiry, whether the worship of saints, images, relics, bread, and in-
umerable other absurd doctrines, and superstitious practices, are agree-
able to the truth and purity of the Christian Religion. The error and

iniquity
Of the Divine Dispensations.

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

The Ways of God 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 of God may signify the meer operation and productions of his power. But both these words have a more restricted and emphatical significati. a Way, signifieth 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 posses|sed 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. Hof. x. 13. Because thou di|st truth 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 Beerseba liveth, subsists, flouriseth, notwithstanding the opposition made to it. ἔφυ σignifies to constitute, ordain, appoint, dispose. Num. xxviii. 6. 2 Chron. ii. 11. Psal. civ. 19. Eccl. iii. 11.

Hence Ways and Works signify the appointments, constitutions, or Dispensations of God. By which are meant, "The schemes or methods devised or contrived by the wisdom and goodness of God, to discover, or shew himself, his nature and will, his beneficence, holinesses and justice to the minds of his rational creatures, for their instruction, discipline and reformation, in order to promote their happiness." 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 Father, 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 honor 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 honor 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 capacities and circumstances, that proper means be provided for our instruction and discipline. For instance, 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, such visible and various displays of his Being, Power, Wisdom, Justice, and kind Regards, as may engage our attention, discover his eternal Godhead, 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 Father, as in a glass held before our eyes and thoughts, has shewn himself 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 authority of others, for preserving good order, for the protection of virtue, and the restraint and punishment of vice. Add to these, wars, perfervience,
Of the Divine Dispenfations.

Ch. II.

fines, famine, earthquakes, and such like events; all these may be reckoned among the Divine Appointments, or Dispenfations; 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 Dispenfations, 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 connections, 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, though fit to introduce a new dispenfation 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 goodnes, 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, preserving the only Family, that remained uncorrupt in the old world, in order to propigate 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 dispenfation, 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, blessed 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 reftored 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 mean 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 Lybia, 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-
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 fin 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 Jews, 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 hence forth 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 every where.

XIV. The
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 sorcery, and cruel persecution of the truth. This, as it was the properst 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 variously 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 persecution, under every form, more generally detested; 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 pleasure 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 surprising 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 connections, we must make a few general remarks, which will assist our conceptions and enquiries.
ONCERNING the foregoing dispensations, we may, in 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 labor 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 assigned to his wisdom. See Psal. civ. 24. Prov. viii. 22. Ephes. i. 5, &c.—iii. 9, 10.

III. Assuredly 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 enquiries 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 wickedness 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 have a sinful world, and to carry religion both in its personal influences, and general prevalence, to the highest perfection our present condition will admit.*

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 states 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†. 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 establısh 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 establısh 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

* 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 men 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 different 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. LD. Barrington's Essay on the Div. Dispensations. Part I. Preface, p. 26.

† 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 thofe, 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] he shall understand these things? Prudent, and [for] he 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 forfake. 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 apostile *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 feeth 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 cloath 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
Ch. III.

Divine Dispensations.

17

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 fiting 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 fulnefs 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, (Pfal. 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 colors. The most horrible gloom will be drawn over the perfections of the best of beings, our minds will be filled with darknefs 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 joyles 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 infcrutability 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 judgements, 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 marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! We cannot comprehend the ways of God in their fullest extent, in all their largest views, and remotest connections. 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 darknefs, 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, perseverance 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.

C H A P. IV.

OF THE CREATION.

Gen. I. 1.—26.

His 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 fullness 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.
The sentiment which Moses, I apprehend, would inculcate being this, that the whole universe of beings, whenever created, doth not exist 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, want, 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,  יִהְרִי הַמְּסָה the firmament, 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 contradiction 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 causing 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. xii. 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 fish 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 Môses 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. Consequently 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 hemispheres. Just as the ringing of the bell produces sound, not by an emanation of particles from the substance of the bell, but by exciting the air, or the surrounding substance, without which the bell could produce no sound at all. As the air will not sound, 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, suppose of one inch diameter, must emit from its body instantaneous, 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 113,0976 cubical miles. Which, notwithstanding the divisibility of matter, in infinitum, seems to me, to be incredible. It is surely more probable and rational to suppose, 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 we

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 mass 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 fixed stars 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 be from that spark, which is but a point, a body, the contents of which are fifty cubick feet. How incredible the supposition!

"Suppose the lanthorn, 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 fix 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 lanthorn concealed, and the light immediately disappears; let it be uncovered the moment after, and it will instantly be seen as far as before, and

"conce.
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, suspended in the unmeasurable and inconceivably distant regions of empty space; and steadfastly 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 faiieth. 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 eight cubick leagues of space with fresh light; then how many times eight cubick leagues of luminous matter, will all the successive infants 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 exalted before the bell that put it in motion, and caused it to vibrate into sound, so in like manner, the light exalted round the fire of Messene, before the lanthorn 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 Moses 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."
manded, 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 infinites; and out of his
own fulness continually and plentifully supplieth them with all the ne-
cessaries of existence. And still his fulness remaineth the same, unemp-
tied, 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 li-
berally 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, exactness,
order, and harmony, in which God hath formed and fixed the universe;
in the several capacities and degrees of excellence he has conferred upon
his creatures; the proper stations he hath assigned to them; the subordi-
nation and subserviency 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, adjusted in the exactest pro-
portions to their several ends and connections; all in every part and
respect shewing the workmanship of the profoundest skill, and most curi-
ous art. The utmost stretch of human understanding can reach but a
small part of God's works; but they who study the wisdom of Cre-
ation, 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 heavens;
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 railed conceptions of his transcen-
ding 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 en-
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. Tranf-
portt with joy, by an elegant profopopoeia, 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 kindness 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 honor 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.

CHAP. V.

OF THE CREATION OF MAN.

Gen. i. 26, to the End.

O W 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 ed and furnished 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. xiii. 1. Thy makers is thy husbands, Isai. liv. 5. which are all to be understood, and are rendered in the singular number. "Nouns apppellative 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 righteousness 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 righteousness 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 righteousness 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, Ephes. 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 (Ephes. 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 repeates, 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 favor of God, which was declared at the first creation of Man. It is of great importance to observe these remarks, not to produce any daffert or animosity towards those that espouse the contrary opinion, who ought to be treated with candor 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 footstepsof 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 honor 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 suprême Father, and desire, and dispose ourselves for, the everlasting enjoyment of his favor. And agreeably to these distinguishing honors 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 surprizing 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 Godness, 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
Of the Institution

CHAP. VI.

Of the Institution of the Sabbath.

Gen. II. Ver. 1, 2, 3.

S 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 our selves, and a blessing

immenfe 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 reafon 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 honor his Grace and our own being. And shall we defert our Manhood? Shall we despife the rich bounty of Heaven? Shall we mingle with the duft that particle of superior life, which God hath breathed into us? Rather let us affert 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,
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 publicly appropriated to the exercises of religion, instruction, prayer and praise, to fortify our minds against temptations, and to season 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 lawgiver 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 Joseph, 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 Lab'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 loft their reckoning of the Sabbath, when they were constrained by perpetual and most servile labor 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 left 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 resting 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 as sure 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 Jew 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 — honor 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 traditional corruptions of several of the commandments of moral and eternal obligation. 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

* Mat. v. 21, 27, 33. xv. 4, &c.
commandment; 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 Apostolic 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 commissiion 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 epochas, 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 begining of the world.

The primary notion of the Sabbath, is a rest or cessation from the ordinary busines 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 purporses 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 exercices; and there our Lord honored 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 dissipate 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 superflitious 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.

loss or damage, may be taken care of on the Sabbath. And in general
he hath pronounced, That the Sabbath (alluding probably to the first in-
stitution of it) was made for man, to be subservient to his virtue and hap-
piness; not man for the Sabbath. Man was made for duties of moral and
eternal obligation, and is bound to observe them in whatever extremity
or necessity he may be; but man is not made for the rigorous observation
of the sabbatical rest, or any other positive institution, so as thereby to
embarass or distress his life, or to neglect any opportunity of doing
good.

I conclude with a few reflections upon Isai. 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
exercife them, the Prophet adds, by the same authority, If thou turn a-
way 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 com-
pofed 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, honorable, and shalt honor him; if you have such a senfe
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 honorable and glo-
rious in itself; and honorable also to you, as it is a mark of the dig-
ity of your nature, a token of your interest in the divine favor,
(Exod. xxxi. 13, Ezek. xx. 12.) and of your being admitted to com-
munion with him; if in this persuasion you shall sincerely endeavor
to honor 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 spend-
ing the time in amusements or diversions, or in impertinent converfa-
tion; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; then thou shalt become
such a proficient in piety, and gain such a senfe of God and religion,
as will establifh in your heart a fund of holy pleasure, comfort, joy,
and good hope towards God.” The Prophet, in this chapter, is in-
culcating 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, name-
ly, the favor 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 bleffed the Day, will bleff us in keeping it holy.
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 preserve in Adam's mind the 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, destractive gratification, vicious pleasure, 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. hidred or burning brimstone. 1 Chron. xxii. 5. the house must be — of fame and glory, i.e. of glorious fame. Pateris libanium et auro, i.e. aureis pateris. *יָיָֽהּ* may signify pleasure or profit. [See the explication of it in the Heb. Engl. Concordance.] Thus Good and Evil may denote pernicious pleasure 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
Of a State of Trial.

Ch. VII.

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 honor, and the felicity of his rational creatures. This kingdom, our Lord informs us, was prepared from the foundation of the world. Mat. xxi. 34. There we men shall be equal to the angels, Luke xx. 36; and probably, like them, shall be placed in posts of honor and power, in some part of the universe; as is plainly intimated Mat. xxiv. 45—47. xxi. 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 practise iniquity and deceit, are excluded out of it. But they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it; the excellent of the earth, who have purged themselves from all ungodliness and sin, and so are Vessels unto honor, 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 honors, 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 posseffed of them, can be no recommendation to the continued favor 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, John 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 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 or 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 suggetions 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 resisting 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, John viii. 44. 2 Peter ii. 4. Jude 6. And our first parents, how singular ever 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 traveling to a better country, 1 Peter 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. 1 Corinthians ix. 24, 25. — As laborers in a vineyard, who have work to do in order to receive wages, Matthew xx. 1. — As servants intrusted with their master's substance, for the improvement of which they are accountable to him, Matthew 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 embarrasments 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; infomuch 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 forfake 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 transitory 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 thatdwily endures temptation; 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 debate and destroy ourselves; we prove ourselves to be unfit for the happy society in heaven, forfeit the favor 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 honorably through our Trials, we have approved ourselves to God, as those whom he judges fit for preferment 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 correceth; 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. I 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 honorable and glorious victory. Difficulties and wants may fill our hearts with solitude, 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, honor, 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 practising 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 divers 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
Of a State of Trial.  

Ch. VII.

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 compleatly 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 groffer 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 splendor, equal to that of the holiest Angels. This the Apostle Peter intimated, 1 Pet. i. 7. The tried faith of persecuted Saints will be found unto praise, and honor, 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 thankfulness 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-mindedness, &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 comprized in the following propositions.

I. It is a matter of great difficulty to adjust our Trials and succors, so 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 censuring, or quarelling with his dispoals, which is foolifh 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. As,

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. Mat. 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 our being forcibly constrained to be virtuous, which is a contradic-
tion, but upon the habits we have attained, or the settled good dispo-
sitions 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 
sort, 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 unfaith-
ful 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 pos-
sess for ever, or which you are never to be deprived of. This plainly 
shews, that we are qualified for honors 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 ballanced 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. Flesh-
ly lusts war against the soul, but are conquered effectually by tempe-
rance, 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 
thereto. 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 Sal-
avation. We may allure ourselves, that we are upon a fair, and even fa-
vorable, Trial; for, if we do not neglect our advantages, the means of 
securing our virtue, if we chuse to be virtuous, do far surpass the occa-
sion 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 dis-
order, and we are easily milled 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 ap-
pointed. We have every day opportunities of shewing our sincere re-
gards 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] hae ci dona suifent.
  Aeneid. vi. lin. 870.
Nihilque esse proprium [perpetuum] cuiquam?
Omne quod habemus, aut mutuum est, aut proprium.
  Donat. in locum.
We have opportunities enough to learn what is sufficient for us to know. And the obcureties 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, seducements, 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 preterment in God's creation. For he is the fittest for business and trust, under the universal Father, who most of all participates of his kind dispositions and good-will towards the whole univerfe 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 allows to every particular person his Trial. He gives our capacities and opportunities, assigns our circumstances and outward condition, 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 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, acquired himself well; and under great pains and poverty, he fined not, nor charged God foolishly. But at length, through the unkind usage of his friends, and perhaps some other concuring circumstances, his Trial began to be so hard, that he opened his mouth, and curfed 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 to 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 righteousnes 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 succor 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 Thess. ii. 16, 17. And we are abundantly assured, that he will give strength in proportion to our Trials, and our faithful endeavors; and that our future honors 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 succors of Divine Grace do not diminish the quantity of our virtue, or reward. Whatever helps our infirmity may require, our virtue is meafured by our own sincere desires and endeavors, 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. (i.) 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 effected by flow degrees, which a man would never
at first have consented to be guilty of. He that fears falling down a pre-
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 subjection
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. exix. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that
I might not sin against thee. (2.) Pray. Not that we may be totally ex-
empted from temptation; for we came into the world for this very end,
that we might be tried and tempted. We cannot reasonably expect
that God, in our favor, 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 probity 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 law
would be most favorable 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 ex-
ample, we shall at length be partakers of his glory. And thus by his perfeet 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.

EN. 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 necessa-
ry 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.
Transgres and die, is the language of Law. And therefore every transgresor,
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; as, in its own nature, it excludes repentance and pardon; nei-
ther
ther of which can take place, unless Law is overruled, or the execution
of it suspended by the authority and favor of the Sovereign. For Law
would not be Law if its sense or language were this, *the transgresser, who
doeth 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 favor." 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 forever, in ex-
pection 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. Consequentially 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 be conceived in absolute terms, *fin 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 jus-
*ti* fied, 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 na-
ture 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 ἐνὶ ἀναπταμένη moriendo merieris, "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 be-
come mortal from a change in his constitution, which is a random con-
jecture, without any foundation in the nature of his constitution, which
was created mortal, or in the force of the words. For the phrase ἐνὶ ἀναπταμένη
is an Hebraism, importing that a thing is, or is done, thorough-
ly, 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. ἀναπταμένη λαβὼν comedendo comedes, "thou mayest freely eat" without
any restraint. Chap. xxxvii. 33. ἔνακτι ἀναπταμένη disserpendo discriptus est
*dissipating torn all to pieces," or most cruelly torn to pieces.
Exod. xxi. 19. ἀναπταμένη 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 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 favor 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 external 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 rigor 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 natures 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 gefpel; by which the sinner may be restored to the hope of immortality, and actu-

Ch. IX. Eve were under in the Garden. 45
Of the Dispensation Adam, &c.  

Ch. IX.

ally invested in it, by the wisdom and favor of the Lawgiver. This new, or remedying constitution, the Apostle calls *s*pirit, 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 of the *s*pirit; for the letter kills, but the *s*pirit quickens life.* Which *s*pirit, he informs us, ver. 17, is the Lord, or the Gospel of our Lord. *Now the Lord is that *s*pirit, that life-giving *s*pirit, or the latter Adam, who is a quickening, or life-giving, *s*pirit, 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 rep-"  

site the execution of it, and not only allow the transgressors 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 [*יִרְאֶה in dicendo me, whereas*] I say [in the Law] unto the wicked [*תְוַעֲמוּת תְנַחֲמֶה thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor spakest 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, [*יָשֹׁהְנֶה תְנוּמָה 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, [*תְוַעֲמַמְמֶה תְנַחֲמֶה thou shalt surely [totally] die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right, ver. 15. — [ totalmente, 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 favor 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 pro-hibition — But of the Tree of Knowledge of God 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 Mofes] sin was [committed] in the world; but sin [though committed] is not imputed [unto death] ָו וַיְהַוָּא יִנְשָׁה when Law is not in being. This supposes, 1. That Law is the only constitution which subjecteth the sinner to death. 2. That Law was not in being in the times preceding the giving of the Law of Mofes. ver. 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Mofes [while Law was not in being] even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgres-sion. That is to say, “Death reigned all the long space of about 2500 “ years from Adam to Mofes, 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 po-
sitive 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 con-
sequence 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 Testa-
ment. Rom. iii. 19. Sometimes for any inward principle which influen-
ceth 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 qua-
ilities 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. Psal.
cxlvi. 4. Isai. xl. 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 soli-
tary, destitute condition, and of the importance of his being also provided
of a mate suitable to his nature, (which, by reason of its superior excel-
leney, 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 for-
mation 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
the existence of all mankind, and of all the near and dear relations, so 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; he that loveth his wife, loveth 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, יָּרָּה Wo-man, because she is taken out of בָּנָּה Man. [A sign of Adam's property in her.] ver. 24. And the Lord God said, (Mat. 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 honorable 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 he, 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 wherfore did he make but one couple? That he might seek a godly seed, יָּרָּה כָּלֵל נַחֲל an excellent seed. That man and wife, in chaste wedlock, in sincere and undivided affection, might propagate a posterity to the honor 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 infancy is, and in how great ignorance and dissoluteness of manners we must necessarily grow up to manhood, without good discipline and instruction, it is evident, this world must have been the most wild and disorderly 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 jeft; nor should the ordinary generation of a man be made a matter of lewd jeft, 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 exercise prudence in the choice of a relation so important and lasting. The advice and approbation of parents is, in this case, one of the best rules.
Of the Tempter who deceived Eve.

Gen. iii. 1—9.

ERE Eve is deceived and tempted to transgress the law of God by some moral agent, who could speak and argue, called by Moses 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 soever, could not speak and reason. Who then was the moral agent that deceived Eve? St. Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 3. speaks of this deceiver in the fame manner as Moses doth; I fear, left 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 deceived 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 is 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 sagacious animal, familiar with Adam and Eve, and much admired by them.

That there are wicked and malignant spirits, is undeniably true from Scripture. 2 Peter ii. 4. For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but 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 unto
unto judgement.] 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 judgement 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 state, and chained, or confined to, a much lower, narrower, and darker situation, without any hope of favor, 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, Ἀδελphin, and Διαβόλος 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, יְנַעָל יָתִין for an adversary, a Satan. So 2 Sam. xix. 22.—Ye sons of Zeruiah are adversaries. 1 Kin. v. 4. xi. 14. 23. 25. Pžl. 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. Διαβόλος, Devil, signifies an accuser, slanderer. Job vi. 70. — and one of you, Judas, is Διαβόλος, a Devil. 1 Tim. iii. 11. Their wives must be grave, ἐν Διαβόλοι not Devils, i. e. accusers, slanderers. 2 Tim. iii. 3. false 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 those two words, Ἀδελphin and Διαβόλος, 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 conversant 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 circumstances, can never be resolved into an allegory; much less can it be supposed to be all transacted within our Lord's own mind, as if the Devil, or Satan, was no other than the suggestions, 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? Joh. 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
...the power of [subjecting our first parents, and their posterity, to] death, that is, the Devil. 2 Tim. 2. 16. — recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil. Jam. iv. 7. Resist 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 connote.

Besides Satan, or the Devil, the Scripture frequently mentions other evil spirits, called δαίμων, δαίμονς, Dæmons, which we translate Devils. That these Dæmons, however understood in prophane 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 δαίμονιοι possessed by Dæmons, in Acts x. 38. are said to be oppressed of the Devil, ἐν τοῦ Δαίμονι, 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 subtility, 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. xxii. 13. Ezek. xxii. 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
capable of doing any mischief to the estate, body or mind, 1 San. xvi. 14. 1 Thad. 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 controul, as much as any other cause whatever; and so must come under the same rules, as any other means, which Providence may imploy in distressing or destroying human life, as storms, inundations, the passions and powers of wicked men, a putrid air, vitiated humors 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 distresses, God may use what instruments he pleases. 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 compleat notions of every thing 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 wile 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 endeavored to weaken her sense of the obligation of the Divine Prohibition, by representing it as uncertain or unreasonable, ver. 1. Yea, saith 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 contradicting 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 favor his affrention, 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 perduades men to have hard thoughts of God, as if he en-

vied 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
tempted us to be uneasy in the condition Providence has alloted us, and
prompts us to be ambitious of things too high for us. And thus he de-
ludeth 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 wife, 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, posibly, the assurance the Ser-
pent 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 the 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 demon-
stration 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, per-
suaded (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 murderer, 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 mali-
cious 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 obser-
vation 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 ani-
mal, 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 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 our 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 malevolence 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 impel 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 endeavor without ceasing the corruption and perdition of their fellow-creatures?"

Answer. That wickedness exists in the universe is too plain from the state 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 opposes and feteth himself against God, not by might and power, as if he were able to contend with the Almighty, but only as
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 goodness of God, and more fearfuls 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 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, Wherefore 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 an 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 boldly 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 another, 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 subtil in understanding our various constitutions and inclinations, and the particular fins 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, ¹ Cor. ii. 11.] and wiles [μαθοδιας, 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 stain 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 infarved to draw in others; to 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 Manichees, 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 humors of
the body, he may inflame our passions, abuse our imaginations, or sug-
ggest 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 vir-
tue. 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 tempta-
tion, we are drawn away of our own luft and enticed, Jam. 1. 14. Satan
tempts, yet can have no advantage over us but what we chuse 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 wickedness, before
Satan can work in us. If Satan can fill our hearts, confider 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 pre-
pared to be the seat and residence of the unclean spirit, the murtherer,
the father of lies, the prince of darkness. A condition unspeakably de-
plorable!

With men of virtue and piety he hath no power, though he may vex
and assaullt 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 consti-
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 perdition,
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-
mination 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 seasonably 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 soever, 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.

---

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Consequences of Adam’s Transgression.

Gen. ii. 7, to the End.

E 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 everlast-
ing separation from the comfortable presence of God, the most grie-
vous 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 consciences, 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 treatise entitled — The Scripture Doctrine of
original Sin, proposed to free and candid Examination — in the study
of which this is a proper place to exercise your thoughts and judg-
ments.

[* Adam having transgressed the law, not only lost 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 ex-
istence 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-
vor, or grace, in this interval, for any thing Adam could know, he, and
the whole world in him, were utterly lost and undone for ever. But
our merciful God and Father had quite different views. He graciously
intended to make Adam’s sin, 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.) "Life, or Life-
giving, for joy that mankind were to be propagated from her, when
he expected nothing but immediate death in consequence of his tran-
gression.]

[† God graciously intended, after Adam’s Transgression, to erect a
dispensation of grace, for the redemption of mankind. Which grace
was declared, and, consequently, which dispensation was established,
( Gen. iii. 15. And I will put enmity, &c.) before the sentence of death
was pronounced upon Adam, (ver. 19. Dyf thou art, and to dyf thou
shalt return.) Death therefore, in that sentence, stands under the new
dispensation, or the dispensation of grace, and for that reason 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 so long as
God should think fit. And thus also all die in Adam; thus by man came
death; thus by one man sin entered into the world, and death by, or in confe-
quenece

* 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 first covenant, &c.
Of the Origin of Sacrifices.

Gen. iv. 1—6.

ERE Cain and Abel perform an act of religious devotion, by a 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 blessings, 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 censured 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, Noah'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 revelation 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 Patriarchs, 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 unreason able 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 Sacrifices. For by the blood of Sacrifices covenants were ratified in after times. The eating of the tree of life, was a covenanting action, (affuring 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 נְבֵן of the fruit of the ground, &c. ver. 4. And Abel also brought of the firstlings 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 relation to domestic, or private Sacrifices; but always in relation to those public Sacrifices, which were brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. As Lev. iv. 4. He shall bring נְבֵן 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 mentioned, 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 Divine 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."

CH. XIV.  
Of the Origin of Sacrifices.  

"xxxiv. 24. Psal. xlii. 2, &c. or to present themselves before the Lord, Job i. 6, *"

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. ii. 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 descendants 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 enquire 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 favor 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-eminence, 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. xxi. 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, wishing all prosperity to their king, pray that God would accept [נָשָׁה] 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 disgust and indignation he had conceived against his brother, instructing him in terms of divine acceptance. *If thou dof well, shalt thou not be accepted?* Most certainly — For I have an impartial regard to true piety, wherefore 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 favor, 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 the birth-right had been previously settled, either by divine appointment, or approbation.

But the rancor 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, insomuch that, notwithstanding all his endeavors, 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 answering the Shechinnah, 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 con sidered by all mankind as a trolling brute, exposed to their hatred, and in continual danger of being destroyed. 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, יִנְּחָנָה יִנְּחָנָה, 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 יִנְּחָנָה 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.
CHAP. XV.

Of the Shechinah, and Divine Appearances.

Having had occasion, in the foregoing chapter, to mention the Shechinah, (a rabbinc word from שֶׁכִּינָה 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 every where present; this may be a proper place to examine the Scripture 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, פִּסְמָה פְּלֵמָה, are justly supposed to correspond to the cloud and pillar of fire, afterwards mentioned, as representing the Divine Presence. Probably, in a visible glory the Lord appeared to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1; and to Isaac, 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. xl. 38. 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. xl. 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. xl. 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. xl. 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; agreeable
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. Pfalm. lxxx. 1. &c. The glory of the Lord appeared to Ifaiah in the temple. Ifai. 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. xvii. 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 be 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 enquiry 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 Ifaac, &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 incontestible 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 witness 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 Jesus; but, according to our Lord's rule, the Appearance, form, or shape, which they saw, was not the
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 as 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 useth 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; [αγγελός ἰδρυμ] which is a Greek word, and both in that language, and in the Hebrew, signifies a messenger, or nuncius, an ambassador; 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 ἵδρυμ found Hagar; and, ver. 10, saith 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, faith 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 bid 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 forbad 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 case, and the other; but he spake by " an Angel, who was his minifter. That is the reason, Angels some- " times speak 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.—Johua vi. 2. The Lord said unto Joshua. It appears from chap. v. 13, 14. that it was not the Lord who spake, but an Angel, under the title of the Cap- tain 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 spake unto Moses. And Moses spake 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. Thus Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost. Acts vii. 35. This Moses, whom they refused,—did God send to be a ruler, and a deliverer by the hands of the Angel, or messenger, who appeared to him in the bush; and who is called the Angel of his, God's, presence. Isa. lxxxiii. 9. ver. 28. This [Moses] is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the Angel who spake to him in Mount Sinai. [Note — it was an Angel, a 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 stedfast, 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 communicated to them from God.

III. The Jews very well understood the nature of those 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 seest me.—

Gen. xxxii. 24.
Gen. xxvii. 24. There wrestled a man with Jacob. Now Jacob knew that man was a messenger from God; and therefore, ver. 30. be 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 Jews 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 so 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, honor 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, Nuncius, 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, Nuncius, 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 Shechinah, 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 fared 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 understand, John xii. 41. These things said Eiaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him, i.e. "saw, 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 [Eiaias] 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 Shechinah, &c.

Of the likeness he was not greedy of retaining, but emptied himself of it, and took upon him the form of a servant. But this form, or likeness of God, may refer to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, John xvii. 5. With regard to which he may also be said to be the image of God, 2 Cor. iv. 4. — the image of the invisible God, Col. i. 15. — the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. However, I should willingly admit that such Expressions refer to the glorious appearances of the Shechinah under the Old Testament, were it not for this objection, that our Lord must then be supposed to publish the law, and to preside over the Jewish dispensation, as well as over the Gospel; which seems to be quite inconsistent with John i. 17. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. See also Heb. i. 1, 2. ii. 2. [Here the Apostle's argument proceeds wholly upon the difference of the persons, the Angels, who published the law, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who published the Gospel; but his argument hath no strength at all, if those persons are the same*. See Mr. Pierce upon the text.]

But may we not distinguish between the Logos, as a Proxy of Deity, or as perfonating the glorious Majesty of God in the Shechinah, and in that capacity, by the Holy Spirit, inspiring the Prophets, and perfonating over the Angels at the giving of the law; and the same Logos 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 perfonating 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 perfonating 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 ministrv of Angels and of Moses; that transcendently glorious person afterwards became a man, and in his own person, and by his own ministrv, 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 who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, both 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.
CHAP. XVI.

Of the Glory of the Lord.

Heb. iii. 1 - 3. [Here Moses'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 היחór יודיע the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even נליפיר the messenger, Angel, of the covenant, [not the Sinai, but the Gospel covenant,] whom ye delight in.

CHAP. 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. Hebrew 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 signifieth a mark of distinction or eminence. Deut. xii. 5. 2 Chron. vii. 16.

Certainly it was the peculiar honor and advantage of the Israelites, that they had such a public and visible manifestation of the presence and favor 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 Moses, 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, favor and protection.

And as the glory of the Lord appeared publicly in favor 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, favor, presence, and protection, upon any occasion. Isaiah lviii. 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 righteousness, [salvation, Saviour] shall go before thee, THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH.
HOVAH shall be thy reward, 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 favor 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, [נָּבֵא] 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 manifesterations of God's grace, which is his glory. Exodus xxxiii. 18, 19. And Moses said, I beseech thee, show me thy Glory. And he said, I will make all my Goodness 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 goodness 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 converted in the mount; and which impressed such a splendor 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. 4, 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, 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.
kind. And thus God, and his merciful regards to men, his presence in his church, and his power, ingaged to keep his servants, and to bring them to the possession of eternal life, is more clearly and illustriously manifested in the Gospel, than his favorable 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, honor and immortality in the future world. And this is to us 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs. bef. the Birth of Christ</th>
<th>4004</th>
<th>Proof.</th>
<th>Table 1.</th>
<th>II.</th>
<th>III.</th>
<th>IV.</th>
<th>V.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen. v. 3. Adam lived</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 6, Seth lived</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 9, Enos lived</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 12, Cainan lived</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 15, Malakalce lived</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 18, Jared lived</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 21, Enoch lived</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 25, Methuselah lived</td>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 28, Lamech lived</td>
<td>195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. 11, Noah, at the Deluge</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all - 1056 Yrs. from the Creation to the Flood.

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 died 243 years after Adam.
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 Eno'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 Eno when Noah was born: but Eno lived 905 years; from which subtract 821, and the remainder is 84. the number of years in which old Eno and young Noah were contemporaries. 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 preserve, 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 Lipsworth,
fom the Creation to the Deluge.

Ainsworth, that מָיִם is a word compounded of מָיִם be dieth, and מָיִים 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. וַיֵּלָכֵן אֵנּוֹךְ 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 מַלּוֹן) מַלּוֹן 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 inserts the idea of pleasing God in the account he gives of Enoch's translation, Heb. xi. 5; 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, myf, 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 lead 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.
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 7] to rest, to take repose.] saying, This name 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. iv. 1.

But (chap. vi. 1. which is in connection 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 instigation 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 prophane 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 chuse 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 Enos and Noah, and, probably, of other good men, the contagion of wickedness by degrees infected the whole earth, and turned it into a
scene of impiety, lewdness, and injustice. The issue, of the aforesaid disorderly marriages, joined the worst part; and growing up without any sense of religion and virtue, became wholly engaged in sensual ambitious pursuits, and joining, or imitating a lewd and impious race of giants, which were then in the earth, they affected to be men of renown for great and valorous exploits, by all methods of oppression and violence, subjecting all others to their wills and lusts; and every where extinguishing 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 goodnesse, and disdainfully the restraintes of his government; till all the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence, 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 this 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 Noah, 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 preserved in safe custody to the day of judgment,] which sometimes were disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was in preparing. My Spirit shall not always strive; or debate, with man, for his reformation, ויהי יושב עז ב嫩 co quod profecto ille caro, seeing that really he is [nothing but] flesh, altogether fleshly, void of all virtuous principles, and therefore incapable of being reformed by any means proper to be applied to a rational 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 creatures, 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 injoying 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 יְלָע רַבִּים בְּנֵי יָדֵן 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 fin is death, and constantly affirm, that the impenitent workers of ini-
quity 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 pestilence, or by de-
stroying angels, 1 Chron. xxi. 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 Ca-
anites, 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 reprieve the judgment, the impious world had deserved, for 120 years, ver. 3. This was to shew that he had no plea-
ure 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 stock 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; there-
fore 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, verse 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 the which he condemned the unbelieving and impenitent world, and be-
came 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 foresaid sons were born till he was

Cubits. Feet. Yards.

- The length of the ark 300 equal to 450 equal to 150 at least.
- The breadth 50 75 25.
- The height 30 45 15.
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 1656, 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 eruption 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 wise 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 reveling, 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 גהשנה a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh. The word גהשנה in its primary sense, doth not include the idea of a flood; it comes from גה 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 גהשנה פנים 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 [בְּ]fat, or did set] upon, or at, the flood, the extinction of life at the deluge. He then sat 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 reserving a select family
family for the continuation of the human species, the system of the Divine Counsels was preferved intire, 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*, beside 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 favor 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,
this, that Noah, who lived 349 years after the flood, and whose pious admonitions would be of much greater weight and authority, than when he was an unsuccessful preacher of righteousness to the antediluvians, was the instructor, and, for some time at least, the governor of the new 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 Gomorrha into ashes — making them an example unto those that afterwards should live ungodly.

CHAP. XIX.

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

Gen. viii. to the End of the ix. Chapter.

OAH, 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 builded 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 honor 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, ver. 21. This one may call Hieroglyphic language. Hieroglyphics, which by bodily sensations, or external representations, denoted abstrac
abstract 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 odor 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, 17, 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. cxlii. 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 hath he tried them, [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 יִהְיֶה our favour, that in us which is the object of Pharaoh's judgment, to be abhorred, to think, in the eyes, the opinion, of Pharaoh. So Gen. xxxiv. 30. Jer. xviiiii. 11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and be hath settled on his lees, —therefore his taste, יִבְלָד his relish remaineth in him, and his scent, וְיָרָב 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, יִעְרָב the excellent qualities, of his knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, by us in every place. For we are to God, יֵעְבָּד, 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, יִעְרָב, the favour of death into death; and to the other we are the favour of
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 favour 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] though 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 Ifaii. xlvi. 12, 15. Jer. iii. 25. Ezek. xxiii. 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 sheddeth 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 affect 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 lessor 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 luft, 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. xxi. 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 shun 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 imbrace, what is right and fit; and I doubt not, takes place in the gradual advances 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 he 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.
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 transmarine 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 express, 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 elder 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. Psa. 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 head. Schultens, upon Job i. 1. derives דְֹּשָׁה a
name, from the Arabic verb קֹֹדֶֹשׂ or קֹֹדֶֹשׂ to be high, elevated, emi-
inent. And according to him, the primary and proper notion of דְֹּשָׁה
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 honor and eminence. chap. viii.
13. 1 Kin. v. 3, 5.—build an house unto, or for, the name, honor, emi-
inent 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. lxiii. 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 gene-
nerations, 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 mischievous 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, un-
cultivated, and over-run with beggary, and wild beasts; which, as it
was, for a long time, according to ancient authors, exercised the indus-
try and valor 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.
ארזיוֹס תַֹּנָֹב, exceeding fair; 2 Cor. viii. 1. תַֹּנָֹב, the very great
liberality bestowed by the churches of Macedonia. chap. x. 4. Δωρατά תַֹּנָֹב,
exceeding powerful. Psalm lxxx. 10, 11. לֹֹא תַֹּנָֹב the cedars of God,
the godly 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 form-
ing 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 gen-
erally 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 pay-
able 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 spread much faster, had the whole world, in one body, been under the absolute dominion of vicious, insolent, 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 sunk mankind into the basest servility of mind, and have stocked 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. Ἁμισον γὰρ τ' αμετής αποκοινωναί δεινον ημῶς, faith Homer (Odyss. p. ver. 322.) — 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 inclosed in them, but also " diminish what bulk they already have, by too close constringion 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 Providence interposed, and baffled the project; which in the then circumstances of the projectors, would otherwise have been unhappily successful, by confounding, and altering their language in such manner, as that they could not understand one another; and so were obliged to desist 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 sameness of speech, were capable of conversing together, and possibly in the very countries which God had marked out for them.

Thus the contagion of wickedness, for some time at least, 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 denunciation, therefore, was properly calculated to prevent a second universal degeneracy. God therein dealing with men as rational agents, and suitting his scheme to their present state and circumstances. This Dispersion probably happened about 240 years of the flood.
CHAP. XXI.

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 transact their most important affairs in a solemn council. Hence God is pleased to represent himself as having likewise his Council 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. xxxix. 4.—when the secret Council דַּּדְגִּים of God was upon my tabernacle; when the august Assembly, where God's Counsels and Decrees are 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 standers-by, and hearers of what is there decreed, and resolved upon. Job xv. 8. שַׁלְמִים תְּלָבוּ תְּלָבוּ לֶא יָדַף thou heard, or been a hearer, in the secret Council of God. Jer. xxiii. 17, 18. They, the false prophets, say unto them that despise me, the Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come unto you. For who hath stood [as a waiter, or servant, ready to carry God's messages to his people. So לָכוּת מִלְתֵּךְ עֵבָר one that stands before the King, is properly the King's Minister. And when Elisha saith, (2 Kings iii. 14.) as the Lord liveth before whom I stand, he means, whose Minister I am. in the secret Council, or Assembly, of Jehovah, and hath seen and heard his word? q. d. Which of you hath been wrap in vision, and admitted as a stander-by and hearer in that great Assembly, where God's Counsels are held, and hath brought a message to his people from thence? No, you go presumptuously with messages of your own heads. Verse 21. I have not
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 connection 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 connection 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 enquire. 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 prophets prophesied lies; and this by the Divine Permission, and the inflicting 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 acquainted with the Council of God, as we have seen.] as a historian, inter-weaves it with the history in the plain, narrative file, 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.

Ifaiah also in a vision stood in the Council of God, chap. vi. 1, &c. Where he 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 whom 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.—-Ifaiah 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-ruling Providence. A method practised long before him, and very probably derived from the truly inspired.

I shall only further observe, (1.) That ἡδ is sometimes applied to worshipping assemblies, Psal. lxxxix. 7. cxi. 1. (2.) Sometimes it signifies the thing that is transacted, commanded, or established in the Council
Ch. XXII. Of the Patriarchal Religion.

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

CHAP. XXII.

Of the Patriarchal Religion.

E should now advance to the next Divine Dispensation, the calling 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 Josh. xxiv. 2. Joshua said unto all the people, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood, [in Mesopotamia beyond the 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 Babylonians began to introduce idolatrous principles and practices; which from the fore-quoted place in Joshua, 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 honor. 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. xxxxi. 26, 27, 28. If I have beheld the sun when it shined; or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly inticed, 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. 3. and was continued long after, 2 Kings xxii. 3, 5. xxiii. 4. Jer. xlv. 17, 19. The splendor 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 inculcate 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.) supposes 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 honor unto 
them, and they are Ministers that minister before him, it is meet that 
men should praise, and glorify, and give them honor. For this is the 
will of God, that we magnify and honor whomsoever he magnifieth 
and honoreth; even as a king would have them honored, that stand 
before him; and this is honoring the king himself. When this thing 
came 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 
favor 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, Melchizedeck, king of Salem, Gen. xiv. 18. who was (Heb. vii. 3.) without father, without mother, without descent, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, recorded in the history of the Patriarchs from Naah to Abraham. For (verse 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 Melchizedeck his priest, by whom he had been so devoutly blessed.”

**Note**—Melchizedeck’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 נְבֵי לֻּלְעֵי secundum rem, according to the affair, the case; which as it related to a kind or sort of priesthood, is well translated διό ταξιν] of Melchizedeck, Pfal. cx. 4. Of what
what order was Melchizedeck? 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 blest-
ing or happy, 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 moral agent can sustaine. Thus he was the Priest, or of-
ficiated in the service of the most High God. And thus the object of his
priesthood, and consequently his priesthood itself, was of an eternal, un-
changeable, 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 descent from Aaron
and Levi judged of the validity of their priests.] But being of an uni-
versal unchangeable nature, must subsist as long as there are any moral
agents, that live in obedience to God.

Thus our Lord was made priest after the order of Melchizedeck, i. e.
not after the law of a carnal positive commandment, which confined the of-
fice to a fleshly, mortal descents, 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 verse 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 ever-
lasting! 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. Verse 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, verse 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.

Melchizedeck was eminently religious. And probably Abraham's
neighbours and confederates, Mamre, Ephol, 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 sup-
poed 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, Cocurcus, 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; alledging, "that frequent Chaldaisms, as the plural "\(\ldots\)\) for \(\ldots\)\) are to be found in it; that some passages are taken from "\(\ldots\)\) the Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes; that there are more than a hun-
dred words, partly Syrian, partly Arabic, which are not to be found "\(\ldots\)\) in the other parts of Scripture; which are all signs that the author "\(\ldots\)\) lived in the later times, when many words, borrowed from the idiom "\(\ldots\)\) 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 "\(\ldots\)\) is no mention in the book of Job of any law, or religious rites, but "\(\ldots\)\) such as were traditional, [chap. viii. 8, 9, 10. xv. 18, 19. xxii. 15, "\(\ldots\)\) 16.] nor of any points of history, nor of any idolatrous practices, but "\(\ldots\)\) such as were of the more ancient times, before the Mosaic institution. "\(\ldots\)\) [Chap. xx. 4, 5, meaning Adam. xxii. 15, 16.] And that the length "\(\ldots\)\) of Job's life, extended to about 200 years, agrees also with the same "\(\ldots\)\) times; that the country where it happened was Arabia, as appears, "\(\ldots\)\) not only from the names of places, Uz, Teman, Shubah, but from the "\(\ldots\)\) many Arabic words here used." And might not Grotius from hence "\(\ldots\)\) have fairly and strongly concluded, that the writer was an Arabian? No. He faith, "it was written by some Hebrew." Why so? Because Arabia, "\(\ldots\)\) 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 West-country 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 intelli-
gible.

It is no argument that the author of this book took similar or same expres-
sions from David's or Solomon's writings, [compare Psalm cvii. 40. with Job xii. 21, 24.] because it is more probable, that David and Sala-
mon borrowed such expressions from the book of Job. [Compare Job xxxix. 33. Mat. xxiv. 28.] Schultenius, a very good judge, affirms, that the flyle 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 \(\ldots\) are true Hebrew and Arabic, and that of the most ancient stamp. Job is honorably mentioned with Noah and Daniel, Ezek. xiv. 12—20. Hence it follows, (1.) That Job is no fictitious character, 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; otherwise 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. Meer 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 honored 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, strip of all his substance, bereaved of all his children, seven sons and three daughters, and, soon after, seized with a most noisome and painful disease, 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 mark 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 insignificance of the strictest 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 merriment, treated 
him with all manner of indignities, calumnies, and flander; and even 
spared not to spit in his face, chap. xxx. 1—15. Scarce 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 cen-
fure, 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 persua-
sion of the power, goodness, and wisdom of God.] When his calamities, the 
loss of his numerous herds, flocks and servants, and of his dearest chil-
dren, partly by the hands of violence, partly by lightening and storm; 
when these calamities rushed upon him like an inundation, though he 
felt all the pangs of the moft 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 unworthines, and a patient submission to the Will of God, com-
pising 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 
same 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 incontestible 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 strokes 
of his rod!

When covered over with painful boyls, in the place and posture of an 
humble penitent, he was probably pouring out his submissions and sup-
plications to Heaven, his wife spared not to reproach him with his prepo-
siterous godliness. Chap. ii. 9, 10. Doft thou still retain thine integrity by 
blessing God, and dying? q. d. "Will you blest God when he is destroy-
ing 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
“resignation; seeing both come from the same Wise and Sovereign
“Dispenser of all things.” Still Job is patient, and, under every trial,
adheres 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 ad-
vise and consolation, they apprehended, his case would admit. For, as
the suspicions were very strong, and his calamities carried evident marks
of Divine Inflictions, 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 Favor and blessing. But when
they were come, and had found their late flourishing, honorable, and
highly esteemed friend, reduced to the most loathsome and miserable
wretch, that was fitting in the ashes, they were astonished beyond expre-
sion; 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 anything comfortable and encouraging, they chose to
say nothing at all for seven or several days together, chap. ii. 12. The
sight of his old acquaintance, and their unfavorable manner of conso-
dence, 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 de-
testable to all others, as it was to himself.

Upon this, Eliphaz, probably the oldest and most honorable of the
three, addressed himself to Job, and, in the softest manner, openeth
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,
they 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 mat-
ter 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 pu-
nished; 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 them-
 theirs, 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 aggra-
vation of his misery, to hear his friends, so well acquainted with him,
 men of sense and distinction, charge him with crimes which his soul ab-
 horred, 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, (chap-
ters xxix. and xxxi.) that his friends, though perhaps not convinced, were
 however put to silence. (Chap. xxxii. 1.)

Upon this, Eliph, a young man of good understanding, who, proba-
bly, with others, was a bystander and witness to this debate, (chap-
xxxii. 15.) acts as moderator between Job and his friends, and cenfu-
res 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, Eliphaw this token
 [OPSIS gold, splendor, the splendor of the Divine Presence. See Schultens
 in loc.] cometh [ synagogue will come, or is coming, speedily,] out of the
 North; v\ith God is terrible Majesty. The speech of Deity, (chap. xxxviii.
 xxxix. xl. xli.) 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
 skie, the air, the earth, the sea, are produced and disposed in a manner
 far beyond the reach of human wisdom and power. Consequ\ently, 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 pre\sent to,
cares for, sustains and directs every living thing; and therefore that we
 ought to trust in him for a happy issue of any of his afflictions. 5. That
 the wise\ft of men should be very cautious and modest in cen\uring the
 ways of Providence.

Chap. xlii. Job humbleth himself before God, sacrificeth for his
 friends; his family is restored, his estate is doubled.

Rules
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 cenfures 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. xviii. 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 favor 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 honor 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 embarrasst 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 earnestly to come to a conference with God, to know his mind and meaning. Chap. x. 2. Show me wherefore thou contendest 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.
me with a tempest, he multiplieth my wounds without a cause, or without any apparent reason. Chap. vii. 12, 20. The whole xxiii\textsuperscript{d} 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 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 underhand 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, Eliph. 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 laid 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 connection 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 taken leave of God. And so 1 Kings xxii. 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 loss 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 your [quoting of] memorable sayings are like ashes, or dirt; your bodies your heaps, eminencies, your strongest arguments, to heaps of clay, soon washed away,
HE 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 censtire 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 persever 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 censtires of his friends provoked him to. Thus he was put upon too frequent and too strong justifications of himself, being withal 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 count 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 recompense 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 sees 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 bless those who sincerely repent of their sins, and return unto him. That he is to be supremely reverenced and worshiped, as the sole Sovereign of the universe, 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 helpless 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 idolatry, 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 abfain from adultery and fornication, ver. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11; from theft, rapin, and deceit, ver. 5, 6, 7. For the punishment of which crimes he mentions judges in his days, (ver. 11, 28,) and was himfelf one of the chief, chap. xxix. 7, 9, &c.

These, and fuch 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 fubfequent ages, I am persuaded, entertained the faith and hope of a future state. This hath been the popular belief of all nations from time immemorial; 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 and at length would infallibly and totally be demolifhed by death, fhould ever become a folid principle of religion, considered as the fole 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 muft be in a future state. Chap. xiii. 15, 16. Lo, or certainly, he will defay me: I will not hope, non eft quod fperem, I have no ground to hope, that I fhall survive my fufferings, yet will I maintain the integrity of my own ways before him. And even this fhall be for falkation to me; [where but in a future world?] for a hypocrite fhall not come before him; fhall not have confidence to present himfelf before his tribunal. Chap. xxiii. 10. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I fhall come forth as gold. As Job absolutely defpairs of any temporal deliverance, this muft necessarily be underftood of the hope he entertained of having his innocence cleared in the day of judgment.

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垺t again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cafe. Ver. 8. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the flock thereof die in the ground, ver. 9. yet through the fcent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a new plant. Ver. 10. And fhall man die, and totally ware away? And fhall 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 fnows of winter; ver. 12. So man lieth down, and rifeth not, till the heavens be no more; they fhall not awake, nor be rafed out of their fleep, to return to the affairs and poifesions of this world. Ver. 13. And Oh that thou, O God,
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 rest 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 answer thee; thou wilt have a longing desire to restore the work of thy hands. Ver. 16. Though now, at present, thou numberest my fleas, &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. Psal. lxxiv. 22. lxxxi. 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. יז] verle 27. Whom I shall see for myself; [to do me justice, as chap. v. 27,—for thy good [for thyself] and mine eyes shall behold; but  ː a stranger to goodness and justice shall not behold him in the same manner. My reins are consumed in my bosom [in ardent expectation of this glorious event. N. B. יב sequente יד, שלב vel  מ ר de- fiderium, ingens, flagrans et confumens significat; videfis Psalmos lxxxiv. 2. cxix. 82, 123. cxliii. 7. Sic quoque de יב רenes, statuendum.] Observe—if after his skin, his body also was destroyed, how could he out-live this destruction, io as to be a man prosperous and happy again in this world? Had this been his fixed belief, his frequent wishing for death would be utterly unaccountable, and his tragical complaints ridiculous, and his despair of health and happiness in this world a contradiction.

If wicked men, though sometimes in great wretchedness, [chap xxii. 16, &c.] are also sometimes prosperous and powerful, verfe 7, &c. the proper inference is, verfe 30. That the wicked are referred 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. 2, 3.

Chap. xxvii. 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. xxxi. 13, 14. What then shall I do when God riseth up to judgment? Not in this world, where his sufferings were so great as could be, and where he did not expect they would be abated.—Lastli, his friends had not spoken of God the thing
thing that was right, as Job had done, chap. xlii. 7, 8. But, setting
aside a 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 affected the contrary, would have
misrepresented his dealings with mankind.

The Patriarchs before and after Job, and the Israelites before Chris-
came, had a notion of a future state.—By sacrifices was plainly shewn,
that a way was open to the Divine Favor and Acceptance; and the fa-
vor of God imports happiness, which to Abel, who was for that very rea-
son, because he was accepted of God, unjustly slain, could be only in a
future state. Heb. xi. 4. For his faith he yet speaketh an invisible future state of reward.—The transla-
tion of Enoch and Elijah, in two distant ages, were well known demon-
strations of a future state of reward and glory.—They were certainly
acquainted with God and Angels, and heaven where both resided. Gen.
xxii. 11. And the connection between this world and heaven, by the
ministry 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 in-
clude 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 right-
ly 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 sojourn-
ning or traveling, they plainly intimatcd that they were seeking, παρέκκλισιν,
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 people of
God, he plainly indicated, that he had respect to the future recompence of

It is certain the Jews, even during their peculiarity, were under the
Abrahamic, or Gospel covenant, promissing the pardon of sin, and etern-
al 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-
lity, 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 pas-
sages 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 hast
answered well; this is the way, and thou shalt live, meaning eternally. Which
leads us to understand Moses in the same sense, when he propofes life as
the reward of their sincere religion, virtue, and goodness. Deut. xxx. 15,
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.] אָהֲרָיתָּא is the beginning, or former part; אָהֲרָיתָּא properly denotes, what comes after, the after part, time, or state. Thus Job's time, after his afflictions were over, is called his ahararith, 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 confluence, 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 ahararith, my after, or future state, be like his. Psalm lixiii. 3–18.

The wicked lived in prosperity, and died an easy death. There are no bands in their death, verse 4. I envied them, faith David, verse 17, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their ahararith, 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; Job, O Lord, when thou awakest [אָהֲרָיתָּא in awaking them, or when they are awakened] thou wilt despise, [debacle, pour contempt upon, Daniel xii. 2.] their image [אָהֲרָיתָּא 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, ahararith, an after-state. Jer. xvii. 11. As the bird Kore 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 אָהֲרָיתָּא in his after—or future-state] shall be אֶבָּה a fool, vile, contemptible. Verse 13. They that depart from me shall be written in the earth, not registred in heaven, in the book of life. Deut. xxxii. 29—their latter end, their after—or future-state. Psalm xxxvii. 37, 38. the end, ahararith, of that man is peace, happiness. But the transgressors shall be utterly destroyed [where but in the future world?] the end, ahararith, 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 your fowls, nor make any baldness 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. 19. 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 Rephaim, as abortives.

See Psalms xvi. 9, &c. xvii. 15. when I awake out of death. Daniel xii. 2. Psalms xxiii. 6, xxiv. 3, 4, 5. Eccl. iii. 16, 17, xii. 13. Isaiah xxv. 8, li. 6.

These infinities may satisfy, that, although life and immortality are brought into the fullest light by the Gospel, a future state was not un—
known 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, 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 Gomorrah.

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 World</th>
<th>Year of Shem's Age</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Names of the Patriarchs, and their Ages, when they had Sons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2346</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Gen. xi. 10.</td>
<td>Shem, after the Fis. 2 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arphaxad lived 35 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Salah lived 30 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heber lived 34 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peleg lived 30 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reu lived 32 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Serug lived 30 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nahor lived 29 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Terah lived 130+ and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>2083</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>xii. 4.</td>
<td>Abraham 75 when the Promis was made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After that 25 and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Isaac lived 60+ and begat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1706</td>
<td>2298</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>xlvii. 9.</td>
<td>Jacob aged 130 when he removed to Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1491</td>
<td>2513</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hebrewites continued there. 215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* E N. xi. 26. it is said, Terah lived 70 years, and begat Abram, G Nabor, 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 Methusela 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 Promize 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. xli. 46. After that there were seven years of plenty, and two of famine (Gen. xlv. 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. i. 22, 26. Take 71 out of 215, and there remains 144, the time the Israelites remained slaves in Egypt after Joseph's death. Exod. i. 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 Zeboim, (Gen. xiv. 2. Deut. xxix. 23.) that stood in a very extensive, fruitful, and pleasant vale, along the sides of the river Jordan. Gen. xiii. 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 in that vilest sort of lewdness, which is commonly called Sodom, 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 foil 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, thoughtless and secure; 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 Hebraifin, 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 עצר. 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 sense 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 lothe 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 purposes 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 Noah’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 ascribed to simple irreligion, but to religion directed to wrong objects and purposes. 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 purposes 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 signified purely by human imagination, they would naturally be represented by men, who had their own interests and lufts 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 lead 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 encoura-
gement to vice, and the principles of virtue and goodness would be extin-
guished.

Whether they were seduced precisely after this manner or not, the
fact is certain, that their abominable idolatries were attended with abo-
minable 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, destiny, 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, consilium 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 chil-
dren, 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
devoted 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 for-
warded and completed by the suggestion and instigations 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, (Ephes. 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 uni-
versally, as the remaining virtuous dropt off, and as men of understand-
ing 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
honor of them, even in the neighbourhood of the city Jerusalem. i
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 fa-
mily, afterwards to be formed into a nation, instructed in religious know-
ledge by God himself, and favored with such extraordinary privileges,
and honors, 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 God and his worship. At the same time, to prevent their being infect-
ed 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 distin-
guished and separated from all other people by their diet, their dres,
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 dispensions wherewith they were visited.
And further, their laws and religious institutions being originally record-
ed in books, would more certainly be preferred 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 instruc-
tion 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 Abra-
ham and his posterity, was the Covenant of Grace, the Promise
or grant of favors 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 Treas-
tile on the Covenant of Grace, &c.]

C H A P. XXVII.

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

O 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 insured the performance of the promises. What could be more ingaging 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 Jacob, and afterwards to Joseph, 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 retort 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 honor 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. xlvii. 6. where their situation, manners, and way of living would keep them separate from their idolatrous neighbour's, 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 slavery, 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 preserved, 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 striking 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 occasion, Pharaoh's magicians, possibly by the ministry 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 different restraints and regulations in different ages, so as to interfere more or less, or not at all in human affairs. Fortin.

(2.) God hardened Pharaoh's heart, by granting him respite from one plague after another, that he might multiply, and so render more conspicuous, 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, saith 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 every deed for this cause I have raised thee up, [I have restored thee to health, by removing the pestilential boils,] that by revisiting thy destruction, I may shew 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 possible 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 fingleth out only the first-born in every family, it must plainly appear to be a judgment
ment immediately from the hand or direction of God; [Exodus xii. 29.] as it was to the Israelites 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 give 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 labor of so great a multitude, for 140 years.]

See Exodus xii. 33, &c. Verse 35. And the children of Israel—��dez of the Egyptians Jewels, &c. i.e. asked the Egyptians to give them jewels, &c. [��dez 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. So that they readily gave them, &c. ��dez in Hiphkid 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, establisht his Covenant, or entered into a solemn contract, with them in mount Horeb; chusing them for a peculiar treasure above all people, Exodus xix. 5, and ingaging 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 tinctured in Egypt, (Lev. xvii. 7. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8.) otherwise they might expect the severest judgments. Deut. xxix. 1c, &c. At the same time he gave them a system of laws and statutes, most excellent in themselves, fitted to their present temper and circumstances, as well as to the future intents and purpo ses 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
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 whole 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, brutifh, cruel, incestuous, and unnatural crimes, which universally prevailed amongst them. Had the Israelites been mixed with the idolatrous Canaanites they would soon have loft 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
pared to receive from their prophets, they were at last weaned from idolatry, 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 con•••sence 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 dispersion 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 instruc•rs, 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 suspicions; 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 prospects the most pleasing and joyous; knew not how to value the blessings of liberty; of a taste to mean and illiberal, that the flesh and fih, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, onions and garlick, 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 honor and felicity, as a peculiar treasure to God, above all people in the world. Num. xii. 4, 5, 6.

In short, nothing would do; the ill qualities of slav•ry were engrained in their hearts; a groveling, thoughtless, sturdy, dastardly 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.
CH. XXVIII.  Of the Jewish Ritual, or Ceremonial Law. 115

that esteem of his highest favors, 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. iii. 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 honors 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.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Jewish Ritual, or Ceremonial Law.

We must now turn back to the Mosaic Constitution; 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 favor 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 favor, 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 hinde; 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, Isaiah x. 5, 24; and of dominion and authority, Psalm 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 born represented temporal power and dominion. Isa. ii. 10. and of the zumake s of the Israelites. Exod. vii. 15. ... 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. Psal. li. 2. Wash me from mine iniquity. Ver. 7. Wash me, and I shall be clean. Isai. i. 16. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, put away the evil of your doings.—Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Jer. iv. 14. Acts 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 honor, joy, holiness, and inspiration, Psal. xliv. 7. Acts 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, Psal. cxxii. 9. For the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints. Rev. xix. 8. Burning of incense, whose fmoak riseth up with a pleasant smell, was an hieroglyphic representation of acceptable prayer. Psal. cxlii. 2. Luke i. 10. Rev. viii. 3, 4. Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retracting 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.]

### C H A P. XXIX.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years before Christ</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1451</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From the Exodus to the death of Moses, and succession of Joshua.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note — Moses was 40 years old, when he fled out of Egypt, Acts vii. 23. He was 40 years with Jethro, Exod. vii. 7; and 40 years in the wilderness with the Israelites. Therefore, he was 120 when he died. Deut. xxxiv. 7.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Exod. vii, 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1426</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From the succession of Joshua to his death.</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note — After the death of Joshua the Israelites fell into idolatry, Judg. ii. 7, &amp;c. And in those licentious times, Josephus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIS 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>Years</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1451</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From the Exodus to the death of Moses, and succession of Joshua.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note — Moses was 40 years old, when he fled out of Egypt, Acts vii. 23. He was 40 years with Jethro, Exod. vii. 7; and 40 years in the wilderness with the Israelites. Therefore, he was 120 when he died. Deut. xxxiv. 7.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Exod. vii, 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1426</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From the succession of Joshua to his death.</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note — After the death of Joshua the Israelites fell into idolatry, Judg. ii. 7, &amp;c. And in those licentious times, Josephus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. xxi. chapters. For Phineas, the son of Eleazar, (Joh. xxiv. 33. i 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 Cuthan.

1391

To their deliverance by Othniel.

1383

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

1343

To their deliverance by Ehud.

1325

[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; and
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. 26.

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.]

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. 1, 2. Judg. vi. 4.

To their deliverance by Gideon.

To Abimelech's usurpation, 40 years, or 39 compleat.

To Tola, judge over North and East-Israel.

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, Elie 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years before Christ</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[1152] From Jair to Jephthah, who delivered North and East-Israel from the Ammonites, 22, or 21 compleat years.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Judg. x. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1147] From Jephthah to Ibzan, over North and East-Israel, six, or five compleat years.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>... xii. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1140] From Ibzan to his successor Elon, in North and East-Israel.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>... 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1135] 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></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1133] From Elon to Abdon, over North and East-Israel.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Judg. xii. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1130] 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. probably,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAP. XXX.

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

BOUT 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 τόμοι, 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 content of all the learned in all ages. The first of these books is Genesis, מִשְׁרָרָה, containing the only history of the world from the creation down to Jacob's removing into Egypt, for 2298 years. 2. Exodus, מִשְׁרָרָה is the history of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, and of the erecting and furnishing of the tabernacle. 3. Leviticus, מִשְׁרָרָה in which are the laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Jewish religion, and what particularly related to the Levites. 4. Numbers, מִשְׁרָרָה begins with the numbering of the Israelites; after which several laws and remarkable events are recorded. 5. Deuteronomy, מִשְׁרָרָה 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 Eleazar the high-priest.

The Book of JUDGES.

Was certainly written before the second book of Samuel; compare 2 Sam. xi. 21 with Judg. ix. 53; 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 surprisingly successful faith in Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, whose history is recorded in this Book. It consists of two parts, the one containing the history of the Judges, from Othniel to Samuel, which part ends with the xvi\textsuperscript{th} chapter; the other, containing several memorable actions, performed not long after the death of Joshua, is thrown to the end of the Book, that it might not interrupt the thread of 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 seminaries 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 language 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 Prophets, properly so called, came out of those schools. Amos excepts himself, 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. 38. Elisha came to Gilgal—and the sons of the Prophets 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 society, 2 Kings vii. 1; and when they had done their lectures, and religious 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. xxxix. 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 Ijiah, 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 Abax, 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 Jews' historians; therefore to the historical books, Joshua, Judges, I. II. Samuel, I. II. Kings, they give the title of, סנהד the former Prophets; as they give the title of, קול the latter Prophets, to Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c.

The Book of PSALMS,

Was composed by several authors, but chiefly by king David. Moses composed the xth Psalm, when God had shortened the lives of the Israelites in the wilderness, as a punishment for their unbelief. The cxxvii Psalm was indited soon after their transportation to the land of Babylon, and captivity there, and the cxxvi upon their return out of it. Others were made upon other occasions; as may be seen in their titles, (although these 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 xli Psalm; the second to the end of the lxxii Psalm; the third to the end of the lxxxix Psalm; the fourth to the end of the cvi Psalm; 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; consisting of the loftiest celebrations of the Divine Praises, 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 very 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 Israel. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. He, doubtless by Divine Authority, appointed the singing of psalms by a select company of skilful persons, in the solemn worship of the tabernacle, 1 Chron. vi. 37. xxvi. 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 for
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. xxvii. 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 compleat years are intended. So 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10, it is said, that Salmanasar laid siege to Samaria in the fourth year.
From the Founding of Solomon's Temple, &c. Ch. XXXI.

126

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 preserved 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 Arch-Bishop Usher, who is generally followed by our Chronologers. 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 Jasha's reign, from the year before A. D. 955, when Jasha 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</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Kings of</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Yrs. bef.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Israël</td>
<td></td>
<td>Israël</td>
<td></td>
<td>A. D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>SOLOMON (a)</td>
<td>1 Kin. vi. 37, 38.</td>
<td>JEREBOM I.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>975</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>REHOBOAM</td>
<td>xiv. 20, 21.</td>
<td></td>
<td>18. (b)</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>958</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ABLIAM</td>
<td>xv. 2, 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>18. (b)</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>955</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>ASA</td>
<td>xv. 10, 9.</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>953</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiv. 25.</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.</td>
<td>953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>952</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiv. 28, 33.</td>
<td>NADAB (c)</td>
<td>20.</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>929</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>xvi. 8.</td>
<td>BAASHA (d)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>928</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>xvi. 10, 15</td>
<td>ELAH (e)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>928</td>
<td>27 (f)</td>
<td></td>
<td>xvi. 23.</td>
<td>ZIMRI</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OMRI (g)</td>
<td>11 days</td>
<td></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 Compleat.

(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 two years, or one compleat.

(f) To preserve a consisteny 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 Afa: that after Tibni's death he reigned alone 8 years, or 7 compleat, beginning at the 31st year of Afa. For so the text, 1 Kings xvi. 22, 23, may be read—a Tibni die, and Omri reigned alone in the 31st year of Afa king of Judab. Omri reigned in all twelve years: in Tirzah he reigned six years.

(g) Eleven years compleat. When it is laid, that he reigned twelve years, part of a year is counted for a whole year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yrs. bef. A.D.</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Kings of J U D A H</th>
<th>Proofs</th>
<th>Kings of I S R A E L</th>
<th>Yrs. of Reigns</th>
<th>Yrs. bef. A.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>917</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>JEHOSAPPHAT</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>AHAB (b)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>914</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (i)</td>
<td></td>
<td>914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>910</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Elijah (k)]</td>
<td></td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>904</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Troy taken (l)]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>897</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AHAZIAH (m)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>896</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2-KIN. iii. 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>JEHORAM (n)</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elijah translated,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&amp;c. iii. 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elija succeeds him.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>889</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>JEHORAM (o)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>885</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 (p)</td>
<td>884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>884</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ATHALIAH</td>
<td></td>
<td>JEHU</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>878</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>JOASH (q)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 (r)</td>
<td>856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>870</td>
<td>[Hesiod and Homer #]</td>
<td>22 (s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>856</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Abab reigned but twenty years compleat. See the corresponding part of the opposite column.
(i) This was the third year compleat.
(l) According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
(n) Or Joram, he reigned eleven years compleat.
(p) Eleven years compleat.
(r) The sixth year compleat.
(s) Twenty-second compleat.
(k) About this time Elijah, the Prophet, appeared.
(m) Ahaziah reigned one year with his father, and one year alone.
(o) Or Joram. It is supposed he reigned four years with his father.
(q) Or Jehoash.
# According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
<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>839</td>
<td>37 (t)</td>
<td>2 Kin. xiii. 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>JEHOASH (u)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>839</td>
<td>29 AMAZIAH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Elisha died.]</td>
<td>2 (x)</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>825</td>
<td>15 (y)</td>
<td>xiv. 2, 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>JEROBOAM II.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>812</td>
<td>52 AZARIAH (a)</td>
<td>xiv. 23.</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Jonah (z)]</td>
<td>27 (b)</td>
<td>812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>[Joel prophesied.]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(t) The thirty seventh of Joab of Judah is the year in which Joab 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 compleat, when Joab of Israel reigned alone.

(u) Or Joab. 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 compleat.

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

(a) Or Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. Isai. i. 1. vi. 1. Amos i. 1.

(b) Amaziab reigned twenty nine years, namely, fourteen years before Jeroboam II began to reign, and fifteen years after he began to reign. How then could his son Azariab, or Uzzia, succeed him in the twenty seventh year of Jeroboam II, when Jeroboam had reigned but fifteen years when Amaziab died? Ans. If Azariab was sixteen, in the twenty seventh of Jeroboam (2 Kings xv. 2.) then he was born in the eleventh year of Jeroboam, and so was but a minor of four years old in the fifteenth of Jeroboam, when his father Amaziab 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 Jeroboam: 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 Jeroboam's reign; and so he will be considered as succeeding his father in the fifteenth year of Jeroboam. 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.</th>
<th>yrs of reigns</th>
<th>kings of j u d a h</th>
<th>proofs</th>
<th>kings of i s r a e l</th>
<th>yrs. of reigns</th>
<th>yrs. bef.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>784</td>
<td>38 (c)</td>
<td>[amos i. 1;</td>
<td></td>
<td>amos prophesied,</td>
<td></td>
<td>787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>773</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>[hosea i. 1;</td>
<td></td>
<td>hosea prophesied.</td>
<td></td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>772</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>interregnum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>zechariah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>shallum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>menahem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>[jonah went to nine-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>753</td>
<td>pekaiah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>742</td>
<td>pekah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[isaiah (c)]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>758</td>
<td>jotham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[micah prophesied]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>742</td>
<td>azariah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 (g)</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Thirty seven compleat.
(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, isa. i. 1. 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 uzziah's reign, from 810, which is the year before christ, when he began to reign.
(g) Sixteen compleat.
<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>749</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>738</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>730</td>
<td>29 (b)</td>
<td>HEZEKIAH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>726</td>
<td>6 (i)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>720</td>
<td>[Nabum prophesied.]</td>
<td>MANASSEH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>698</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>677</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>643</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>AMON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>641</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>JOSIAH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>628</td>
<td>[Jeremiah began. ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Habakkuk, Zephaniah (l)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Twenty eight compleat.
(k) King Necho and his people, the ten tribes were now carried into Assyria by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who dwelt at Nineveh.
(i) Five compleat.

* 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 contemporary 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 Judah</th>
<th>Proof</th>
<th>Kings of Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Jehoahaz (m)</td>
<td>2 Kin. xxiii. 31.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jehoiakim (n)</td>
<td>Dan. i. 1, 6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>606</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel carried to Babylon (o)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>603</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Jehoiachin (p)</td>
<td>2 Kin. xxiv. 8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mordecai and Ezekiel captives.</td>
<td>Eshb. ii. 5, 6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>595</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Zechariah</td>
<td>2 Kin. xxiv. 18.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>595</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ezekiel had his first vision.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>588</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Temple was demolished.</td>
<td></td>
<td></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></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>555</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel had his vision of the 4 empires.</td>
<td></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.
He interpreted the hand-writing on the wall. Dan. v. 25. and was cast into the lion's den. Dan. vi. 

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

Zerubbabel was then governor, and Joshua high priest. Ezra iii. 2, 8. Hag. i. 1. Zech. iii. 1. iv. 6.

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

Daniel's last vision. Dan. x. 11, 12.


The Temple rebuilt and dedicated. Ezra vi. 15, 16.

Abasuerus, alias Artaxerxes, divorces Vashti, and afterward marries Esther. Esth. i. 1, &c. See Dr. Prideaux's

Connect. at the year before A. D. 465.

Ezra sent to be governor of Judea by Artaxerxes. Ezra vii.

Haman plots the destruction of the Jews. Esth. iii. 11.

Nehemiah sent governor to Judea, and rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem. Neb. ii. 1, &c.

Ezra is supposed to publish his edition of the Holy Scriptures.


About this time Malachi prophesied, according to Dr. Prideaux's Con. 428.

Nehemiah comes again to Jerusalem with a new commission. Neb. xiii. 6.

Socrates flourished.

Simon the Just, high-priest of the Jews.
The moral Causes of the Babylonish Captivity; and the Propriety of that Dispensation.

HE 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 endeavors of good kings, and all the preaching of holy Prophets, sent by special commision 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 so shed innocent blood very much. Ahaz, 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 Jehoahaz 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 Asphenaz 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 vassallage under the Babylonians. A severe visitation, but had not the proper effect upon Jehoiachin, 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 treasuries, with all the mighty men of valor, all the crafts-men and smiths, he took away, leaving none in the land, but the poorest sort. 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 Kii. 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 lefs to greater, for the space of twenty-two years; which shoule 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 fee, 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 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 forcer-
ers, 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 belied the Lord,
and said, it is not He, neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we fee-
ward, nor famine, Jer. v. 12. but I will give you assured peace in this place.
xxiv. 13. Thus they cauèd 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. xxiii. 11. They committed adultery, walked
in lies, strengthened the hands of evil doers, and prevented their returning
from wickedness, Jer. xxiii. 14; they perjured and murdered the jilt,
in the midst of Jerusalem. Lam. iv. 13. From them profaneness went
forth into all the land, Jer. xxiii. 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 pre-
tensions, and flattering promises? The delusion is now quite at an end,
and they find themselves most miserably deceived. Their eyes are open-
ed, and they are thoroughly convinced, they were a set of the vilest im-
postors, who had deluded them into the most wretched circumstances.
The prophets were now become wind, Jer. v. 13, an everlasting reproach, a
perpetual shame, which could not be forgotten, xxiii. 40. And in propor-
tion as these deceivers were detected, the true Prophets, who would have
drawn them to just regards of God and his holy law, would be esteemed and
honored.

Doubtless the lying prophets and priests had filled their heads with spe-
cious pretenses 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 pro-
tection; 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 ly-
ing words, and could no longer take assurance from their peculiar privil-
ge/s, 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 striped of all their peculiar honors. 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 sedu-
ced into it. And it had this effect. They never more fell into idola-
try, 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
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 favor, 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 publick reading of the law, that the people themselves called for it. Neb. 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 publick worship or instruction, nor any places to resort to for either, unless 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 preferring the knowledge of God and his law, and a sense of their duty. This was another good effect of this dispensation, and may justly be given as one good reason of their being so strongly fixed against idolatry, ever after the Babylonish Captivity.

V. This dispensation was also calculated to produce good effects among the nations, whether 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 imprest 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. Infomuch 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 favor of the profession and worship of him. Dan. iii. 29. vi. 25, &c. And the affair of queen Esther and Mordecai, and the decree of the emperor Ahasuerus, in favor of all the Jews in his empire, consisting of 127 provinces, must, not only give the Jews every where great distinction and honor, 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 vii. 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.

C H A P. 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 Canon, namely, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and his Song.

PROVERBS.

This Book consists 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 give 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 addresses 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, the son of Jakeh, delivered to his pupils, Ithiel and Ucal, chap. xxx. And the xxxist 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 enquiry 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 wisdom, or philosophy; in the pleasures, amusements, or splendor of life; in honor, magistracy, and dominion; in riches or wealth. This, in the first chapters. II. He teaches, that true felicity is to be found only in a serious regard to God and religion, in the 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 epithalamium, or marriage-song, of the pastoral kind, embellished with the most grand and beautiful images. In the latter 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, Ps. 145. 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, dressed 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.
Prophets before the Captivity.

Ch. XXXIV.

ried to Eve, represents Christ as a husband to the church. Ephes. v. 25, 26. 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. lx. 10. lxxii. 4, 5. Jer. iii. 20. xxxi. 32. Hes. 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 supplyeth 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.

C H A P. XXXIV.

PROPHETS before the CAPTIVITY.

But twenty-six years after the death of Eliahu, 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 at Jerusalem (Joel ii. 1, 15, 17.) might prophesy before Amos at Samaria, Amos i. 1. 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 herdsman, 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 cotemporary 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, Abaz, 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 transacted 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-anmi, 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, ξείων ἡμῶν ὑπερήφανος, better than merry Nineveh. By Zebaniah it is called, the rejoicing, or joyous, city, chap. ii. 15. To be sent with a meffage 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 perjured 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 slow in executing them. On this account, the Prophets at Bethel and Jerusalem were vilely abused and decried by insolent and rude infidels, who durst even prosefs to desire, or long for, the day of the Lord, (Amos v. 18.) in a confident persuation, that it would never come; and dared to challenge God to hasten his work. Isai. v. 19. See also Jer. xvii. 15. Ezekiel xiii. 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 publick 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 swept by a miracle, and at length obliged to deliver the doleful meffage, 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.

faft, and enjoined all the usual forms of repentance; and God repented of the evil, which he had said he would do unto them.

It is very probable, that the idolatrous priests, and the astrologers, tooth-fayers, and magicians, who must be numerous at Nineveh, as well as at Babylon, (Isai. xlvii. 13. Dan. ii. 2.) would zealously endeavour to divert the king, when the first fright was over, from attending to a meffage from J'hovah, as soon as ever they possibly could, before the forty days were expired. They would naturally represent Jonah to the king and all the people, as an impoftor; and bear them in hand that the prediction was false, and would not be fulfilled. This must give the Prophet, who was zealous for the glory of the God of Israel, very great uneafiness; inforncb, that he withifed for death, chap. iv. 2, 3; as Eli-jah, in a case somewhat similar, had done before him. 1 Kings xix. 4.

The queftion of Jehovah, Jon. iv. 4. which we render, Doft thou well to be angry? should have been rendered, Art thou very much grieved? And fo ver. 9. See Heb. Eng. Concordance. R. 748, 637.

Pul, the king of Assyria, who came against the land of Israel in the reign of Menahem, 2 Kings xv. 19. is supposed by Arch-Bishop Usher to be the king of Nineveh, to whom Jonah was sent. As it appears from the history, that Pul had no design to make conquest of the land of Israel, I can affign no reafon, why he should reach his arm over the kingdom of Syria, which lay to the extent of about 300 miles, between his dominions, and the land of Canaan; to strike at Israel, but that he did it in revenge for the supposed insult, which Jonah had offered to him and his people.

ISAIAH vi. ii. iii. iv. v.

ISAIAH, the brighteft luminary of the Jewish church, juftly called the evangelical Prophet, he speaks fo much, and fo clearly of Christ, began to prophesy in the year king Uzziah died, chap. vi. 1. and prophesied in Judah in the fhucceflive reigns of Jotham, Abaz, and Hezekiah. He was certainly alive and prophesied when Merodachbaladan fent his embaffy to Hezekiah, who had been fick, 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 firft year of his reign, before Christ 608, by being cruelly fawn afunder; to which the Apoftle, Heb. xi. 37. is generally thought to have refpect. And then he muft have continued 61 years. See PIERCE upon Heb. xi. 37.

The firft chapter, by rea:on of the grand exordium, might be judged proper to stand at the front of the book; but it gives fuch an account of the diftreffed, deflate condition of the land of Judah, as agrees much better with the wicked and afflicted reign of the apoftate Abaz, than with the flourishing circumstances of the country in the reigns of Uzziah, and of his fon and succesfor Jotham, who wereboth, in the main, good princes. Compare Isai. i. 7, 8, 9. with 2 Cron. xxvi. 1——16. and the whole 27th chapter. But the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters of this prophecy, do defcribe, and exactly correfpond to, a state of national wealth
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 assure him they should not prevail against him; and that the house of David should subside 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 idolater, paid little regard to what Isaiah had spoken to him in the name of the Lord. Therefore God ordered Isaiah to take a large

* Isa. 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 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 Manasseh 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 son, which was then born to the Prophet, and by Divine Direction was called Maher-sha-lal-hash-baz, i.e. wake 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. Isa. 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 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 forsoaked 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. And
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 Ahaz had applied to Tiglath-pileser.

ISAIAH xiv. 28, &c.

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

ISAIAH xv. xvi.

The Moabites had not used the Israelites well, who fled for shelter from the ravages of Pekah and Rezin. With this inhumanity they are ironically upbraided, Isa. 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 should fit 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 Moabites, to prevent any incursions, or attacks, from that quarter.

HOSEA 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 Hosea, revolting from Shalmaneser, sent messengers to So king of Egypt. 2 Kings xvii. 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 Hosea 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.

MICAH
M I C A H  iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

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. 2, 3, 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.

N A H U M  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.

I S A I A H  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 foretells the miserable overthrow of Tyre, which was effected by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. An. 715, 720.

I S A I A H  xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii.

These chapters may refer to the final desolation of Judea 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.

I S A I A H  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.

K 2  I S A I A H
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. Ifai. xxxvi. Particularly, he entered into an alliance with the king of Egypt and Ethiopia. 2 Kings xviii. 21. Ifai. xxxvi. 6. This was a measure displeasing to God, and therefore is protested against by his Prophet Isaiah in the xxth and xxxift 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 prophetick 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 xxi.

The inhabitants of Kedar were the descendents of Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 13, and were one species of Arabs 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 Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, as he advanced out of Egypt against Sennacherib. 2 Kin. 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 distrest for three years together, Isa. 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 Ifaiah, 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 leveled 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 prospopoeia, 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 y 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 xxxviith chapters of Isaiah.

Note—Before Sennacherib laid siege to Jerusalem, Tirhakah, 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 185000 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.
ISAIAH 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 questions, 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 Manasseh, 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 Manasseh may be assigned. Shebna, secure of the stability 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, Isaiah 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 Isaiah's being put to a cruel death, [caw awnder, Heb. xi. 37.] was fulfilled about twenty-two years after, when Shebna was taken captive with Manasseh by Esarhaddon, and carried to Babylon, where Shebna continued all his life. But Manasseh, 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. Manasseh 22.

JEREMIAH i, ii.

In this year Jeremiah, in the council of God, received his prophetical 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, verfe 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 anything 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 xxvii., 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 desolation 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 3 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 preferred 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. VERSE 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 fastening-day, i.e. the great day of atonement, being the 10th of the seventh month.

JEREMIAH XLV.

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
ken 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—Jeremiah 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.

J E R E M I A H xxii. ver. 24, to the End.

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.

J E R E M I A H xiii. ver. 15, to the End.

By the king and queen mentioned ver. 18, are probably meant Jehoiachin 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 Nebuchadnezzar, 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 Shushan, afterward the metropolis of the kingdom of Persia.
Jeremiah xxix.

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.

Jeremiah xxx., xxxi.

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.

Jeremiah xxvii.

This chapter is to be placed in this year, (see chap. xxviii. 1.) 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, Jehoiakim 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.

Jeremiah xxviii.

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 Glass. Phil. Sacra Lib. IV. Tract. I. Observ. V. Pag. 860, Nold. Concord. Nota 677, and Lowth upon the place.

Jeremiah li., li.

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 ١٨٩٨ or ١٨٩٨ No. 1.
EZKIEL i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

In the 5th year of Jehoiachin'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 Jehoiachin were carried into captivity.

EZKIEL viii, ix, x, xi.

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.

EZKIEL xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix.

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.

EZKIEL xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii.

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.

JEREMIAH xxi, xxxiv. Ver. 1—8.

Nebuchadnezzar having advanced a great army against Judaea, 2 Kin. xxxv. 1, 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.
chapter. 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 caldron; 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 had laid siege to Jerusalem, Pharaoh-Hophra 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
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 deferter as he was passing through the gate, and clapt in prison; but principally for perfishing, 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 deserted 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. 589. 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, lothsome, 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. Ver. 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 36, 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 xl. Ver. 7. to the End. xli, xlii, xliii. Ver. 1—8.


CHAP. XXXV.
CH. XXXV. Prophets after the Destruction, &c.

CHAP. 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
E Z E K I E L xxxv.

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

D A N I E L iii.

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

E Z E K I E L xli, 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.

E Z E K I E L 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 labor. See Dr. Prideaux's Con. ad An. 573. Nebuchad. 32.

D A N I E L 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.


This year Nebuchadnezzar dies, and is succeeded by his son, Evilmerodach, who releafted Jeboiachin, king of Judah, out of prison, where he had been confined 37 years, and advanced him to honor 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 had the vision of the four monarchies, and of the kingdom of the Messiah.

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

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

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, 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.

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 An. 536. p. 190. Upon this joyous occasion the 126th Psalm was composed.

The Jews begin to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.
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 favor of God.
At this time these visions, greatly encouraging the Jews in building the City and Temple, and assuring them of the Divine protection against all their enemies, were revealed to Zechariah.

The Samaritans again disturb the Jews, and put a stop to the building of the Temple.

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.

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 so thoroughly restored and established 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 72 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 facts, which we have in the seventh and eighth chapters of his prophecy.

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.
Prophets after the Captivity, Ch. XXXVI.

ESTHER i.

Artaxexes, or Ahasuerus, 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.

E Z R A vii, viii, ix, x.

In the beginning of this year Ezra received from Artaxerxes, or Ahasuerus, 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 Ahasuerus.

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 Tareesh, two eunuchs in the palace, entered into a conspiracy against the life of Artaxerxes, or Ahasuerus, 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
NEHEMIAH i, ii, iii, &c. to the End of the Book.

NEHEMIAH, with a commission from Artaxerxes, or Abasuerus, probably by favor of queen Esther, (Neh. ii. 6.) succeeth 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.

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

After certain days, i. e. after about five years, Nehemiah comes again to Jerusalem with a new commission, 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, compleats 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, suppos'd 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- " heemiah was written after his [Ezra's] time; and so most likely was " the Book of Malachi also. And therefore a later time must be assign- " ed for their infertion 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 labored 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- " nogogue in his time, settled the Canon of all but the forefaded 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 " 19
The State of the Jews, and of other Nations, at the Time when our Lord came into the World.

From 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 Messiah 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 Messiah, and the just notions of religion, which he was sent to inculcate; in much 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 ascribed 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 traveled 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 fate 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 labors 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 spake 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 publickly 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 every where 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 Elamais, 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. profelytes 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 favorable 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 obstruc-
tion to the Gospel could arise, but from that one quarter, none could
suddenly arise from thence, but only in process of time, when the Gol-
pel was sufficiently spread and established, as it did not in the least in-
terfere with the Roman polity or government. The Gospel was first pub-
lished 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 Gen-
tiles, 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 favored the success
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 re-
gard to the time past, as well as to the time to come; to the penitent,
that were dead, as well 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 di-
rected and would permit. The scope and intention 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 fame 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
That end would be much better answered by its dissolution, and the dispersion of the Jews all over the earth, as they are even unto this day. [For the most excellent character of Jesus Christ, and the Divine principles, doctrine, and spirit of the Gospel, see my Treatise upon the Lord’s-Supper.]

C H A P. 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 adref 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 profitable 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 understandings 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 Revelation, than the Scriptures, eminently so called, which we are happily possessed of. There we have the fullest and clearest account of the nature 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 preserved through succeeding generations. The knowledge

* With this chapter ends Dr. Taylor’s Scheme of Scripture-Divinity, 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, had 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 abstruer 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 labor 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 feeth this at the same time in a practical light; he feeth 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 dispensations 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 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 of 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 consolation 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 splendor 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 dressed in all its charms; not as a sour, 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 relief 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 diæase and deformity of the mind, hurtful to the health of the body, and ruinous to the reputation and estate. Their reflections were so far 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 impotent workers of iniquity with everlasting destruction, and purge out of his kingdom every thing that offendeth, that is either mischievous or polluting. And all this is so 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 dissonance 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 understood 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 do 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 forts 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 constitutions 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 mens 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 confidences, 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 luster 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 shelters and defends itself, and gains the character of truth, of important, necessary, awful, and perhaps excellent truth; and the unwary think themselves bound in confidence 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 grocer 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 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 delusion 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 Christianity, 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 Jews, and Papists 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
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 their's 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. xvi. 4. Whateuver 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 exercized 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 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 desiple the weakefs of thofe that know lefs, nor to reject the instructions of thofe 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 defire to gain their true fenfe and meaning. We all know how much men are at variance about the fenfe of Scripture, one affirming that this, another that that is the true fenfe. So it may well be expected to be in our present weakefs; and fo God hath permitted it to be; not to give us oc- cafion to cenfure, judge, and disparage one another, as is too common, for this is expressly forbidden; but this variety of fenfiments is permitted to teach us to ceafe from man, and fhould convince us that we ought not to resign our understandings or confciences to any man's judgment whatever.

CHAP. XXXIX.

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

SHALL consider firft,

I. 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 noblefe purposes, the enlightening of our minds, the purifying of our hearts, the regulating of our practice, and the saving of our fouls.

As to the authority and original of holy Scripture, it is said, by a very good and fufficient 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, fays he, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, fenfe, or impulse; meaning, that no prophecy did flue or proceed from the private fenfe or thoughts of the writer; it was not giving a loofe 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 fpake as they were moved by the holy Ghost; or by the holy Spirit of God, enlightening their minds and directing them what to fay. 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 stricteft fenfe, this is to be understood only of what Prophets, as Prophets, have deliver- ed to us; fuch as Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the reft.
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 leveled 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 favor and blessings. It is necessary that we love the great Author of our being, that we pay him all due honor 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, honor, 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 instincts in our world, by them to show 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 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 fenses 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 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 favored 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 forts 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 judged 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 preserved, 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 compleats 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, fill 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 leveled against Re-
velation 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 of-
eration. 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 direc-
ted 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 Revela-
tion, we shall find them grossly ignorant of the being, unity, and per-
fec tions of God, the dispensations of his Providence, the proper honor
and worship that is due to him, the prayers we may address to his good-
ness, 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 privi-
leges, or future glory of his kingdom. The resurrection from the
death, 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 mea-
 sure, 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 igno-
nance, through the favourable allowance of God, yet surely every
man’s reason will tell him, that superior knowledge, and a more exten-
vive 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 conven-
icences of life; but shall we therefore despise the blessings of agricul-
ture, and the various accommodations which make life happy and com-
fortable, and say they are needles? Would any man in England ever
think of turning out naked into the fields and woods, because it is pos-
fible, 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 com-
modious habitations, fitted up with proper furniture and utensils, are ne-
cessary 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 of the truth; because they themselves, who should be the physician to heal themselves, are sick and disabled. 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 beneficence 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 very 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 refuses 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 profusion 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

M 3
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 goodness, because indeed it is not communicated to all the world, as well as to ourselves? It is very unnatural to dispute against God's goodness 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 goodness. 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 goodness. 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 thoughtfulness 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, unaccountable 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 ingrossed by busines, 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 publick acts and records, preferred in their archives with the utmost care, than we are of the truth of the Scriptures now in our hands. The Jews preferred the books 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 instance 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. Infomuch 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 pleaseth 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 im-
possible 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 Prote-
tants, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the cove-
nant of the Lord our God, and the several duties to which we are there-
by 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 preferred pure and entire in every translation from
the beginning to this day.

Thus the Objections against Revelation in general, which are all that
I ever 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 be-
cause 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 under-
gone some alterations; when the book, in itself considered, is an ex-
cellent performance, and capable of giving him the most profitable in-
struction?

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 plen-
tiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full ac-
count 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 wis-
dom, and our hearts tinctured with a Divine Spirit, we may be prepared
for glory, honour, and immortality.

C H A P. XL.
That the Scriptures are given by Inspiration of God, appears from the express and frequent Assertions of Moles, the Prophets and Apollies.

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 diffpered, 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 preferred 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 businesses, 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 into the hands of twenty translators, there are great odds, but every translation would differ.
The Authority and Excellency

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 his 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, 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-fupper 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 showing 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 Inspiration 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
must be very bad, designing men, who solemnly and publickly 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 honor 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 harassed 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 usage. 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 preserved 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, persuading 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 everywhere 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 foolifh 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 becaufe, 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 lot 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 such, directly contrary to their own consciences, and to all their interests both in this, and a future world.

None but a company of madmen, feized 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 been in the world. They had a surprising acquaintance with God and the perfections of his nature; they set the dispensations of his wis-
dom, and the grand designs of his love, in the clearest and most amiable
light; they well understood the whole system of morality, and fixed eve-
ry 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 accu-
rate 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 cer-
tainly true. They were fully satisfied that it was true, and they were
perfectly capable of receiving the clearest evidence, and fullest satisfac-
tion. For observe, what they reported was not a matter of mere opi-
ion, as in the case of superstition, nor a warm suggestion or secret im-
pulse 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 con-
ceited, or fancied, but which all of them, which great multitudes of all
forts 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 now a days may cavil and object, it is certain the A-
poftles, 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 them a commission to preach the Gospel to all
nations, and promise them success; that they actually saw him ascend up
into heaven; that the Holy Ghost actually fell upon them on the day of
Pentecost; and that by his influences they actually felt themselves in-
dowed with new and miraculous powers which accompanied them dur-
ing 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 eve-
ry where.

Add to all this, that the Apostles were surprisingly successful in preach-
ing 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 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 phi-
losophers, and the policy of statesmen; all these difficulties they encoun-
tered, and surmounted them all. The doctrine they taught, like the
sun, inlightened the whole world, in a manner, all at once; and infinite
multitudes of people, both from cities 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 A-
postles are to be credited when they affirm, that they received their in-
structions 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 proposi-
tion, or that twice two is equal to four. The proof indeed is of a dif-
ferent 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
asserted 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 Deluge, Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham, the Israelites, and their mi-
raculous deliverance from Egypt and settlement in the land of Canaan,
and all the surprising events in their story, are referred to as true and au-
thentic.

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 A-
postles have represented and established them as such.

Thus the frequent and express assertions of Moses, the Prophets,
and the Apostles, taken in connection 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 ineffimable 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,
CH. XLI.

The Harmony and Agreement, &c.

truth, and holiness, for the purifying our hearts, and directing our conversation, and proposing the noblest motives to ingage us to, and encourage us in, the practice of all virtue and goodness. We cannot over-value this blessing, neither can we defpife 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.

C H A P. 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 connection; but the Scriptures were done by several hands, in very different conditions of life, from the throne and scepter 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 predecessors, 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 compleat 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 than 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 commission. 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 honor and renown, to pretend a commission 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 connection and Harmony, mutually confirming the doctrine and testimony of each other, and concouring to establish the very fame 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. No body 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 of 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 causes 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 compleat 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 desolations, 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 profession of his newly devised 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 son, of no education or learning, without house or habitation, without the least human interest or influence, begins to preach up reformation among the Jews, the most suspicious and bigotted 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 despised by the generality, and greatly opposed and harrassed by the men of power and learning. However, he shifted 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 impostor, he plainly forefaw and foretold; but not in the least discouraged by the prospect, he ordered his Disciples to go and preach his Gospel over all the world, promising that after his death he would assist 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 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 philosophers, and the policy of statesmen, their doctrine, like the sun, almost at once, enlightened the world, overthrew the whole system of Pagan idolatry and religion, and advanced as far as our own country in the darkest and remotest 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 confess 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 sent 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 convincing proof that his doctrine was divine, and that he himself was actually gone to heaven, and lived there in the highest interest and favor 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 effected 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 Jesus. For this people, as they were originally chosen to be the repository, or storehouse 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 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 honor and renown, as the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, who all in their turn 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 better 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 lost the odious name by mixing with any other nation; yet, I say, this hated people, harraffed and butchered more or less by all mankind, banished and bandyed 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 descenfants of Abraham his servant. And thus the present state and being of the Jews is every where a publick 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 ease, neither shall 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 dispersed thee among the countries. And our Lord predicts, Luke xxii. 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 preserved in their dispersion, and preserved 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 have thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; for though I make a ful end of all nations, whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a ful end of thee.
The Harmony and Agreement of, 

Ch. XLI.

Hear 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 rise; 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 preferred 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 said 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 apostasy, 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 in-
exhaustible 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.

C H A P. XLII.

The internal Worth and Excellency of the Scriptures considered, as con-
taining 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 Excellen-
cy, 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 Fa-
ther 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 in-
tended. 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 honor of the
Bible, that it is the book, which, under the Divine Providence, has pre-
served in the world the knowledge of the one true God, which other-
wise must have been lost and extinguished. For when God in his in-
finite wisdom was pleased to call Abraham, and separate his family to the
purposes of revelation, idolatry, even in those early days, not long after

N 3
The internal Worth and

Ch. XLII.

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 the one God and Father of all, fell into the foulest idolatry, the grossest superstitition, and all the abominable vices in connection 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 everlasting 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 Jesus, 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 superstitition and idolatry? Is it 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, resumed 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 caufe, 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 resplendent 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 caufed to shine in the moral world, shall by his Providence be preferred, and shine with a growing lufhre, 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 fee, notwithstanding all the philosophy and wisdom of man, would have been totally lost among all the nations; and it shall be established 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 establiihed, it shall shine, it shall be honoured, when those, who now despife and disparage it, shall be confounded and perifh 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 meer human composure, that it has been the means of preferring 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 wick- edness, 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 attested, 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 Possessor of all being, of all wisdom and power, made the earth and created man upon it; that he stretched out the heavens, and com-
manded all their hofts. He measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the duft of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke, he looks upon the earth, and it trembleth. Behold, the na-
tions are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small duft 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 lefs than nothing and vanity.

"The whole universe rests wholly upon his arm, and is entirely sub-
ject to the dispo
sals of his will. Lift up your eyes on high, and be-
hold, who has created these things, that brings out their hoft by num-
ber? He calls them all by name, by the greatnes 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 ex-
cellent 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 exer-
cised 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 blest, 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 pu-
errer 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 volumes 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 favor to the righteous, 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 show 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-seat, 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 affured 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 correspondent to prophetic descriptions.

I should exceed my bounds only to mention the several heads of instruction and knowledge with which the word of God is crowded. 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 enjoyment, but for trial; not to gain temporal pleasures or possessions, but to discipline our souls, and to prepare them for immortal honor and glory. In particular, the many afflictions incidental 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 futility, to draw our regards to things heavenly and eternal, to exercise our faith, hope, patience, and every virtue, which is our real excellency and best qualification for everlasting happiness. This is a brief and very imperfect specimen of Scripture doctrine; which, even in this cursory view, as it is a little with sober reflection, must, to an impartial judgment, moderately acquainted with what the wisest 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 honor and favor, to show 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 godliness 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 favor 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 ingage our affections and esteem, are fully exposed to the judgment and censures of reason, and manifestly shewn to be emptines and vanity, infinitely below the excellence and worth of immortal spirits, and therefore infinitely unfit to be pursued at the expence 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 shall never 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 meer 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 can never forget us, and will make all things, how bitter ever, 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 honors of this world. Look into the Scriptures, view the unfathomable riches of Christ; behold the love of our God and Redeemer; of his own gracious will, and meet good pleasure, he has begotten us, he is become our Father, he has justified us, he has bestowed upon us the honors 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 cause 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. Both the world grown, 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 tranitory state. Such strong consolation 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 honor, 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 and 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
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 compleat, vindicate, and illustrate them; assuring us that as their original is Divine, their honors 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 fore-ordained, 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 stood in connection 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 has 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.

Christian ought to be thankful for the Scriptures, and maintain a high Esteem for them.

AVING, so far as seems necessary, considered the use and importance of the holy Scriptures, I would now point out the proper esteem 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 wife and benevolent Father, who has employed his spirit at sundry times, and divers manners, to pour knowledge and light into the darkens of the nations, which otherwise would, in effect, have generally left the use of intelligence; and that at length he has vifited us with the day-spring from on high, a full display of his heavenly grace in the everlafting Gospel.

Should we not maintain a just, that is to say, a very high efteeem of the word of God? If it is true, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for the nobleft ends, for doctrine, for reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness; then it is true that we cannot fet too high a value upon it. The things of this world, which are very imperfect and tranitory, have, alas, too large a share of our hearts; but the holy Scriptures are a treasury of heavenly and everlafting 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 wifeft and beft of men have represented them as the highest object of our delight and efteeem. Psalm xix. 7—10. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wifhe the fimple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be defired are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold; fweeter alfo than honey, and the honey-comb. Psalm cxix. 96, 97, 103. I have fen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad. O, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. How fweet are thy words unto my tongue; yea, fweeter than honey to my mouth! And we may then only call ourselves happy when we have attained the fame fentiments and taste of the good word of God. Indeed I cannot fee that we use it as what it is, or anfwcr our Christian profession, if we do not treat it with great efteeem and regard. To this purpofe 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 thought; and it is too facred and divine to admit of any degree of contempt. It is with some reckoned a turn of wit to introduce Scripture phrafe into common conversation, and to provoke pleafantry by quoting the Bible. What is this but burlesquing the word of God, and raifing a laugh at the expence of the greatest blesfing of heaven? Such a profane levity will by degrees leffen the reverence we owe to Scripture, and deftroy all serious regard to it; which is, in effect, to deftroy ourselves; and therefore should not only be carefully avoided, but with abhorrence detested.

Guard your minds well againft Deifm on the one hand, and Popery on the other. Both theee agree in depreciating the Scriptures. The Deif will perfuade 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 thofe who find their account in it. He rafts his invention to start any difficulty or objection to prove that the Bible is not fufficient to the purposes of revelation. And here, the Romanift joins him. They go indeed different ways, the one, as he pretend, to the meer 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 feruples 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 shew soever 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 and 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 treasure of books and manuscripts, upon all ancient subjects; yet he could rest his soul on none save 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 and 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 cavil, vilify, and condemn a Boerhaave, or a Sydenham, the greatest masters 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 devoutly 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 by 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 Happiness 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 masters 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." Pothumous 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 considerate person. All besides is uncertainty and confusion. You have Popes against Popes, councils against councils, fathers against fathers, the church of
one age against the church of another age, and tradition passing through
hands is uncertain, and inconsistent, must of necessity lose all force of
evidence. Only upon the rock of Scripture can we find any rest for the
sole of our feet; and there we have a firm foundation, and a sure infal-
liable guide, which we may with the greatest certainty and steadfastness
oppose to the authority of the church of Rome.

Whatever may be pretended to gain that church the credit of a guide,
all that, and much more may be said for the Scriptures. Has the church
of Rome been ancient? The Scriptures are more ancient. Is that
church a means to keep Christians in unity? So is the Scriptures to
preserve unity of belief in things necessary and plainly revealed, and in
unity of charity in other matters. Following the Scriptures, we shall
follow that which must be true, if the church of Rome be true, for
she owns the truth of Scripture. Whereas if we follow that church,
we follow that which, if the Scriptures be true, may be false; nay,
which if the Scriptures be true, must be false, because the Scriptures tes-
tify against it. We have God's express command to follow the Scrip-
tures, and no intimation or colour of any prohibition; but to believe in
the church of Rome we have no command at all, much less an express
command. Nay, on the contrary, we have a general prohibition in
these words, Call no man master upon earth.

Following the Scriptures we shall embrace a religion, which being
contrary to flesh and blood, without any assistance from worldly power,
wisdom, or policy, nay, against all the power and policy of the world,
prevailed and spread itself in a short time, over a very great part of the
world. Whereas it is apparent the church of Rome has got, and still
maintains her authority over mens consciences by counterfeiting false
miracles, forging false histories, corrupting the monuments of former
times, by wars, by perfecutions, by massacres, by treasons, by rebel-
lions; in short, by all manner of carnal unjustifiable means, whether
violent or fraudulent.

Following the Scriptures, we shall believe a religion the first preachers
and professors whereof could certainly have no worldly ends; could nei-
ther project, nor promise to themselves by it any of the profits, honours,
or pleasures of this world, but rather the contrary, even all the hardships
the world could lay upon them. On the other hand, the head of the
church of Rome, the pretended vicar of Christ, successor of the Apostles,
and guide of faith, it is palpably evident, makes the Popish religion the
instrument of his ambition, to gratify the lust of dominion, by subje-
cting the consciences of all mankind to his authority, and all nations to
his jurisdiction. Besides, it is evident to any man, who has but half an
eye, that most of those doctrines, which the Romish church addeth to
the Scriptures, are, one way or other, calculated to promote the ho-
nour or temporal profit of the teachers of them.

Following the Scriptures only, we shall embrace a religion of perfect
simplicity and purity; consisting, in a manner, wholly in the worship of
God in spirit and truth, and in sincere obedience to his will. Whereas
the Roman church, and doctrine, is loaded with an infinity of weak,
childish, ridiculous superstitions and ceremonies, and the most grofs and
manifest idolatry. If we follow the Scriptures, we must not promise our
selves
selves salvation without forsaking effectually, and mortifying all vices, and practicing sincerely all Christian virtues, which our reason tells us is the only way in which we can secure the favour of God, and our own happiness. But the church of Rome opens an easier and broader way to heaven, and though a man continues all his life long in a course of sin, gives him assurance he may be let into heaven by a back gate, even by an act of attrition, at the hour of death, if it be joined with confession to a priest, or by an act of contrition without it.

Just and perfect are the precepts of piety and humility, of innocence and patience, of goodness, temperance, sobriety, justice, meekness, fortitude, and constancy, contempt of the world, the love of God, and of mankind; in a word, of all virtues, and against all vices, which the Scriptures obliges us to observe and obey, as ever we hope to see God in his heavenly kingdom; which if they were generally obeyed, could not but make the world generally happy; and the goodness of them alone is sufficient to make any wise and good man believe, that the religion, which oblige to them, comes from God the fountain of all goodness. The church of Rome enervates, and in a manner dissolves and abrogates many of the holy precepts of the Gospel, by teaching men, that they are not laws for all Christians, but counsels of perfection, and matters of supererogation, which a man should do well, if he observes, but shall not sin, if he doth not observe them; that they are for those who aim at high places in heaven, but if a man will be content with an inferior situation there, especially if he will be content to taste of purgatory in the way, he need not incumber his thoughts at present with many of the rules of the Gospel. Not to say, that the Roman church manifestly forms a spirit of uncharitableness and cruelty to all mankind, not of her profession. Therefore the religion of this church is far from being so holy or so good as the doctrine of Christ delivered in the Scriptures, and consequently cannot come from the same fountain of holiness and goodness.

Following the church of Rome for our guide, we shall only follow a combination of deluded men, who have fast closed their eyes, and are not at liberty to open them, or to examine and consider whether they are in the right or no. For that Papists have no liberty of judgment is manifest, because they reckon it a mortal sin to doubt of any part of their doctrine. Whence it follows, that seeing every man must resolve that he will never commit mortal sin, that he must never examine the grounds of Popery at all, for fear he should be moved to doubt; or if he do examine, he must before resolve that no evidence, not even of Scripture, no motives, be they ever so strong, shall move him to doubt, lest he should fall into mortal sin.

Seeing this is the condition of all who are esteemed good Catholicks, who can deny that they are a part of men unwilling and afraid to understand; that have eyes to see and will not, that have not the love of the truth, but are given over to strong delusion? And therefore in following such a church, and such guides, we shall only follow the blind, and with them fall into the ditch. If we follow the Scriptures, we shall follow only the truth; we shall follow a guide which exhorts us to keep our eyes always open to the truth, to try all things, and to hold fast only that
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
foolish and unsafe it is to forfake this heavenly guide, and follow the de-
lusions of the church of Rome. But then, the greater the evidence that
Scripture is a perfect guide to eternal life, the greater must our obliga-
tions be to use it faithfully as such.

Let us be much in reading the Scriptures; and think and judge free-
ly. 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 imploy our minds generously in the search and
knowledge of the truth. Christianity calls us to the noblest exercise of
our understanding, and we lose the benefit of it, if we do not think se-
riously, and judge freely.

There is no other way of having our minds established, and well sea-
soned 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 inlightened with Divine knowledge, and, to our unspeakable com-
fort, grow up into Jesus Christ, and gain the happiness of the man, who
forfakeing 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 incum-
bent 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>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>812</td>
<td>MAZIAH king of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeroboam II. king of Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>Uzziah king of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeroboam II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>Jeroboam II. king of Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uzziah king of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>772</td>
<td>Menahem I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>770</td>
<td>Menahem II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>759</td>
<td>Uzziah 52. Pekah 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>753</td>
<td>Jotham 5. Pekah 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>742</td>
<td>Ahaz 1. Pekah 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the same year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the same year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>739</td>
<td>Aaphaz 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>726</td>
<td>Hezekiah 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the same year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>720</td>
<td>Hezekiah 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715</td>
<td>Hezekiah 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>714</td>
<td>Hezekiah 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>714</td>
<td>Hezekiah 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the same year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>713</td>
<td>Hezekiah 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the same year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>710</td>
<td>Hezekiah 18.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jonah sent with a message. 2 Kings xiii. 20. xiv. 25.

Joel i. ii. iii.

Amos i—ix.

Hofea i. ii. iii.

Hofea iv.

Jonah i. ii. iii. iv.

Ifaiah vi. ii. iii. iv. v.

Micah i. ii.

Ifaiah vii.

Ifaiah viii. ix. x.

Ifaiah xvii.

Ifaiah i.

Ifaiah xxviii.

Hofea v. vi.

Ifaiah xiv. ver. 28, &c.

Ifaiah xv. xvi.

Hofea vii—xiv.

Micah iii. iv. v. vi. vii.

Nahum i. ii. iii.

Ifaiah xxiii—xxvii.

Ifaiah xxxviii. xxxix.

Ifaiah xxiv. xxx—xxxx.

Ifaiah xxii. ver. 1—15.

Ifaiah xxi.

Ifaiah xx.

Ifaiah xviii. xix.

Ifaiah x. ver. 5, &c. xi. xii. xiii.

xiv. ver. 28, &c.
Prophets before the Captivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years before Chr.</th>
<th>In the same year</th>
<th>In the same year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>698 Maraffeh i.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>628 Josiah 13.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>623 Josiah 18.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

611 Josiah 31.

610 Jehoiakim i.  
In the same year
606 Jehoiakim 4.  
In the same year
603 Jehoiakim 7.  
599 Zedekiah 1.   
In the same year
596 Zedekiah 4.   
595 Zedekiah 5. Jehoiachin's capt. 5. 

589 Zedekiah
CHAP. XXXV.
Prophets after the Destruction of the Temple, during the Captivity.

Years before Christ.
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. 11—15. xl. ver. 1—7.
Jeremiah xl. ver. 7. xli. xlii. xliii. xliv. ver. 1—8.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Ezekiel xxxii.
Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 1—21.
Obadiah
Ezekiel xxxv.
Daniel iii.
Ezekiel xl.
Daniel iv.
Jeremiah lii. ver. 31, &c.
Daniel v.
Daniel vi.
Daniel ix.
Ezra i. ii.
Ezra iii.
Prophecies after the Captivity, &c, Ch. 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 Hyftaspes 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 Hyftaspes.

515 Darius 6.
462 Ahaferus 3.
461 Ahaferus 4.
458 Ahaferus 7.
In the same year.
457 Ahaferus 8.
453 Ahaferus 12.
445 Ahaferus 20.
433 Ahaferus 32.
429 Ahaferus 36.
428 Ahaferus 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.
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 eastern 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 leaft, 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 thefe with the reft of the world, they make the leaft and worst part of mankind, though many of them appear to live morally well.

All the reft of the world make profession that they own a God; that is to fay, a moft 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 thofe actions which depend on his liberty: From whence they equally conclude, that man was de-sign'd for the duties of religion, that society without it would be pure robbery: and that, as it is hard to conceive that men fhou'd be wholly defroy'd by death, fo it is directly contrary to the sentiments of con-science 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 firft is of thofe who fuppofe, that there is more than one God; and this is the belief of all Pagans in general.

The fecond is of thofe that acknowledge one only God, fuch are the Jews, Christians, and Mahometans.

Now, as for the cure of different difeafes, ferveral remedies are made ufe of, fo 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, preach'd 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) that the Christian Religion should be the true, but that 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, with that a perfect conformity of the Christian Religion, with the confidence 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 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 perfwade all forts of readers, and better levell'd to the ordinary capacity of thofe, who newly enter upon the examination of this truth.

And as the neceffity of revelation is generally owned by heathens, and by all other nations of the world: I thought it a thing altogether unnecessary to enter upon the examination of several abftracted questions, fuch 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 firmlv proved, that God revealed himfelf, that he prefcribed a fervice 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 obfcurity.

I have therefore confin'd my felf to certain confiderations, which do fo eftablifh the truth of the books of the Old and New Teftament, as by their union they firmlv prove the truth of the Christian Religion.

I hope, that it will not be thought needful for me to demonftrate, that the Mahometan religion ought not to abolifh the Chriftian, as the Chriftians pretend, that the Christian Religion abrogated the ceremonial part of the Jewifh worship.

Asfoon as an understanding Reader fhall make fome reflexions upon the nature of the arguments which demonftrate 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.
REFLEXIONS
UPON THE
BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE
For the Establishing of the Truth
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

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 violatd 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 acknowledgement 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 scatter'd throughout the whole world, do oppose our affection, that the promise of sending the Messiah is already accomplished, tho' 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.

ORASMUCH as in order to establish the truth of the Christian Religion, we confine our selves 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, tho' possibly no lefs 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 furnisheth 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 beholding to history only for the knowledge I have of a Cyrus, an Alexander, or a Cæsar; 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 entred 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 tho' it be founded on the authority of historians, who liv'd 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 dependance 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 liv’d amongst those who had perfect knowledge of it; when the matter is not gainaid or contradicted by any; if we find it pen’d at a time, when the things could not be related by any otherwise than indeed they were, without exposing themselves to publick 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 inform’d of it, or because the thing was so publick 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 convers’d with him? Don’t we 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 easie thing to make it appear, that the proofs which evidence the truth of the matters which our religion proposeth, 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 Delphos 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 proposeth, 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.
CHAP. 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 contain’d 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 Nebuchadnezar 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 ex-
act 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 prophesies 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 writ-
ings every where for granted, as also of all the other sacred writ-
ings of the Old Testament, both historical, prophetic, and moral.

These four particulars do in a manner give us an intire idea of the
holy Scripture; and we shall scarcely stand in need of ought else to ma-
neift the truth of those writings, if we consider those undisputable mat-
ters of fact I am now to speak of, and will but make some very natural
Reflections 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 slipp'd 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 Ptolemies's kings of Egypt, whether a considerable party 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 tho' the Jews had not all the books of the Old
Testament from the beginning of their commonwealth, they that fol-
lowed 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 3030. in which the
divisions of the two kingdoms happen'd, 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
Vol. I
of various disputes from the very times of the Apostles or soon after, should be supposititious, as to ver, 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 Ptolomy 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 preferred 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 look'd 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 prefer'd 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 Sothah of the land of Canaan, nor the authority of the priesthood; which reasons of state (hereafter mentioned) where 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 the Pentateuch of Moses. Most of the others we know were pen'd 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 confirm'd 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 580 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 posessing of them. Indeed nothing can be imagin'd more absurd.
abfund 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 unsufferable piece of boldness to charge the Jews with forging these books of Moses, 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 kindomes, 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 Moses 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 Moses are the rife 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 confirm’d by the following books of Josuah and Judges, which have an essential reference to the fame, and contain a relation of the publick acts of many nations, attest’d, and acknowledged by heathen authors, who were the mortal enemies of the Jews.

Thirdly, That the said books are so closely link’d and related to those publick and known actions, that it is impossible to separate the laws they contain from the matters of fact attest’d 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; tho’ the sequel will oblige me to make some more particular reflexions upon each book, when I shall come to consider the severall 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.

**CHAP. IV.**

*That the Testimony of Moses concerning the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah, is unquestionable.*

Orasmuch 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
which all the rest do depend (as I shall shew hereafter) it is evident, that I must make it my busines 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 hath promised in due time to send the Messiah for redemption of mankind from the punishment of sin, I shall propose these 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 prophane 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 expos’d 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 publick 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 distinguish’d 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 
Abrasam the eftablifhing his posterity in the land of Canaan, was to reprefent to the Jews the right they had to that land, according to the defign 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 prefcribes to his people the manner of celebrating the paffover; at leaft this is the firft law which God gave them through the miniftry of Moses; but forasmuch as Moses his end was to juftifie in the minds of his people, the defign he had to make them leave Egypt as well as their pretentions to the land of Canaan, whither he was to lead them; it was natural for him to lay before them the ground of thofe pretentions, which he could not do without relating the whole feries of the history until the time of their bondage in Egypt, which we read in Genesis; the greatest part of which only concerns the ancetfors of that people, after that Moses had firft 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 fuddain to introduce into the world the belief of things fo far diftant from common apprehenfion as thofe two points muft needs be, viz. That of the creation, and the promife of Chrift, in cafe we fuppofe them generally unknown. Let us yet further conceive a man not only relating thofe things, but making them the foundation of a new fort of laws never before heard of. Is there any wit, or judgment in fuch an undertaking? Can we therefore fuppofe that Moses, whole writings teftifie his great wifdom, fhould ever have entertain’d fuch unaccountable thoughts.

I dare aver that there was never any legiflator fo ftupid and inconfiderate, as to pretend to engage a whole people to submit themselves to the yoke of obedience, and to receive a great number of laws reftecting their civil government and religion, by declaring to them two fictions, of which they had never before had the leaft idea.

It is also very confiderable, that thofe things are not recited by Moses as a preface to the Decalogue, as if then firft they had been propofed to Moses, or the people by God; but Moses fets them down as truths known to them all, and as principles, universally admitted, and fuch as the mere mentioning of them could not but ftrongly engage the Jews to render a ready obedience to the laws which God gave to Moses in their prefence of the Divine authority, of which their very fennes were con-vince’d.

Let us also confider the nature of thofe things, the relation of which Moses has joined with thofe two general points, to make an impression on the minds of the Jews. Let us confider the account he gives them of their ancetfors, nearer or farther off, whom he repreffents as equally inform’d of thofe matters, as having feverally delivered the knowledge of them to their children, and having join’d to thofe firft truths of the creation, and the promife of a Saviour, many other notions thereon de-pending, 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 fenfelesnecfs, if he had proceeded to make fuch a vaft people (all of the fuddain) to receive for truths publickly and generally owned, what indeed was nothing but the moft ridiculouf 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 an historian and law-giver as Moses was, relating such important matters cannot be call'd 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 assert, that there is nothing better attested than the creation of the world, and the promife 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 Moses relates concerning these matters.

What can they with reason object? Perhaps they'll say, that Moses is not the author of Genesis, but that it was foifted in under his name, and consequently, that whatsoever is built upon the authority of Moses and his evidence, is all without ground. Or they may object, that if Moses be indeed the author of Genesis, that 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 alledge, that Moses 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 inform'd of, and that they may well be suppos'd greatly changed and altered by a tradition of so many ages. They may also alledge, that according to the common opinion, Moses penn'd 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 confuse, or rather were generally unknown.

They may object against these relations of Moses, that which the most ancient people, such as the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Chinese, alledge for their antiquity, which far surpasseth the date of the world according to Moses.

These are the principal ways to assault the truths which Moses relates, either by maintaining with the Atheists on one hand, that the things which Moses relates, are indeed mentioned by other authors, but that they forged them themselves; or that Moses being an able and resol'n'd politician design'd 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 book of Genesis to be writ by Moses, it was an easie 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 easie 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.

SHALL in the sequel of this discourse make it appear, that we cannot with reason, conteft the authority of a tradition which hath those characters which we find in the relations contain'd in the book of Genesis: the only thing that can be question'd in this matter is, whether Moses the great captain of the Israelites, and founder of their common-wealth, be the author of it. This therefore is the thing which we ought solidly to evince.

Tho' it seems that we might dispense with this trouble: forasmuch as it is safe 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 Prometheous, to that of Jupiter's continued laughter for the seven first days of his life, which they look'd 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 Titans, 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.

Whoever was the author of Genesis, whether Moses or another, sure it is that he was exactly inform'd of the matters he relates, and that he lived soon after Joseph.

First then I say, that it appears he was fully inform'd 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 countreys they posseft, and their kings, as of things he was perfectly inform'd 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 contain'd in Exodus, and the following books, is the author of Genesis.

For first, it cannot be deny'd, that the heathens themselves have acknowledged Moses for the most antient law-giver; for this, we have the testimonies of Plato, Polemus, Artapanus, Pythagoras, Theopompus, and Diodorus Siculus, who places Moses in the front of six of the most antient law-givers thus: Moses, Saucnus, Sefonchus, Bachoris, Anasus, 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 our selves oblig'd to believe them; because naturally every nation is suppos'd to be a faithful depository 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 averr'd, that he did so? I say, when all the Jews, who continue at this day, do in all places, where they are scatter'd throughout the world equally, and with one consent, maintain, that they received this book from him, together with the laws and worship therein contain'd? Nay, when it is notorious, that many of them have suffer'd martyrdom in confirmation of this truth?

I omit now to mention the consent of the Christians, who tho' 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 dwell in the sequel of these my Reflexions, with how much justice they affent to this truth; but at present I tie my self only to the testimonies of the Jews, and that which confirms the authority thereof,
CHAP. 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 mucle which is in the hollow of the thigh, &c. The observation of which laws is indeed prescrib'd to them in the other books of Moses, but the occasion and ground of them all, is no where 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 potterity of Abraham, as well as his ancestors, had always observ'd 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 on 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 form'd 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, tho' 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 perswaded 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 learn'd,
or heard of their parents or fore-fathers, 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.

Laftly, It cannot be deny'd, 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 infance, since the time of Jesus Christ, or since that of David. Neither can it be denied, but this constant reading was observ'd by virtue of a law contain'd in the said book: Now if this law has always been in this book from the first appearing of it, which cannot be question'd; 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 mention'd 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 publickly establisht in the kingdom of Judah it 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 Sambanaffar, 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
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 laws was altogether unknown 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 posterity.

Secondly, It is evident that tho' the wickedness and violence of Manasseh, 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 before profaned, a main part of which, was the expounding and reading of the books of Moses, according to those laws before mention'd.

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 cleaning and repairing 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 particular 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 ceremonial of the passover, 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 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 soever the wickedness of the kings of Judah and Israel was, as well as that of their subjects, yet the same generally consisted in nothing else, but the imitation of the worship of their neighbour nations, as to some particulars, which tho' they were forbidden by the law, yet they left the far greater part of their religion in full force. This we have an instance of in the time of Ahab, where we find Elijah reproaching the Israelites with the monstrous alliance they had made betwixt the worship of God, and that of Baal, which queen Jezebel had introduc'd.
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.

CHAP. 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 preserved so distinct amongst those that lived since the creation until Moses. We are no sooner inform'd 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 farasmuch as this impossibility 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 renew'd 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, tho' the generality of authors, ancient and modern, Jews as well as Christians, are of this opinion, yet there are some of the Christian fathers, who seem to deny that the sabbath was ever observ'd by the Patriarchs. But it will be an easie matter to prove from Moses, that the antiquity of the sabbath is such as I affert, and at the same time to demonstrate the truth of the creation, as well as of the promise of the Messiah, which in a manner immediately follow'd it.

Moses in the second chapter of Genesis, expresseth 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 confection 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 plac’d 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 confection 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 confectionating 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, maintain’d a publick 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 7 day was observed (b). I will not here peremptorily assert that antient 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 finding 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 XXIX of Genesis concerning the term of a week set apart to the nuptials of Leah, where at the twenty seventh verse Laban thus express’d 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 so plainly signify a week of days that it cannot be more naturally express’d; and indeed, all generally understand by this week of the marriage feast of

(a) Gen. ii. 3.  
(b) Kimchi Preefat. 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 proportion'd 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 enterrment in the land of Canaan: and as we find, that this custom was perpetually afterwards observ'd by the Jews, as appears from Ecclesiasticus XXII. 12. so likewise we find the same observed by the Asiaticks, 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 observ'd 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 antient 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 refi^es 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 express'd 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

\[(e)\) De fide Refor. in obitu Sat. p. 321.
\[(f)\) Seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had smote the river. Tulkas in h. 1.\]
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 inclin'd 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 determin'd 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 happen'd the seventh day after the creation, and to the law then given to man concerning it.

We may gather from the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, that the same 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 sware 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 tyrals 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 entred 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 tell us, that God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it: that is, he consecrated 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, tho' Philo the Jew be of opinion, that the practice of solemnizing that day, had suffer'd 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 Peripatetick (i), in a treatise dedicated by him to Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, cites several passages of Homer, Hesiod,

(g) Exod. xx. 8.
(h) Exod. v. 5.
(i) Euseb. prep. Evang. i. 13. c. 12.
Hesiod, and Linus, heathen poets, which mention the seventh day as a festival, and solemn day, because all things were finished 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 deny'd that the Patriarchs observed the seventh day, they did so rather with regard to the rigor of that law, which forbade 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, observ'd 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 express'd 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 authorized, 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 tho' 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 those 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 past 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 imprudently have 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 dependance and connexions, which the matters related by Mofes 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 Mofes, in which the Atheists imagine, that they discover so great absurdities.

CHAP. VIII.

That Adam was convinced of his Creation, by Reason and Authority.

HO’ 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 Mofes, and from them to pass to those at a greater distance, yet I have chosen rather to follow the thread of Mofes his discourse, hoping that this method will afford more light to these our Reflections: at least, it will spare me the trouble of frequent repetitions, which in the other way I should be necessarily oblig’d 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 enquiry to know what ways he had to assure himself, that he was indeed created in that manner as Mofes relates. And, forasmuch as the certainty of this tradition depends upon the authority of Adam, whom Mofes 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 reflection: 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 Mofes 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 reflections upon those several matters, which God had made known to him concerning his creation:
creation: I say, it cannot be imagin’d, but that he must have taken these things into consideration, and have been convinc’d 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 joyned 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 instances, 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 assur’d of by the light of reason, being convinc’d 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 maintain’d 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 stature.

And he might as easily be assur’d, that his soul was not formed before his body. The soul is a being, conscious of his 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 assur’d 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, tho’ 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 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 maintain'd 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 deferr'd 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 assur'd 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.

CHAP. IX.

That Adam was confirmed by his own Experience, in the Perswasion he had entertain'd concerning his Creation.

HEN I take for granted, that Adam could satisfy himself concerning the truth of God's revelation, by some natural and easy reflexions, I don't find how any can think strange of this hypothesis, except some, perchance, might think that I make Adam too contemplative.

But if any will be pleas'd 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 weakness of his infancy are the cause of; his mind was not tainted with popular errors, which oft 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 prov'd 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 country-man, not capable of discovering of himself, all on a sudden,
fuddain, 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 needs but consult the rules of probability to be determin'd 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, that so he did really make those reflexions, I have attributed to him, if we consider, that God gave him a law proportion'd to the state in which he was created: for this law supposes that Adam own'd himself God's subject; that he consider'd God as his great benefactor, that he hop'd for rewards from him, and fear'd to be punish'd by him.

And lastly, If I should grant that these reflexions did not at first make so deep an impression in his heart, yet at least, it cannot be deny'd, 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 pass'd sentence upon him, his wife, and the serpent; God condemn'd the serpent, and afforded his grace to man; God made him a promise proportion'd to the evil into which he was fallen. The woman had deceiv'd 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 extrem pains in child-bearing, he drive 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 convic'd 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 receiv'd 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 produc'd 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 confirm'd.

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 deliver'd to them concerning the creation. They had also leisure enough during the long lives they enjoy'd, to examine the solidity of those reasons which perfwaded 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 perfwade them, that the world had not its beginning at the time which their parents assign'd 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 assign'd 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 represent'd 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 sensuous 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; 'tis impossible to suppose, that they should let these things pass without making any reflexion 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 examin'd 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.

Suppose it is sufficiently evident, that the immediate posterity of Adam could easily be assured of the manner how their parents had been produc'd, from whom they deriv'd 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 instruct'd in these truths by their parents, so they deliver'd 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 perverted of the truth of the creation, and first promise.

The sin of Cain in killing his brother, shews the same perversion: 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 posterity; or else, to some other who might be called her seed, because born from one of her posterity.

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 fulfil 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 Afiyages, which she look'd upon as a divine foreboding.

When we read therefore, that Cain slew his brother, seeing him prefer'd 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. Tanchuma 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. 'Tis the King, the Messiah.

I pretend not to maintain the solidity of the reflections they make upon the words, another seed. They seem rather to have pleas'd themselves in sporting with a word which admits of both significations, other and strange, than 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 had 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 posterity 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 those 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 supposed the creation of the world, and promise of the Messiah, and that all the acts of religion are employ'd either in commemorating these truths every

(k) Gen. iv. 1.
(l) Rabbath fol. 27. col. 2. par. 23. & alibi.
every seventh day, or in unfolding the wonders therein contain'd, or in testifying our thankfulness to God for the same.

We may add here, that the instance of Lamech's polygamy does in some sort make out to us the force of this persuasion.

Cain being rejected by God, and distinguish'd 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 happen'd; 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 debarr'd 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 fulfill'd by some one or other of them.

It cannot be deny'd, but that he imitated the crimes of Cain, and therefore may well be supposed to have been leaven'd also with his false maxims. But how greatly forever he was corrupted, yet so far much 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 can't well imagine, but that he must have had the same pretensions.

It appears therefore, that the polygamy of Lamech may justly be esteem'd 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 periwaded 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 sensuality, 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 antient right, from which he had been suspender 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 supplanted by him of his right to accomplish the promise) and the polygamy of Lamech, as an effect of this persuasion; if it be consider'd, that in all likelyhood
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 fa-
mily in general, manifold instances of this spirit of jealoufie, and burning
defire of a posterity.

We find also, much about the fame 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 con-
cerning 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 in-
stance which might seem to convince the relation of Moses of the least
aburdity. We fee men acting from the persuasion of these two matters
of fact; we must conclude therefore, that they were distinctly inform'd
of them; yea, we see all men in general, acting according to this per-
suasion: it is evident therefore, they were known to all, and the week-
ly observance of the sabbath day continually representing those truths to
the eyes and minds of all, takes away all possibility of forgery in these
matters.

Let us now enquire 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.

---

CHAP. 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 Mes-
iah, 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 con-
verted with Lamech his father, who had seen Adam and his children, as
being fifty six years of age when Adam died; he had converted with Me-
thusalem 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 instruc'd Noah, during so vast an interval of
time, in like manner as himself had been instruc't 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, examin’d 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 con-
vince 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 assur’d 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
1656 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 jealoufie 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 own’d 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 inaccessible, which if so, was an authentick proof of the
truths in question: that garden, as far as we can judge, being not de-
stroy’d, 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 com-
manded to build an ark; he saw the deluge happening, according to what
God had foretold, he saw the beasts, of their own accord, gather them-
selves 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
offer’d 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 depositary of the promise
which Adam had left to his posterity, tho’ 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 perswasion concerning these
things.

CHAP. XIII.
CHAP. XIII.

That the Children of Noah were convinced of the Truth of these 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 paid to them, as after a new creation, increase and multiply (v) : 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 practis'd 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 suppos'd) that Canaan had given occasion first to his fathers 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 tinctured 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 seem'd 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 pronounceth 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 extirpated by Japhueh, when God put the posterity of Shem by Abraham in possession of the land of Canaan? It is very natural for us to conceive,

(v) Gen. ix. 1
(o) Gen. ix. 5.
that Noah consider'd 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 attack'd 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 can't be deny'd, but that this reflexion is as natural as it would have been just in reference to the fact of cruel Abyages (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 seem'd to promise to the son of Mandane the throne of all Asia, and threaten the ruine of his own.

'Tis 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 suppos'd to be generally preserv'd amongst other nations, that in their letter to king Artaxerxes against the Jews who rebuild 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 perfwade themselves of the truth of these things, we had better proceed to the enquiry, whether their posterity that follow'd them, had the same perfwasion 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.

CHAP. XIV.

That the Posterity of Noah's Children were perswaded of the Truth of the Creation, and first Promise.

If Noah saw Methusaleth, who had seen Adam and his posterity before the deluge; Abrahall saw Shem and his children, who were unquestionable witnesses of what had pass'd before and since the flood.

(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.

Isaac 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, discoursed of Noah as a man but of yesterday, 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 conduces much to the preservation of a distinct knowledge of these matters.

The first is, That the ark it self 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 amongst 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 were seated, in defence of which, it seems probable, that the war of Chedarlaomer (mention'd the XIII 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, tho' 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 of Cain, was a great means to preserve inviolably the important truths of the creation and first promise; a like jealousy now being risen 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 rescue 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.

(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 Baalberith, 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 prophan the most holy things, with such shameful idea's.

Secondly, That it was in detestation of these idea's, 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 dextrous 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.

CHAP. XV.

That we find the Family of Abraham and his Posterity till Jacob fully persuaded of those Truths.

T 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.

I need

(s) Judg. viii. 23. & ix. 8. Talm. Hier. fol. 11. col. 4. & gloss. in h. l. & Avodahzara c. iii. fol. 43. col. 1.
(t) De Dea Syr. p. 1069.
I need not take notice here, that the religion practis’d by Abraham and his posterity suppose these matters as constantly owned and known.

It cannot be deny’d, 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 priviledge of fulfilling the promise of the Messiah, or at least to see it fulfill’d 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 possest with this hope which their father had rais’d 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 Naab and his family, so the flames which destroy’d 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 consider’d as proceeding from a very different motive, the Jewish Doctors (x) plainly averring, that this was done by them in hopes of bring 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 fear’d God; it is natural to conceive, that considering their father, as one whom God had peculiarly chosen from amongst the posterity of Shem, to execute the promise of the Messiah, and seeing that their mother was changed into a statue of falt, they conceived themselves in some sort authoriz’d to surprize 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 manifestly separated and call’d forth their father from amongst them; and on the other hand, supposing that God would dispence 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 behav’d themselves very chastly, in the midst of the impurities of Sodom; and that besides we find they design’d 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 asham’d of an action, in it self so criminal, or concealing the knowledge of it from posterity, that they gave those names to the children born of this their incest, that might

(u) Lyra in Genesis, xix.
(x) Beres, 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 hers Benammi; a name of a like signification with the former.

This observance 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 elder brother, was to be consider'd 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 ministry 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, look'd upon the pretensions of the Israelites, that the Messiah 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 Moabits, 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. Tanehnumah 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 her self destitute of children, and her barrenness having continued so long a time, she had no hopes of ever being a mother, what remain'd
remain'd therefore for her, but to think of adopting a son of her bondwoman? And in consideration of this, she perfwades 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 fought the seed of God, that is, the seed which God had promised, as Malachy expresses it, Mal. II. 15.

At least it is certain, that the Jews have taken these words of Malachy (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 observ'd 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 ministration of an angel; and was the head of a great people, who from that time to this very day, have always been circumcision.

It may be also of great use to take notice here, that Ishmael could not but be instructed by Abraham concerning the promise God had made to him, to which he pretended, as being the elder, and therefore mocked at the great air was made at the weaning of Isaac, as thinking that he being the eldest, could not be deprived of the natural right of his primogeniture. At least, it is very probable, that except it had been thus, Sarah's anger (approved by God himself) would not have prov'd so violent, as well against Ishmael, as Hagar, who flatter'd him in these pretensions, nor would Abraham so far have comply'd 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, 'tis 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 Esau and Jacob, who were both born of the same mother, but Esau being the first-born, we find the same jealousy arising between them, as before between

(x) Targ. Jonath. in h. 1. & Kimchi in h. 1.
tween 

Ishmael and Isaac. Sarah seem'd somewhat cruel in calling out her adopted son Ishmael, and here we see that Rebecca preferred Jacob before Esau her first-born, and afflicted 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 sons 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 prophane person, for which, not only this reason may be alleged, that he sold his birth-right for a melf 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 seem'd 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 cursed 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 prophane humor, he was pierced with extrem sorrow 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 deliver'd 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, deserves 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
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 surprising and strange worship indeed, and yet celebrated with festivals, and hymns, and was the rise of that worship which the heathens afterwards 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 ministrv.

After all that I have now said, concerning those jealousies which Moses relates with so much care, it seems that the solidity of these observations cannot be disputed. Especially if we consider, that it is these jealousies, 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 tho' 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 promises which had been made first to Abraham, secondly to Isaac, and lastly to Jacob, and in opposition to the pretensions of some people near neighbours 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, obey'd 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 surpriz'd, as he thought, the blessing design'd

(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 follow'd her, and gave one of her maids to her husband: all this was evidently grounded upon the same principle which afterwards bred those diffensions 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 those 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 confirm'd 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 judgement 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 ones 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, Juda's daughter-in-law; for having been deceived by Judah, she in exchange, surpriz'd him into an incest, the commissiou 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 lookt upon as solely intrusted with the promis of the Messiah, and out of which he was according to be born.

It is necessary to make that observation, because we ought always to remember, that she was formerly a Canaanitute, and that consequently she left off and renounc'd the impiety and idolatry of her kindred, when she embrac'd 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 forfook 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) Theoph. in Mat. c. i.
(c) S. Hieronym. in Tradit. Heb. ad 1. Reg. 3.
Revolutions 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 reflection upon the considerations 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 lookt 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 lookt 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 begg'd 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 Sem'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 childrens 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 reflections upon the promise which Jacob on his death-bed made to them from God: that persecution was chiefly intended against the male children, Pharaoh commanding the extirpation of them, because he was afraid of the Jews growing too strong for him, and of their joyning with his enemies; and perhaps also, because the Jews entertaining a certain expectation of the Messiah's coming, and so boasting and glorying of it, upon all occasions, the Egyptians desir'd 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. Joseph 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 been Levi, but also Kehath his grandfather, who had seen Jacob.

And it is for that reason, that Moses seems to have observ'd, that Joseph saw his own children's children (d); that is to say, the third generation.

Gen. 1. 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 shew'd, 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 joyned hands with both.

From Noah to Abraham, there is but one man, viz. Sem, 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 shew'd, that many actions recorded by Moses, tho' 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 the uncertain authority of tradition: for tho' I grant that tradition, as to facts of another nature, be dubious and uncertain, and not to be too much
much relyed upon in matter of belief, yet this hath such very particular characters as keep up its own authority.

Firstly, it supposeth a small number of persons from Adam to Moses, who put it in writing.

Secondly, it supposeth, that those who have preferred 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 inform'd of, and which he is particularly concern'd 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 publick service and worship, whose celebration is repeated fifty two times a year, that the remembrance of it should be preferred by all posterity.

Sixthly, It was preferred 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 all been excluded, and the younger, as Abel, Seth, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Juda, chosen to accomplish the promise of the Messiah, which bred great jealousies, and tended much to preserve those ideas of the truth.

Lastfly, it supposeth great contests betwixt whole nations, who all strive 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.

**CHAP. XVIII.**

An Explication of Moses's Way of Writing; where it is shew'd, 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
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 hath 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 Prophet 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 Prophets 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 preserved in it the memory of those ancient events which were then generally known.

Now what side soever 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 vivâ voce. (And the Jews have wisely ob-
Rejeextions
which
265
for
he
Ch.
ferved,
restof
and
vision.
He

used
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
casion
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
prophecies
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
confusion
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
1656
years
is
all
contained
in
eight
chapters;
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
Sem,
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
Abraham,
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
illustrious
action.

Secondly,
That
in
Moses's
time
there
were
none
who
knew
any
particulars
of
the
history
of
the
flood,
&c.
of
the
tower
of
Babel,
of
the
division
of
tongues;
the
we
see
plainly,
both
by
the
nature
of
the
facts
themselves,
in
which
all
nations
were
concern'd,
and
by
Moses
his
description,
that
the
generality
of
mankind
were
sufficiently
instructed
in
them
already.

Thirdly,
It
must
be
supposed
that
Moses
hath
set
down
the
manner
how
how that tradition was infallibly preferred so carefully to no purpose, tho' 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, altho' all these nations valued themselves upon their being descendent 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, tho' 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.

Hat 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 hath fixed it, is what Diodorus Siculus relates, that in the time of Alexander the Great, there were some Egyptians that reckon'd up three and twenty thousand years from the reign of the sun to Alexander's time, and that those who reckon'd least, yet reckon'd 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 caused that great variety amongst their historians: whereas amongst the Egyptians none wrote but by publick 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 publick authority in all their succeeding generations, seeing there were, as Diodorus observes, such a strange and vast divisions amongst themselves? If there were but two or three ages difference more or less, no body 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 less than thirteen thousand years in their accounts of the duration of the same interval of time, had yet certain histories upon which these things were grounded.

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 Olymipriad, leaving all which went before to the fabulous part; so we must of necessity make the same distinction in the matter of the antiquities of Egypt.

But I intend to do something more, and to consider 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 opposed 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 altho' the Egyptians, about their latter times, have maintain'd that the elements were eternal, yet they have sufficiently acknowledged that the world had a beginning, seeing they make no mention of any thing before their thirty Dynasties, which in all, did at the most amount to no more then 36525 years.

Neither do I think necessary to mention here that they have sufficiently acknowledged the beginning of mankind, seeing they held that men were first born in Egypt; altho' they endeavoured to make good their pretensions by that fottifh ascertion of the eafe production of frogs out of the mud of their fen's, as the fame Diodorus tells us.

But there are three things which I must here take notice of, because they do moft certainly decide the question.

The first is, That by that long reign which they ascribe to their gods and hero's, 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 subsisted so long; but to the return of the fun, 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 first began their course: In a word, it is only the great astronomical year, about which, as Arisfotle tells us, the ancients have had so many different opinions, and the Egyptians have so little
little agreed, as the history of their antiquities, related by Diordorus, plainly shews. One thing evidently proves what I here allledge, which is, that they have reckon’d up but fifteen Dynafties to Jupiter the laft of the heroes, that is to say, but fifteen persons to Jupiter, who is Ham the third fon of Noah.

This comes very near Mofes’s calculation, who reckoneth Noah as the tenth man from Adam: for it is very likely, that those ignorant people, after a long proceed of time, have joyned Cain and Abel with Sem and Japhet, and Mizraim the fon of Ham, which makes up the sixteen Dynafties, except we chufe to say that the Egyptians thought fit to joyn the seven generations of Cain to thofe before the flood, which comes very near to the fame account. All this, according to the phantaffick notions of thofe ancient people, who defified the firft men, and gave them afterwards the names of fome fars, to imprefs upon their pofterity a greater veneration for them; and in particular, according to the ground-lefs imagination of the Egyptians, who were resolved to maintain that the firft men were formed in their own country. And in short, we find that thofe Dynafties for the moft part, if we except thofe of Vulcan, and of the fun, have been but of a very fhort continuance, and even shorter than that which Mofes ascribes to the lives of the ancient Patriarchs, which we have already fet down.

The second thing that is obfervable in the confutation of this falt antiquity, if one would take what the Egyptians have related of their Dynafties before Menes, and Jupiter the laft of their heroes in a historical fenfe, is, that there are still fufficient marks of the newnes of the world, as Mofes hath defcribed it, in the remaining fragments of the true Egyptian history.

Firstly, We fee 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 reafon, but because Egypt had fallen to the share of Ham, Noah’s third fon, who fettled there, and whose pofterity did afterwards people Africa, and gave it their feveral names, as Mofes particularly obferves.

Secondly, One fee’s that Egypt hath more particularly born the name of Mizraim, which it bares till, and which was given to it, in refpect of one of its parts, becaufe of Mizraim the fon of Ham. And it would be ridiculous for one to imagine that thofe characters given by Mofes, had been allowed of in the world, except he had had good grounds to describe their original in the fame manner as he hath already done.

Thirdly, One fee’s that all the Dynafties of Egypt, that is to say, all the feveral branches of the kings who have reign’d over the feveral parts of Egypt, did all acknowledge Menes for their common founder.

This Menes being the fame with that Mizraim of Mofes, as I fhall fhew hereafter; it is visible that the Egyptians, who in all likelyhood have ascribed to Menes what they might more juftly have ascribed to Jupiter Hammon, because they would diftinguith their kings from hero’s, have exactly followed the idea’s of Mofes, in repreffenting one as the com-
mon father of all the several branches of kings who divided Egypt amongst themselves.

Fourthly, One fee's 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, musick, wrestling, phyfick, hieroglyphicks, anatomy, and architecture. All this plainly shews 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 hero's. 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 attribute to their first king, or to one or two of his successors, during a very short interval of time.

Fifthly, One fee's in the history of Egypt the same decay in religion that Mofes 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 Mofes 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 fee's in the sixth place, That as Mofes represents Nimrod one of Ham's posterity, as the founder of an empire in Affyrion, where he formed the manners of the inhabitants according to the platform of the Egyptian principles; so the ancients have observed, that the famous Affyrion 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 Mofes doth. But I believe I may be able to shew out of their common opinion's, 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 Sefosiris, 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 Sefonchothis, unless he is the same with Shiphak 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 of 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 yet 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 Siculus (b), who faith, that the Egyptians propofed 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 learnt astronomy by tradition from their anceftors, 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 authorize'd 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 durft not oppose the common and general opinion of the worlds being new, tho' 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 anceftors following the study of astrology for 472000 year successively: the impossibility of the thing in it self is apparent by the certainty of the flood, which was acknowledged by all tho' nations, of whom we have any antiquities, tho' never so little consider-able in Pagan authors.

But I shall make two observations, whereof one shews the folly of the Chaldean hypothesis, and the other doth invincible elftablish 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 moft ancient authors are of opinion, that the Chaldeans are descend'd from the Egyptians, who lookt upon them as a colony of their own. Diodorus Siculus faith, that the Egyptians maintaine'd, that they had sent out feveral colonies into feveral parts of the world; that Belus the fon of Neptune and Lybia had conducted one into Babylon, and that having fixed it near Euphrates, he eftablish'd some prifets among them

(g) 1. Kings xiv. 26.
(b) Diodor. l. 2. feft. 30, 31.
them according to the **Egyptian** cultom, who were free from all publick 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. **Hesiod** and **Diodorus (i)**.

Now one needs 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 lookt upon as the first inventors of that science, to the inventing and perfecting of which, all men know that the **Egyptian** climate, where the skie 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 origine of it is uncontroulable, because the **Chaldeans** are descended from **Cush**, **Ham's** eldest son, as **Moses** tells, **Gen. X**. Therefore tho' we should grant, that the **Chaldeans** were the first inventors of astrology, yet this would be always certain, that it was found out only since **Ham's** time, whom the **Egyptians** did look upon as the laft 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 (i)**, 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 (k)**, 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.

---

(k) **Simplic. in l. 2. de coelo.**  
(l) **Gen. xi.**

---

CHAP. XX.
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 reign'd about four hundred years before the flood. Some learned men have already made use of that argument, to discredit the Mofaick 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 publick 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 Mofaick chronology, with the Chinese; but in making use of the Septuagint's account; and wherein they agree with all the Asiatick 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 fake, but are ready to examine this questtion, with that equity which is requisite in the examination of all questions of that nature.

I confess ingenioufly, 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 astronomicall observations, older than any that have been made by the most ancient astronomers in other nations.

Fourthly, it was written by a publick 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 hieroglyphicks, 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, no body 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 tho’ 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 upream governour of heaven and earth.

Thirdly, he affay 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 vertue.

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 installment 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 a long 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 Puncvus, 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.
Secondly, what they tell us of the world being civiliz'd under the second of those kings, call'd Thienhoang, 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 tho' 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 Ginhohang there was a kind of golden age, the earth being then fruitful to admiration, and that under his successors men being extremely simple, and altogether ignorant of the several arts necessary to human life, as of characters and letters, one Suju, to supply the want of them, contrived a way of keeping up the memory of things, by tying several forts of knots upon a cord.

All which sufficiently evinces, that the belief of the worlds 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 Martinus's account, do suspect all the historical records of their empire, before king Fobius, looking upon them as false and ridiculous: and indeed the people of that country before Fobius, living like brute beasts, without any settled government, laws, or arts: this alone is enough to confute those among the Chinese, who maintain now adays, 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 three score 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 among them for 472000 years before Alexander's entering into Asia.

After all, it is certain that their calculation of 3000 years, from Fobius 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 Fobius, whom the Chinese suppose to have begun his reign 2952 years before Jesus Christ? First, he is call'd 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 of Lantien, 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, do's demonstrate that the first inhabitants of China came thither 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, altho' there be perhaps no incongruity in their ascribing to him the study of astronomy, and the invention of several institutions nec-

cessary
ceffary 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 story 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 hieroglyphicks, 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 cords, shews evidently the fallacy of the story; for there is nothing more improbable, than to suppose that he should arrive to such perfection of improvement in musick 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 physick was under Fabius's successor, it do's 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 usurper. 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, arithmetick, 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 dy'd, but that he was translated alive into that place which the Chinese do assign for eternal happiness.

"Tis 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, among 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 pusillanimity 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

recorded in that history, having for the greatest part of them, a great conformity with the transactions related in Moses 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 reflection will appear the more probable and natural, if we consider what they relate, that under the fourth successor of Fobius, 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.

Chuenious 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 of 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 Martinus 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. 'Tis 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 Censorinus * and Aristotle † have observed it. 'Tis a judicious remark which Oreganus || 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 Stoffer, as Cardan tells us, having observed such a conjunction of all the planets

* Censor. de die nat. c. 18.
planets in Pisces, in the year 1524, foretold that there should come a general flood, whereof 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 Chuenbious 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 astrology, 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, tho' confusedly, to the Chinese; we have already intimated one of those probable means of conveyance of this tradition, by their commerce which 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 caft.

To this we may add another argument, yet more certain and sure; which is the continual commerce, that hath always been betwixt the Indies and China, and the communication which the inhabitants of the neighboring countries of the red sea, have always had with all the eastern nations of 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 easily 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 be made of those forementioned 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
supposed.
2. That the fables intermixt in their histories do sufficiently evidence
the ease 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 perdue 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 affection 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 affection, and such as hath exposed the
Chaldeans and Egyptians to the just contempt and derision of all other
nations.
5. That there is amongft them a diversity of opinions contrary to
one another, about their antiquity; just as there were some amongft
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 overstockd, as that it will not be able to yield
provisions enough for all its inhabitants, as a learned English man hath
of late 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 publick allowance for every king’s decease, might indeed
be so about the latter times, as it was practic’d in Egypt; but that it is
as absolutely false, that the Chinese had ever in former times, such pub-
lick 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 anfwer the laft objection of Atheifts against the authority of the
book of Genesis.

C H A P. XXI.

Wherein the laft Objection of Atheifts, is answered.

I intend to clear all the difficulties which may arise about this
important matter, in the minds of those that shall perufe these
observations; I think my self obliged to prevent and resolve, the
only
only plausible objection, I know remaining, after all what I have said up-
on 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 suppo-
sititious, 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 any thing he had written in his books. This I think, is all, that the most contentious Atheists can think of, to under-
mine the authority of Moses’s history.

But this objection is easily answer’d, for it confutes itself. For,

First, it supposes the truth of these great miracles, by which God establish’d Moses the head and captain of the people of Israel; which mir-
acles 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 monu-
ments 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 ac-
count of several passages, in which he could not impose upon other na-
tions, 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 Is-
hmaelites, and Edomites; for it is ridiculous to conceive, that this law-
giver should ever hope to perfwade other nations to believe any false
stories about matters so well, and so generally known, as those were
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 ever 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 Abra-
ham, 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, whither they will or not, the
truth of the accounts he gives, concerning the original of the preten-
sions 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 publickly known, and those which he relates of his own head, and private knowledge; there being, as I have already shew’d, 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 contest 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 meer violence and tyranny.

Nor do I think it necessary to observe here, that the people of Israel were neither so patient, nor so easily perswaded 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 it self, viz. that Moses had no succeflor any ways concern’d, to countenance and defend these pretended fictions and fables of his history, Joshua his immediate succeflor 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 Joshua’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 contest 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 Joshua, 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
believe 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 prescribed them to use in those sad misfortunes
which he foretold should befall them, and out of which he promises, at
the same time, that God would miraculously deliver them; which in-
deed 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 pre-
vent 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.

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 ac-
count, 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 assert, that Moses that famous Hebrew, who was design'd 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, ac-
cording to his way of writing, record those important transactions, he re-
lates otherwise than they really came to pass.

Thirdly, I maintain, that tho' 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 authentick tradition, as cannot be reasonably doubted of, be-
cause it was then the univerfal tradition, not only of the Moabites, of the
Ammonites, of the Ishmaelites, and of the Edomites, who were all of
Sem'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 con-
tradicted, till true reason and sense, if I may say so, was lost and ba-
nih'd
 Riflexions
and
as Ch.

nished from amongst mankind, till the Egyptians, for example, they who used before, to look upon the Greeks as meer children and ideots, were fallen into so great a stupidity and deprivation of sense, as to believe and maintain, that men were first born in Egypt, because forlooth, frogs did naturally, as they thought, breed out of their muddy fenins and marshes.

Fifthly, I maintain, that for many ages after Moses, no body did ever publickly declare for the eternity of the world, nor yet for its fortuitous production. These opinions are meer 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 enjoyns the observatian 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 of 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.
WHEN I began at first these Reflexions upon the Book of Genesis, I design'd 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 design'd 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 now, 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 my self 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 idea's, he gave of his coming to the ancient Patriarchs.

First, then I design to trace up the method that God was pleased to use,
PREFACE.

use, to make the Messiah known without mistake, when ever 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 characterize 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 consider’d 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 perswaded 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 intrinick 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 promis’d of God to the Patriarchs of his own nation, and as being consequently 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
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 arg-

uments.

I might observe, That Moses hath always been acknowledged,
by the very heathens themselves, not only to be the most ancient histo-
rian, 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 plain-
ly
ly 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 wrong'd of their birthright, thought they might justly rebel against Moses in order to recover it.

But I haste 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 publick 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 straightly 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 supremely felicity of a man to confint in the reading the law of God day and night (n): we see, I say, that holy man give in his death-bed the same charge to Solomon, I Kings.

Thirdly, moreover it is certain that there were many laws and sanctions 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 publick 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 imposture in this matter.

We see that it was, during the longevity of human life, a constant and universal custom amongst all the Patriarch's 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 look'd upon as sincere, so they seldom fail of being favourably conftrued 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, follow'd the custom

(n) Psal. 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 venerated men, was a kind of a publick sermon, because it was delivered before those numerous families, which met then altogether 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 publick, 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 does attest it in Acts XV. And tho' 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 file of those books, as we have them now, that they were formerly publickly 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 appendices or postscripts inserted by Eshab, 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 publick 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 curfes 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 had made formerly by 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 grand-mother, that appears plainly, by their observation of those laws, which enjoyn'd the next kinsman 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 IV. and V. Chapters of his prophecies, in the year 3580.

The second observation, which is very material, is, that the author of those books, hath inferred 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, altho' they continue their mortal enemies, and have been expos'd to all the changes, and revolutions, that can befal 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 famo

(o) Judg. i. 20. Judg. vii. 3. Judg. xiii. 3.
same form that we have them now: it appears out of the history of 
Joshiab related, 2 Kings XXIII. 21. That after the book of the law, of 
Moses own writing, was found in the temple, the king commanded all the 
people to keep the passover unto the Lord, as it is written in the book of 
this covenant: now we have the institution of the passover, Exod. XII, 
which shews, that Josiah by the book of this covenant, meant the books 
of Moses, such as we have them now adays, and such as they were when 
Moses deposited them into the sanctuary.

It is important to consider well, all that is related in the foremention-
ed chapter of II Kings, for we may gather out of it, that it was accord-
ing to the directions of this law, that they began to reform all the super-
fitions 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 opposi-
tion to the ill government of his predecessours, and to the publick monu-
ments of their superftitions, which he abolished in obedience to God's 
laws, contained in the books of Moses.

However, it is certain, that it was no easie 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 na-
tions.

Secondly, the memory of them continued so lively and universal, that 
almost 1500 years after Moses, the names of those magicians spokken of, 
Exod. VII. II. were, as yet known, not only amongst the Jews, as we 
see it by an express passage of S. Paul, who speaks of them, and men-
tioneth 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 Gene-
sis, 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 confideration of the things contained in 
these books, which will much conduce to the confirmation of the same 
truth.

CHAP. II.

That both the Character of Moses's Person, and the Nature of the Things 
he relates has always made Men read his Books with Attention.

HE subject of some books is such, as that alone would recom-
mend them to the attention of any reader, tho' their author had 
no reputation in the world; but when besides the importance of 

(p) Hist. Nat. I. 30. c. I.
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 histiorians; no, they content themselves with their absolute power, to make laws, without giving any reason for the sanction of them: therefore we see, that there is commonly nothing more dry and fable 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 transactions 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 heathen customs, which God designed to abolish from among that people newly come out of Egypt, where during their captivity they had complied, and accustomed themselves in a great measure to the rites, and religion of their masters the Egyptians. But yet how abstruse ever 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 promise of whom 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 subsist 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 common-wealth.

If any Jew had a mind to be informed about the tradition of his ancestors, 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 common-wealth 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 part-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 amongst those of his nation; he might easily satishe
his curiosity, by reading Moses's history.

If any Jew desired to know what sort of exhortations they were, which
the Founder, both of their religion and common-wealth 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 possefs'd 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 befel 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 common-wealth 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 juftly observe three things in his
person, which as they raise him above all common authors, so they can-
not 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 in-
firmities, and whatever is dihonourable to their families: Moses on the
contrary seems to have affected to record all the things that could be
made the memory of his ancestors, and derogate to his own reputation.
He blemishes Jacob's memory by his relating, how he preferr'd Joseph
the son of his beloved wife, to Reuben his eldest, whom he unjustly de-
prived of his birthright, in favour of the other, which injustice is ex-
pressly 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 mar-
riage betwixt an aunt and her nephew, seeing he relates that he himself
was born of Jacob's both aunt and wife to his father Amram; he describes
his own increduity with all the ingenuity imaginable, when he repre-
sents 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 fincerity
and impartiality we know confirms and increases mightily the authority
of any author.

The second thing is, that Moses not regarding the advantage and ho-
nour of his own family, left the government of Israel to Jofhua, one of
the tribe of Ephraim, and so reduced his own children, and their poste-

T 2

rity
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 supream 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 common-wealth of Israel, which was before unfetted, and as it were ambulatory in the desart. 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 possest the Jews of it; now, to be sure if that people had not been then fully perfwaded 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 maintain'd the authority of those laws, if they had not lookt upon Moses, not only as an extraordinary man, but also as one particularly commissonated 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 surprizing 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 deposite them in the sepulchres of their ancestors (for both Joseph and his brethren were interred in Judea) 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 confefs, no solidity in that conjecture of his, but yet it may give us occasion to make a reflexion hereupon, I think, more natural and easie, 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 corps, 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.

C H A P. III.

That the Truth of the Miracles related by Moses, cannot reasonably be doubted of.

HOEVER will examine with attention, the four last books of Mofes, 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 Mofes, 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 Mofes gave to that people, from God.

And lastly, Moses his 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 authentick 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 conversion of that prince who had adopted him, and made her self a profelyte as the Jews endeavour to prove, from 1 Chron. IV. 18. (9). 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 either Mofes 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 Mofes’s birth, to throw their children

(q) Talm. in h. l. ex Vajikra Rab.
dren into the river Nilus, notoriously known of all men? Were not the publick buildings, and strong cities, viz. Python, and Rameses, so call'd from the name of king Rameses Mianum, standing in the sight of all men? And was it not publickly known by all the world, that the poor Israelites were the slaves and drudges who were made use of to erect those buildings.

Neither could the manner of his education be unknown to him, nor yet to any of the Hebrews, for we do not join here to Mofes's narration, what Josephus relates of his person, of his seats in Meroe, and of his marrying an Ethiopian princess, &c.

As Mofes's miracles were done in the presence of the Egyptians and Jews, so they testifie, 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 Mofes. 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.

Tragus Pompeius, Justinus, and Tacitus, do also speak of it, only Tacitus does groundlessly, I suppose, of his own head, relate, that the Jews were expell'd out of Egypt, because of their leprosie: I say groundlessly, for it is known, that on the contrary, leprosie 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 Mofes which calls the leprosie 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 leprosie was lookt upon by the Jews, as a distemper most commonly sent immediately from God. Nay, Tragus Pompeius (s) himself, observes that the magicians caused Mofes with the people of Israel to be expell'd, because they themselves were struck with a kind of scab and itch; and that they were afraid, lest 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 oppoфе Mofes, 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 leprosie, 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 espous’d 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, as so many witnesses of the truth of those miracles, which formerly perfwaded their fathers to joyn 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 reflections we may add, that the commemoration of the Israelites going out of Egypt, with all the miracles wrought by Moses, was renew’d 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 other 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 preferred 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 forth 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 amongst the Jews: it is clear, and evident, that there is in all those laws, a deep impression of those several great miracles which compell’d 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 all 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 one may see in Epiphanius; 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.
CHAP. 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 stupendious 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 \(x\); the Israelites took the spoils of the Egyptians drown’d in the red sea, as they were pursuing them: they made a song upon the occasion of that wonderful deliverance; they were fed with manna, a kind of heavenly, and miraculous food; they drunk 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 publick monuments of those miracles; as for example, the rod of Aaron which blossom’d 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 transaction 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 shew’d that they had a mind to perfose the Israelites that they

\(x\) L. 9. præp. Ev. cap. ult.
they came from a far country. The treaty which they extorted from Joshua 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 destroy'd; and their being destined by Joshua'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 Joshua'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 chuse but be of an extraordinary use, to make that people prefer, and cherish up the memory of those glorious actions, which every Gibeonite 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 sundial of Ahaz; 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 (y), 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 publickly known, that God by his Prophets

(y) Levit. xxv.
Prophets did often threaten 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 three 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 countrey 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 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 countrey is expos'd 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 suppose 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 look'd upon it as a necessary consequence, and accomplishment of those 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 though innocent of itself in a prince, did yet directly contradict that truth which the Israelites were bound to set upon God's protection. For when David cau'd 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.
author but God alone: neither will I urge in this place, the extraordinary 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 ceremonial laws, which besides their useful opposition, to the then Pagan customs, do most of them, either mind men of their duty, or represent and typifie the things that were to come to pass under the Gospel.

In short, I will not aggravate any farther the consideration of the admirable wisdom that appears every where in the whole body of the political 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 compare 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 chuse 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 light 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 earnestly intreated Moses, that God would no more speak to them himself, it is evident, that they are no less authentic than the moral law, therefore we see that they were accordingly received by that people, notwithstanding 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 convinced, that Moses did really familiarly converse with God for forty days and forty nights upon mount Sinai, they would foolishly without any caufe, of a suddein, 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 posterity, and of the priesthood in favour of Levi, and of the kingdom, in favour of Juda.

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
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 con-
vinced 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 Moses's law, Numb. XXV., and to assume to 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 sud-
dain 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
confineinent, and meekly resign'd his crown to his son, if that punish-
ment inflicted upon him, had not fully convinced him of the divinity
of that law, which he had transgressed and violated by his temerity and pre-
sumption.

The third reflection is, that the greatest part of those laws being in-
tended by God to inspire his people with an irreconcilable averseion
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, Amorites, and other nations, of whose countries they were going
to possess themselves.

Thus we find in the XVIII. of Leviticus, laws against all incestuous
marriages, which without doubt, were ordinary amongst the Canaanites,
and Egyptians, who therein follow'd the examples of the ancient Patriarchs,
who married within those forbidden degrees; there we find also the sa-
crifices 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
suddain 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 had a strong, and extraordinary motive for so doing.

There is another thing beside, that challenges our consideration, viz.
the exact description which God gave to Moses 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 ap-
partenances, utensils, and ornaments, was finifhed.

For as this tabernacle was then the centre of the whole Jewish religion,
(as the temple was afterwards by suceeding to it) so it was a solemn
proof of the divinity of Moses's laws, and of the worship that was per-
formed there.

Is it conceivable, that a whole nation should contribute to the build-
ing 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 con-
struction, and not discern whether there was any truth and reality in all
that was told them concerning the religion which their governour fixed
in that place wherein he pretended many revelations were made.
C H A P. VI.

Some other Proofs that confirm Moses's Description of the Manner how the Law was given and promulgated.

But if it is so ease to establish the divinity of the Law of Moses, by shewing the truth of the matter of fact, according to the manner of God's promulgation, as Moses relates it, we may further collect the truth of it, by joyning 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 ground to suspect, that his successors, consulting their own interest and honour, would have been very glad to perfwade 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 supream 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 preferr'd 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; tho' 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 arifocratical, 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 successors 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, how came it to pass, that in all the divisions and factions that nation
nation fell into, there was never any Jew, 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 XXXI. of Deuteronomy.

It appears, that those laws were publick, 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 throughout 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.

Laftly, 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 surprizing miracles that God had done for 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 inserted 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.
CHAPTER VII.

That there is no just Exception can be made against Moses's History, in what relates to the Oracles, which he hath recorded in his Books.

Here 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 foretell 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 prophesie; and it was that accomplishment which established the divinity of his commission.

So is the other prophesie 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 countrey that every tribe was to inhabit.

Those that were born in the desert, were witnesses both of the prediction, and the execution of it, altho' it was by the calling 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 prophesies that foretell 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 prophesies which relate to the future change of their common wealth into a kingly government.

Thirdly and lastly, we see that Moses foretells all the accidents, changes, and revolutions that were tobefal 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 imposition; because he wrote it amongst a whole nation, which could not possibly be imposed upon in that cafe, seeing he supposes, and takes it for granted, all along in his relation, that those predictions were beforehand publickly 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 Mozes's death, as in the books of Judges, and several others, which relate the accomplishment of them, as of prophecies written many years, and even some ages before, by Mozes.

Besides, to this we may add, that the account which we find in those books, concerning the accomplishment of Mozes's prophecies, is interwoven 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 Mozes's books in such esteem, because of these several illustrious prophecies that are contained in them, that they have always lookt upon him as the most excellent of all their prophets. They assert at 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 Mozes 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 prepossess'd of that high opinion both of Mozes, 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 ministr y 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 interwoven 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 Mozes gives of all the great transactions which gave the occasion to so many several revelations and prophecies recorded in his books.

I am perswaded, that it is impossible for any man to make those reflexions upon the opinion which the Jews entertained of Mozes'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.
CHAP. VIII.

That the Testimony of the Jews, is a constant Proof of the Truth of the Oracles related by Moses.

UT least 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 fulfill'd, 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 prophecies of it, with the description Josephus their own historian, hath made of the fame in his history of the siege and ruine of that city, and of the dissipation 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 easie 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 in him.

Now that being supposed, the truth of all Moses's prophecies cannot be question'd. 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
the prophesies which foretold the calling of the Gentiles, not Moses, seeing all his laws do tend (as I shall shew hereafter more at large) to establish that restriction, I was just now speaking of, which was to continue to the Messiah's coming. Not the Jews, seeing that none of them can still endure to hear of the removal of that restriction, 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 abominate them. But besides, we cannot desire a better, nor a more authentick accomplishment of those oracles, which are so opposite to the Jewish principles and prejudices, than that which we our selves are witnesses of.

The same reflexion belongs to the other prophesies of Moses concerning the total dissipation of the Jewish state; as also to the dreadful accomplishment of them in our days. The most resolved obstinacy can suggest but one objection in this matter, which is, that either the Christians, or the Jews have falsified Moses's writings, and inserted those prophesies, which we now find there, concerning the vocation of the Gentiles, 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 stile as evidences their antiquity, and as would be inimitable now.

Secondly, that these books have been all translated into Greek, almost 300 years before Jesus Christ, and about 350 years before the destruction 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 prophesies 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 prophesies which we find in Exodus and the following books.

C H A P. 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 shew'd 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 proved, that the various idea’s 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 no body 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 common-wealth, 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 reflections 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 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 passions Joseph and his brethren were moved and affected with, when he made himself known to them. Besides all that we may observe two very surprizing 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 burying place for his wife: he sets down all the particulars of the incest of Judah with Thamar; and he relates the manner how Leah with her sons mandrakes obtained leave of Rachel to enjoy her husband for one night, with a surprizing exactness.

The other is, that Moses records a whole series of horrible crimes, which seem to be as so many blemishes and odious reflections 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 chuse 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 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 same when he records the burial of Rachel at Ephrathah.

As for the crimes Moses relates, I have before proved, that he design'd 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 perswaded 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 murder a much greater ambition, and affection of the throne; and supposes in him a distinct and clear knowledge of his rights and pretensions to the empire.

CHAP. X.
CHAP. X.

That the same Perseverance appears throughout the whole Conduct of Moses, until his Death.

But it is not only by those and the like reflections 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 promise 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 consequentially 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 sometime 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 (x), 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 sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense 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 perseverance 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 fared by them in all their calamities and pressures. 'Tis 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 as he had received

(x) Heb. xi.
Reflexions upon the

Ch. XI.

eived his commission from God, to deliver them out of their misery and bondage: now he shew'd 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 perfuasion of its future accomplishment.

Moses informs us indeed, how he refused at first the commissiun God gave him to deliver his people from the Egyptian slavery, and how he excused himself upon his own incapacity, and being un\n
ferting an undertaking: but yet he makes at the same time so visible an allusion to the prophesy 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 ever 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, altho' he would reassume 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 entertain\ned 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 XVIII. 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 ye 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.

CHAP. XI.

That Balaam's Prophesie, which Moses relates, is a further Argument of the same Persuasion in him.

S we ought to shew that Moses had a very clear and distinct knowledge of this promise; so I think it will not be amiss for us to make here a particular reflexion upon what he relates Numb. 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
Israelites cursed from God, and by one of his prophets only, because he design'd 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 intended to have had pronounced against the Israelites, 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 suppos'd, one needs only consider the terms of the prophecies spoken by Balaam in favour of Jacob, to see that Moses hath related it, only to shew,

First, that altho' those neighbouring nations to Judea had degenerated, and corrupted themselves much by their communication with Ham's posterity, yet they preserved a strong, though confused notion of their ancestors pretensions, and acted according to that prejudice of theirs in all matters and occurrences of great moment.

Secondly, that it might be an authentic determination of all the several contests 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 Israelites, descend from Israel: thirdly, in favour of Jacob, against the pretension of the Edomites, descend from Esau.

For when he foretells, that there shall come a star out of Jacob; he decides the three forementioned controversies. Jacob having been preferred to Esau, Isaac to Israel, and Abraham to Lot. Now Jacob could not be preferred to the Moabites, but he must be so too to the Ammonites, Israelites, 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 notwithstanding it was pronounced at the entry into Canaan, the posseffing and inhabiting of which country was one of the chiefest characters of the Israelites 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 Messiah, the restriction made and observed by God before that time, was then to cease, and that there should be no more distinction between the Jews and Gentiles, who were all the children of Noah, and all equally descend from Seth by him, because then all nations were to be call'd 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 XV. of Isaiah, 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 call’d 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 prophesy by these words, I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him, but not now, 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 Abraham; because the author of it decides these important questions and differences, without any visible partiality, and without being byassed 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 prophesy, which was as publick and well known amongst the Moabites, as any prophesy 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 panicke terror of the Moabites, at the approach of the Israelites; nay, and notwithstanding the express threats, and ominous prophesies 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 prophesy, 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 prophesy had inveigled with the right and priviledge of accomplishing that promise.

The second is, that accordingly about two hundred years after Moses, we see that Ruth the Moabitess 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) ABUSI AID. M.S. IN THE FRENCH KING’S LIBRARY, NOTE 4. UPON GEN. IV. 24.
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 books of Moses, wherein were inferred, both the prophesy 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 pessamam, יִתְרַלְתָּן contained an upbraiding reflexion as well upon the meanness of his birth, as being descended from a Moabite, as upon his adultery, &c. This is related by St. Jerome, or some other ancient author, who writ that discource, de traditionibus Hebraorum, 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 II. Chap. of the first book of Kings, v. 19. that when we read there, that Solomon caused a seat to be set 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 Sarah the daughter of Abher, 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.

No body can condemn this reflexion upon Ruth, if he will but consider, that her faith having been so rewarded, that the Messia came out of her posterity; she is particularly made mention of in his genealogy; and that on the other hand her history hath been preferred amongst the other books of the Old Testament, as a kind of prescription, not only against the Moabites pretensions, long before condemned by Balaam's prophesy, 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 establish 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 amiss, to remind the reader, and to lay before him once more, the several characters of God's conduct in that

(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 reinstate 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 preserved all along the distinct knowledge of it amongst men.

Now in reading my reflections 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 set it in the tribe of Judah; as we read it 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 Ismael; 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 Abrahaim had two children, so Lot had two; as Jacob had twelve sons, so Esau also had 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.

'Twas this design, no doubt, which obliged God to make Seth the depository of his service and worship, that he might thereby have Noah from the flood, and so procure to Shem his father's blessing.

'Twas 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 Machpela, 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 practiced 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 prophesies, which do particularly characterize 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 Moses'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.

CHAP. XIII.

That the Manner of God's promulgating his Law amongst the Israelites, did much conduce to the distinguishing them from all other Nations.

Do not barely design here at first to observe the several resemblances, which are observable betwixt the things related by Moses in Genesis, and those which one finds in the following books.

Neither will I meekly establish here that, as Jacob's going down into Egypt with all his children, and the protection that they all received there, from Joseph, did serve to fulfil the prediction which God made of that event by Joseph's dreams; so we may say in general, that the sending of Moses, his miracles, and his whole ministry to the time of his death, when he entrusted 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 tenour of the prophetic, 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, Moses 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 posseffing 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 Moses 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 common-wealth 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 amongst the Jews; and this is my chiefest aim in the reflexions 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 shew'd, 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 expresses 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 sin of the golden calf, that God laid upon them that heavy and troublesome yoke, on purpose to imply all their time, and to keep them from falling into idolatry again. But however Tanchuma (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 plow, 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 of out 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) Talkut. 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 dust: 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 are preferibed: 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 Mezonzoth 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 practises, and an aversion against all commerce with idolaters: and this may be further discerned, if we examine those laws in particular.

One fee's 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 so 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 its 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 Zabij 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 seething a kid in his mothers milk, and of offering honey in their sacrifices, in the prohibition of forcing their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, 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 Israelites, 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. Mos. lib. 2.
CHAP. XIV.

That God seems to have designed to keep up a Spirit of Jealousie in the very Bosom of the Jewish Nation.

E 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 jealousie amongst the several pretenders to the promise. I come now to shew that God hath follow'd the same design in his law, and that he hath made use of that jealousie 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 reflections 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 jealousie, 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 explication of God's conduct upon this occasion.

Two things, as I have already observed, have conducted to keep up that jealousie, 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 Korah, 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 Tamar; just as Jacob was preferred before his brother Esau, tho' 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, that, 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, tho' the youngest of all Jacob's children.

Thus one see's that Solomon the youngest of David's children, was preferred before his brothers, and that the same Solomon built the temple of God in the tribe of Benjamin, tho' he himself was of the tribe of Judah.

We shall afterwards see, that the Messiah was descended from David by Nathan, son to one of David's younger children, and by Refhob Zorobabel'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 Edomites 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 Tamar to have the Messiah descend from her; but also would have her incease 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 prophecies, 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 inferred in Deuteronomy, which excluseth 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 sired 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 Josuah, the conduct of the Israelites, after he had formerly railed 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 prophesie related, Gen. XXVIII. 17. build a temple at Bethel, as being jealous against Solomon, who built one upon mount Moriah, according to the prophesie we find in Genesis XXII. 14.

The second is, that this separation, gave a fair pretence to raise the reputation of the prophesies which Jacob uttered upon his death-bed in favour of Joseph; which prophesies 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 XLIX. 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 prophesie. 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 prophesies 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 saith, *Circumcidere genitalia instituere Judei ut diversitate noscantur* (e). But besides, by it God's covenant was, as it were, printed, and ingraven 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 suspected, 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 reflections 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 incumbent to generation. As the Messiah was to come into the world by generation, according to the words of the first prophesie 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 shew'd 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 common-wealth, and from one of their posterity.

The second reflexion is, that it was the same prospect of 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 surprizing thing, that so much rigour and severity should be used in exacting the observation of a ceremony, which was merely indifferent in its nature, and had no moral goodnes in it self? But hereby it appears the more evidently, that God design'd, that the use of circumcision, by which he distinguished Abraham's posterity from all

(e) Hist. l. 7.
all other nations of the world, should be a kind of immoveable 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 comprized.

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 easie thing to satisfy a man’s mind in all these appearing difficulties. I confess, that one is surpriz’d 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 reflexion.

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 injoyed 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 jealously 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 third objection, there is no difficulty in it: 'tis true, some Jewish interpreters imagine, that Joseph took occasion to prescribe the use of circumcision to the Egyptians, after Pharao 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. 'Tis 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 observe, 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 perigna 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 Ahabraham 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 practise 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 ob-
liged to keep.

The feast of the passover, was the memorial of the accomplish-ment of
God's promise to Abraham to deliver his pofterity 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 gener-
ation.

The Pentecost was a publick 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 cloaths, of their beard, of their philacteries, 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.

C H A P. 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 Si-
chemites 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 subsist
and continue in a kind of a separation from one another, altho' 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 de-
creed, 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
publickly known.

And therefore one sees that God secured this, not only with all ne-
ceffary care, but even with a caution greater than could have been rea-
sonably desired.

He engages all the tribes of Israel to preserve with a kind of affecta-
tion,
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 affection 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 fill'd 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 publick 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; so that if 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,
Ch. XVII.  

four last Books of Moses.  

327

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 sets 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 suprem 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, reduc'd 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.

CHAP. XVII.

A Solution of some Difficulties in these Genealogies.

N D E E D 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 their 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, tho' 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) Is. xi.

(g) Is. lxxi.
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 Jacob gave in favour of Ephraim, the words of which run 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 authorize’d by a prophetic inspiration, and by a special sign of God’s approbation; and that on the other hand he desired to propose to his people the two calves which he set up in Dan and Bethel, as symbols of the Deity, only to pursue the idea’s of Pharaoh’s dreams, which Joseph interpreted, the representation whereof, did clearly shew both the greatness of Joseph, and the particular care of God’s providence over him (b). It was then natural, 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 tho’ 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 descended from that very tribe, could by establishing his genealogy, put his being of the tribe of Ephraim beyond all content.

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 it self.

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 preferred 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 condemns the study of genealogies, which was still much in use amongst 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 publickly 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 saw, that the converted Jews apply'd 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 relation of all the Doctors and Rabbies amongst them who have preferred the tradition, and who were profelytes 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 Apostles' 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 between Jews

(i) Maimon. Pref. ad Jad. Chazzaka.
Reflexions upon the

CH. 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.

NE 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 reestablished the posterity of Shem in their just rights, to whom, if we may credit the ancient tradition, related by St. Epiphanius, this country did really belong by virtue of that division amongst the three sons of Noah, th'o' 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 XIV. Chapter, concerning the war which the kings from the east came to make against the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah to any thing else.

'Twas 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 jealousie 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 re-
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 Abraham's posterity had their hearts set upon his sepulchre, as upon the pledge and security of God's promise, that they should be once possess of that land where he was buried.

And as the carrying the body of Jacob into Canaan, sufficiently shew'd 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 sojourn'd in Egypt. The splendor of Joseph was a natural engagement for them to settle themselves there for ever; besides, their vast encrease 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 to renounce hopes which appeared to be so very groundless. 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, that 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 mis 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 preface of the calling of the Gentiles to the faith, by their insertion 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 suffer'd to run away, much less that they should persuade their masters to forsake their own

(1) Talkut, ex Siphre, fol. 311. col. 2.
own countrey, 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 tyes 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 straitly either the mingling with, or the settling themselves amongst the Midianites, tho' Moses had given an example by marrying Sephora; or the Edomites, or the Ishmaelites, or the Moabites, or the Ammonites, tho' 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 prophesies.

And it could be for no other end, that he so straitly 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 extream rigour would infallibly and insensibly have come to pafs.

I know very well that God preserved the Gibeonites, by ratifying that alliance, which gave leave to those people tho' of the polterity of Ham, to continue amongst his own people in the land of Canaan; but tho' 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 pretensions, and of their miraculous conquest of the land of Canaan; for the continuance of that nation in the heart of the countrey, and their submitting to the drudgery of carrying wood, and water for the use of the tabernacle, tho' 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.

CHAP. XIX.

That the Law tied the People of Israel to the Land of Canaan, and by several other Means establishment the Distinction betwixt Tribes and Families amongst them.

O N E 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
feasts together, which hardly gave them leave to travel far into other countrys, and engaged them every time they met, to renew in the publick acts of their religion the memory and the idea's of their hopes: and they conduced 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 injoins 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 publick ministers of their religion, were dispersed amongst 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 call'd 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 fulnes 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 reinated 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 the

(m) Joshua xiv. &c.
the field of Ephratah had been never so often alienated, yet it always re-
turned to the tribe of Judah, and so afterwards into David's family, be-
cause it was at first the lot of his ancestors.

This law of jubilee preferred a distinct knowledge of the several tribes, and families, and it also kept up a distinct idea of their genealogies, which must be preserved 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 fa-
family every estate did belong to, because one fee's that the first profelytes who went out with the Israelites, shared the land of Canaan together with them; for one fee's 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 debarked the Edomites from being admitted to make profession of Judaism before the third generation, which excluded them for ever from any possession in the land of Canaan.

And thirdly, one ought to observe the difference betwixt an Egyptian profylete, and a native Jew: the quality of a profylete, 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 testified (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 presumptive heirs of their parents, but to consider their parents only as usurper's, since all their po-
sessions 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 lookt 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 same 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 prin-
cefs: if the transgression of that law was punish'd in such an exemplary manner,

(n) Maffa Bicouur. c. 1. S. 4.
(p) Leviticus xxv. 23. 1 Kings xxii.
(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. XLVI. 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 tho' 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 consecration of the second temple had seen the first. nor could the distinct 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 XXXII. Chapter of Jeremiah (q), concerning the sale of a field which Jeremiah bought.

And secondly, what we read Nehem. 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, that 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 relict, and of the estate of the deceased, if he intended to redeem it. One finds in the book of Ruth,

(q) 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.

C H A P. 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.

I THEREFORE have shew'd the care which God took to distinguish his people of Israel from all other nations of the world, and I afterwards shew'd 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 prophecies, Behold, a virgin shall conceive, &c. Is. 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 inframe 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,
Firft, 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 of 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 only 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 hindered 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 apt to be easily 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; most 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 anything for diet, or cloaths, provided only that he would take away that reproach of living without having children. 'Twas 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): Altho' 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 indispensible 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

(i) Deut xxii.
(y) Deut. xxii.

Vol. I.
ther'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 punish'd 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 jealousie of husbands, when he gives them leave to bring their wives to a publick tryal, and to punish them with death, when they did not preserve the tokens of their virginity.

It was for that reason that he commanded (z), 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 of 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 letters, which are called in the Talmud, cevalim, which are described by the famous Moses, the son of Maimon, in this manner: Cevalim sunt comites in forma pericelidis, inter quos interpansen catarulnas, illis complicibus or-nabant se virgines, ut non incederent passu magne, ne contigeret ipsis damnum in virginitate fia (a). This description may be thought to be one of the foolish phancies of the modern Jews, if we did not meet with proofs of the practice of that custom in more ancient times. In short, one sees in the third of Isaiah, that chains are reckoned up amongst other ornaments of the daughters of Israel, which God threatened 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 XVI. Chapter, Solent Israeldae digito educere virginitatem, ne incidunt in dubitationem vel suspicionem, juxta illud, fumat pater, & mater puerulæ, &c.

In a word, it seems, that for fear least these tokens of virginity should be thought to be obscure and ambiguous by their husbands, that 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 lafted to the destruction of the second temple, as the Jews themselves tells us in that title of their Talmud (c), which concerns women suspected of adultery.

However,

(z) Deut. xxii. 7. 
(b) Numb. v. Joseph. 1. 3. Antiq. p. 95. 
(c) Sota 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.

This 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 politick law-giver, he might prescribe the observation of this law, lest the common-wealth of the Jews should have been overstocked with weak, and sickly people.

Lastly, one sees that God himself has fastned 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 congregations 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 law-giver.

One 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 ministration 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 distinguished in general, the priviledges of the first-born.

So it appears by the XVIII 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 ministration 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 Moses intimates, by saying, that he was to be a Prophet like unto him.) Therefore Isaiah specifies the character of those miracles in XXXV. Chapter of his prophesie, 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 leprosie, that it might be distinctly known which was incurable.

It is easie to those who will attend to the laws of Moses, to fee that they were subervient to this design of God, in pursuance of those prospects which we have already set down.


CHAP. 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 ascribes to the land of Canaan, and in respect of the whole service of the tabernacle, of its misterious construction in all its parts: and in respect also of the raising of the material temple afterwards, to be as it were the center 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 feafts, besides the sabbath-day, which was 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 see's, that he rejected any first fruits that did not grow in the land of Canaan: one see's, that tho' some sacrifices were common to the Jews and their neighbours, yet he distinguished them by so many circumstancies, 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 representa-
tions of angels, and of his law, and of the manna to be preserved there;
all which besides, that they were memorials of the ancient apparitions, and
favours of God to that people, they 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 blef-
sings 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 purifed 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 en-
tered 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 forbid them to sacrifice any where else, and he gave fre-
quent and illustrious oracles at that place.

One ought also to observe, that after his temple (to which all the
glory of the tabernacle was transmitted) was fixed at Jerusalem, he or-
dered 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 stood always 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 see's afterwards, that
the temple, the Levites, and the people of Jerusalem were placed, ac-
cording 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, accord-
ing 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 com-
manded 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, 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 know-
ledge
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 enjoy'd in the beginning, before they went out of Egypt, so that five or six persons could no longer preferve 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 prescribed 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 ingraven.

He afterwards follow'd 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 Jephthab 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 common-wealth, as the pot of manna, Aaron's rod that blossomed, the plates of the altar that had been made out of the censers of Corah, Dathan, and their confederates.

One see's, 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 publick 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 enjoyned it to be read publickly in the presence of the whole congregation every seven years: one see's, that he commanded, that every family should read this book continually, and that all should entertain their wives and children from their tenderness, 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 see's, 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 publick, or private, could happen, but what were regulated, and determined by those constitutions.

If a beast was born, the owner was to examine whether it was the first-born,
first-born, or no, whither 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 ask-
ed: when she came to lie-in, several very different ceremonies were
practis'd, according as the child was a first-born, or not. The law en-
joyed 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 kill'd without the design of
his murtherer, for the several crimes that might be committed, in
their several pollutions, and sequeftrations, &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 ob-
liged to keep up a correspondence with the priests and Levites, whom
God had for this purpose dispersed amongst all the tribes of Israël, and to
consult the law and the testimony to be instructed in the manner of go-
verning themselves: but particularly, they were to look upon the temple
and the tabernacle, as the center 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 Israëlis 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 controversies, and were to be considered as
glorious and honourable to the whole nation.

C H A P.  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 laws a severe restriction in all that be-
longs to the execution of the promise of the Messiah (which
shews, that God intended to have that nation distinguished from
all others, till the blessed fruit was come;) if we find, that he restrained
that promise to one tribe, one town, one family, one particular indivi-
dual person in that family, that they might not be 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 setled there, the Jews 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 express'd
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 poste-

Y 4
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 Sem, 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 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 particularly appears out of Moses' 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 so 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, deferves 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, altho' he otherwise insulpts 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 Han, 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 preface of the calling of the Gentiles to the communion of the Messiah.

One may also joyn 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 inclosed within Judea, altho' those people were of the Canaanites posterity, upon whom Noah had particularly pronounced, Curfed be Canaan (c).
Four last Books of Moses.

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 about 300 years before our Saviour's birth, not only to prevent all suspicion of fallhood 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 altho' God had at first chosen their whole nation, yet he was pleased to disperse afterwards almost ten parts of thirteen; which plainly shew'd that this choice which he had made, was only an economical choice, and for a particular design.

The second is, that altho' 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 altho' 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 design'd 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.
N my Reflexions upon the Book of Genesis, I have shewed the means God made use of to imprint the idea's of the Creation of the World, and the Promife 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 confider that God at first prefcribed 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 incontestably proved, or more firmly grounded.

In like manner an attentive Reflexion upon the Oracles which I have mention'd, 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 Promife of the Messiah, should be deeply engraven in the minds of the Israelites, tho' we should suppose, that the spirit of Jealousy, which God had raised amongst the several pretenders to the execution of that great Promife, 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 Promife 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
Now this Reflexion 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 proposed, and more clearly explained. And we ought to suppose that in proportion to the delaying of the Promise, and the shortness of mens 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 employ'd to preserve the idea's of the Promise of the Messiah, and to increase them in the minds of the Jews, until the time of the accomplishment it self; 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 idea's 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 chosing 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
more attention, because God, who at that time changed the government of the Jews, did considerably augment the idea’s 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 my self 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 Reflexions 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.

Tho’ the multiplicity of the things which I am to handle, and which I intend to do with the greatest brevitys 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 Reflexions 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 form’d 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 unmoveable; those laws, the obervation of which served 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 Reflexions upon the Books of Moses, I have begun by the firm establishment of the truth of those Books, on which I made my reflexions, 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 those 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 Reflexions 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 therefore because I intend to be very short; I will confine my self 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.
REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

HISTORICAL AND PROPHETICAL BOOKS

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT,

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

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 epocha's 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 epocha's, 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 confirm'd 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 thecaptivities 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 forbade 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 those different captivities, through which they pased for three hundred fifty six years together. But we may find the memory of some of them preserved by those publick hymns which were famous throughout the nation, and by those illustrious monuments of their judicial authority, which were preserved amongst them, and which kept up a remembrance of them amongst the Israelites, and the neighbour 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 Tyrrians, 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 Moabitess, who rely’d upon the hopes of the house of Juda, out of which she had marry’d 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 dy’d without issue. 2. Of their lively remembrance of the deeds of their ancestors, as of Juda’s incest with Thamar, which was look’d 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 Moabitess, which not making much for the honour of a king of Israel, do’s 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 Bathshebah, his son Absalom’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 fee’s throughout, an exact relation to the law of Moses; one fee’s throughout, monuments set up in several places, to preserve the memory of particular actions; one fee’s 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 these nations against the children of Israel.

The books of the Kings, which the Jews reckoned but as one book, contain an abridgment 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 fee’s 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 these 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 Juda, so never was there any, of which there are left so many monuments, as well there, as in the neighbouring countries.

One fee’s afterwards in the same book, the division of Solomon’s empire into two governments, that of Juda, 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 form'd 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 observ'd 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 serv'd for a double cycle, to fix the remembrance of those acts, 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 altho' Semmacherib'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 sabbathical 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 publick 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 pursuance 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.

C H A P. II.

That there is a strict Connexion between the Sacred History, and the oldest Monuments which we have of Prophane History.

S there was but few very ancient writers of Prophane History, and as we have but small fragments of them dispersed here and there, preferred 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 writ 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 Phoenician 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 preferred by Sancho- niathon a Tyrian writer, who lived soon after him, and whose antiquity is attested by Porphyry.

(f) Precept. Vandaliciorum lib. ii. c. 10.
(g) Polybius Frag. cxiv. Salust. de Bello Jugurthino.
One finds in the manner of Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter after his victory over the Ammonites, the original of the sacrificing of Iphigenia, it being usual with the Heathens, as Ælian judiciously observes (b), to attribute to their later hero's 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 fastned to their tails, which certainly came from the story of Sampson, and was brought into Italy by the Phœnicians (i).

One finds in the same history of Sampson and Delilah, the original of the story of Niphus, and his daughter, who cut off those fatal hairs, upon which the victory depended (k).

Nicolaus Damascenus has preserved 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 fame 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 Phaeton 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 among 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 fee's in the Pagan writers the reign of Tiglab-Pileser, who is the same with the younger Niphus; 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 see's amongst the heathens, the succession of Shalmaneser as it is described in the Scriptures (o).

One fee's the manner of Sennacherib's conquering the most part of the towns

(b) Varia Historia lib. v. cap. 3.  
(i) Ovid Fastorum lib. iv.  
(n) II Kings ii.  
(o) Caistor in Euseb.
towns of \textit{Palestine}, of \textit{Tyre} and \textit{Sidon}, described in heathen writers, particularly as we have it in the Scriptures (p).

The manner of \textit{Sennacherib}'s succession to \textit{Shalmaneser}, of his deposing the country of \textit{Palestine} while he carried on his victories, is described by the Heathens, \textit{Herodot. Lib. II.} \& \textit{Berosus in Josephus Lib. X. c. i.} exactly as the sacred historians relate it.

The memory of \textit{Tirhakah} king of \textit{Ethiopia}, as of a great conqueror, is preserved amongst the heathens (q); for it was his coming, in short, which obliged \textit{Sennacherib} to arise from before \textit{Libna}, whence he intended to go and besiege \textit{Jerusalem}.

One finds amongst the Heathens the remembrance of the manner of the destruction of all \textit{Sennacherib}'s army, for his blasphemies against God, which the \textit{Egyptians} disguised to appropriate to themselves. \textit{Herodot. Lib. II. cap. 141.}

One finds the ruin of \textit{Abdod} by king \textit{Psammetichus} described by Heathen authors, as we have it in the sacred Scriptures. \textit{Herod. Lib. II.} (r).

One finds an account of the ways by which the \textit{Medes} loft the empire of \textit{Asia} under \textit{Cyraxares}, after his conquests over the \textit{Assyrians} in the Heathen writers, much the same as it is described in \textit{Nabum. II. 5.}

The account of the taking of \textit{Nineve} by \textit{Nabopolassar}, and by \textit{Assynes}, is much the same in Heathen authors (s) with the description of it in \textit{Nabum, Esaiah, and Ezekiel.}

The manner of \textit{Josia}'s undertaking a war against \textit{Pharaoh-Necho} king of \textit{Egypt}, when he was overthrown in the plains of \textit{Megiddo}, as it is described by the Heathens (t), agrees with the relation which are given of it in the holy Scriptures.

The victories of \textit{Nebuchadnezzar} over the \textit{Egyptians} and the \textit{Jews}, the carrying away of the consecrated vessels of the temple, and of the \textit{Jews} to \textit{Babylon} (u), are described by the Heathens.

The manner of the yielding up of \textit{Tyre} to \textit{Nebuchadnezzar}, as they describe it (x), agrees with what \textit{Ezekiel} says Chap. XXVIII. 18, 19.

One finds in Heathen authors an account of the stately building of \textit{Babylon} by \textit{Nebuchadnezzar} (y), which is described exactly in the Scriptures.

One finds also in them (z), that the death of \textit{Pharaoh-Hoptha} or \textit{Vaphres} as they call him, happened according to \textit{Jeremiahs' predictions}, Chap. XL. 30.

One finds also the taking of \textit{Babylon} by \textit{Cyrus} (a), as it is described by the Prophet \textit{Jeremiah}, Chap. L. 46.

One finds also that the death of \textit{Belshazzar} (b) happened exactly as \textit{Daniel} had described it, Chap. V.}

\begin{itemize}
    \item (p) \textit{Menander apud Joseph. lib. ix. cap. ult.}
    \item (q) \textit{Strabo lib. i. \& xv.}
    \item (r) \textit{Herodot. lib. i. cap. 104. lib ii. cap. i. lib. vii. cap. 10.}
    \item (s) \textit{Alexand. Polybius ap. Syncellum.}
    \item (t) \textit{Herodot. lib. ii.}
    \item (u) \textit{II Kings xxiii. 29, 30.}
    \item (x) \textit{Annal. Phanotic. ap. Joseph. lib. i. contra Apionem.}
    \item (y) \textit{Beros. Abyssen.}
    \item (z) \textit{Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 163. \& 169.}
    \item (a) \textit{Herodot. lib. i. cap. 178.}
    \item (b) \textit{Xenophon. Histor. lib. vii.}
\end{itemize}
One see's 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 follow'd 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 seem'd to him to be rather a history than a prediction, which he justify'd 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, tho' it be not of equal authority with the sacred writers.

C H A P. 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.

S we may very reasonably say, that all the history of the people of Israel, has a very exact dependence upon the writings of that famous legislator; so we may also observe, that there are scarce any

(c) Herod. lib. vii. cap. 5, 6.
any considerable events which make up the body of this history, which
do not deserve a particular remark, either as a fulfilling of Moses's pro-
pheties, or of those other Prophets whom God raised up after him to re-
form the errors 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 accomplishment of several of these oracles. A little attention and
care in comparing the chronology of the oracles with that of the events,
will sufficiently justify what I say. I shall content myself with observ-
ing their different orders, which will satisfy a judicious reader, since my
defign do's 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
Palestina, or further from it. Now there is nothing so exactly fulfilled,
as these 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 Abijah'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 leffer 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 Je-
boram king of Israel.
You have Elijah's prediction of the exemplary punishment of Abah
and Jezebel.
You have the prediction of Jehoiakim's death made by Jeremiah, Ch.
XXII. 18, 19. and Chap. XXXVI. 30. which happened ten years
after.
You have the prediction of Jehoiachin's miseries made by Jeremiah, Ch.
XXII. 3.
You have Jeremiah's prediction of the death of the false Prophet Ana-
niah, but seven months before it happened.
You have an express designation of Zorobabel to conclude the re-build-
ing 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 fee's 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 fort, after Jacob, the manner how the land of Canaan was to be divided, tho' 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, tho' it was the leaf.

You have Joshua's prediction of the way how the re-builder of Jericho should be exemplarily punished, which was accomplished in Ahab's time, (I Kings XVI. 34.) about 570 years after this prophetical imprecation 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, (I 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-estabishment, seventy years after its destruction.

One sees the promise of Cyrus's birth made by Isaiah, Chap. XLIV. 45. as of one that should restore liberty to the Jews, and give them opportunities of re-building 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 purifie 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 foretell 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 rob-
bining the Egyptians at their departure, of their methods in conquering the
land of Canaan, of the way how kings should arise from Abraham; which
was accomplished in the Ishmaelites and Edomites, and at last in the Is-
raelites.

One fee’s express predictions of the several judges whom God should
raise up to the people of Israel.

One fee’s an express prediction of the advancement of the tribe of
Judah to the kingdom.

One fee’s 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 lye along the banks of Euphrates, which was fulfilled in David’s
time.

One fee’s an express division of that kingdom into two very unequal
parts.

One fee’s great numbers of predictions concerning the state of the
kings of Judah and Israel: for instance, you have an oracle concerning
the destruction of Jotham’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 set down.

The ruin of Jerusalem, and of its 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 di-

finitely foretold.

The desolation of Judea under the empire of Alexander’s successors, is
foretold very exactly.

Their re-establishment after these desolations, and the way by which
they were to be defended by the Maccabees, who should become their
kings is likewise foretold.

In short, one fee’s express predictions of the ruin of Jerusalem, and of
the whole nation under the Roman empire, after the coming of the Mes-
fiah.

As the people of Israel had always great quarrels with the neighbour-
ing nations; so one finds that amongst the oracles which particularly re-
gard the state of the Jews, the Prophets have interwoven a great num-
ber, which concern those foreign people, with relation to those differences
which were kept up between the people of Israel, and them.

So one fee’s the Egyptians and the Canaanites punished, in the execu-
tion of the oracles pronounced against the descendants of Cham.

One fee’s the prediction of the ruin of Benhadad king of Syria, and of
his house, foretold to the tenth generation.

One fee’s the prediction of the ruin of Egypt and Tyre, which happen-
ed under Nebuchadnezzar.

One fee’s the prediction of the ruin of the Moabites, which was under
the same Nebuchadnezzar, after that kingdom had subsisted almost four-
teen ages from its first foundation.

One fee’s frequent oracles concerning the ruin of Nineveh, and its
empire.

One fee’s oracles concerning the ruin of Babylon, which happened un-
der Cyrus.

(4) II Kings x, 30.
One fee's oracles of the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander.

One fee's oracles concerning the manner of this princes conquering the greatest part of the world, and of his leaving his empire divided into four kingdoms.

One fee's frequent oracles concerning the state of the empire of the Seleucidae and the Ptolemeees, who had particular quarrels with the Jewish commonwealth.

One fee's the alliances which were to be between the two kingdoms foretold, and the small success which should arise thence in terminating their differences.

One fee's predictions of the treatment which the Jews should meet with in those kingdoms.

One fee's a prediction of the retreat which Egypt was to give to the Jews, and of the temple they were to build there.

One fee's an exact prediction of the manner of the prophanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes for three years together.

One fee's 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 dependancee, 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 forc'd to assert 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 surprizing, 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.
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 surprizing 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 circumstantial, 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 laugh'd 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. Ensebious quotes a discourse of Oenon 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 synagogue. 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 Caesar, about the year 3492 (e), which shows 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 Pra-
par. Evangelicâ, Lib. IX. cap. 5.] The proverb of the Sibyl's or Delphick
priestess's, favouring of Philip, is commonly known. It was eager for
these Heathen princes to bias their people with such predictions. But
what Eusebius says (f), puts the thing beyond all question, for he ex-
pressly 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.

V. We ought to observe, that we cannot find great numbers of oracles
upon the same subject, whereas one see's that the Prophets follow'd (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 publickly known, having been
only propofed in private places, before a very few, and in short, that
they were not actually known to the most part of the neighboring peo-
ple; whereas one see's 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 questionless known to Nebuchadnezzar and
Cyrus, who look'd upon himself as designed by God to restore their li-
iberty 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 gree-
dines of the priests. Whereas the Prophets among the Jews lived in the
most disinterested manner in the world, and usually pronounced no-	hing 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 reli-
gion, and in cenfuring their princes and governours with a singular in-
trepidity; and indeed, we see that most of them met with the punish-
ment 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 see's that the Jewish nation were so perfwad-
ed of the truth of these oracles, with which they were entrusted, that
nothing to this very day could ever oblige them to discontinue the read-

(f) Lib. iv. de Preparat. Evangel. Lib. iv. initio.
ng of them, whatever disputes they may otherwise have with the Chris-
tians, who make use of them to establith their pretentions, 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 weakned 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 Prophetical Books
of the Old Testament, after Moses, can be no forgeries; the other is,
that in truth, those Oracles which we find inferred in those books, could
not possibly have been forged after their completion.

C H A P. 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 inferred,
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 those Oracles. But it is very
casie to satisfie an equitable reader herein, and to establith 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 establith 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 refults.

I. We ought to obverse, 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 au-
thors, the years from their departure out of Egypt were carefully fet
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 1 Chron. VIII. 1, tho' they began after that time to
reckon by the years of the kings of Juda and Israel, as appears by the

(g) Exod, xix. Numb, xxxiii, 38.
III. It's plain, that the Babylonish captivity, and afterwards their sub-
jection 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, Ezechiel, Zechariah, 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, Zechariah, and Malachi, the same style with
Ezra, Nehemiah, 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 pro-
phecies 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 char-
acteristics 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 prophane 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 prophane
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
preserve 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 mark'd 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 lite-

(b) Ezek. xl. 1. Daniel x. Zach. i. Hagg. i.
(i) Talm. Rofh. Hossanah, c. i.
rally accomplished, and which by consequence cannot be apply'd to Jesus Christ.

V. It cannot be deny'd, 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 sense, the Jews maintain that they ought to be explained literally.

VI. It cannot be deny'd that about 300 years before the birth of our Saviour, the prophetical books were translated, and put into the hands of the Egyptians, having been carried to, and translated at Alexandria, by a publick 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, Zachariah, 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 liv'd but little above four ages before they actually came to pass. There is therefore no difficulty in conceiving that those antient 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 establish the same thing by the consideration of the things themselves.

I confess that we might have a suspicion of those oracles which are not related upon the faith of a publick volume. As for instance, those of Elijah, Elisa, and Uriah the son of Semeiah, who seem never to have published anything.

But here we are to observe, 1. That usally the authors who publish the oracles, are not the same with those who tell us of their accomplishment. 2. That the oracles of which we now speak, were upon subjects perfectly known, and upon very illustrious exigencies. What more illustrious than the destruction of Ahab's family, foretold by Elijah? What more extraordinary than the manner of Jezebel's death, foretold by the same prophet?

In short, we ought to take notice, I. That these oracles were written for the most part in compleat volumes: We have sixteen prophets sufficiently distinguish'd by their proper volumes.

II. Each
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 idea's, 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 Judea, and went to prophecy in Israel, that appears plainly. Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied in Chaldea; that's 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 proposed 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 proposes, 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 connection 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 prophetical 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 reflexions here, to establish the same truth.

C H A P. VI.

That the manner of writing the prophetical books of the Old Testament, shows that those oracles could not have been forged after their completion.

(k) Dan. ix. 2.
oracles, is 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. XXIX. 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.

Nehemiah continued it from 3550. to 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.

Isaiah began his prophecy in 3246. and dy’d in the year 3306. Hosea, Micah, and Nahum were contemporary with him.

Jeremiah begun his prophecy in the year 3375. and liv’d at the same time with Zephaniah.

Daniel was carry’d into Babylon in 3401. and prophesied until 3470.

Ezechiel prophecy’d at Babylon in 3509.

Haggai and Zechariah prophecy’d 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 publick censors; Let us but read the history of Isaiah’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 Isaiah 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 fee's 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 forgery 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 preferv'd amongst their publick hymns?

One fee's that Micah's prediction fav'd Jeremiah whom they would have condemned for prophecying the ruin of the temple under Jeboiahim, 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's an event which affurers 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, Abaz, 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 publick, and very famous amongst the Jews.

We must not here neglect what do's more particularly regard the persons of the prophets.

I. Some of them were priests, that is to say publick 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 idea's about which the prophets were most employ'd.

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 Vol. I. A barely
barely named, without joining to it any honourable title, if the Jews ob-
servation has any strength.

Now, it is well known, that tho' 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 meanness 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 preferv'd, as well as those who did not write, were continually struck
at by false prophets, who opposed them with great heat. Since then we
have no prophecies preferred, but of those whose predictions were ac-
complished, the event justifying the truth of their predictions, with regard to
particular facts near the time which they had foretold to establish their
authority, whereas the predictions of others, wanting this character,
were neglected, and at last absolutely lost: It appears plainly, That
those which remain were things of the greatest reputation among the
Jews.

Besides, I may add, That one needs only read their books to see 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 destruction of whole nations, the destruction
of their own city, with its re-establishment; Matters which would ren-
der their books very illustrious, and which would cause them to be read,
not only by the Jews, but also by the neighbour nations, the Ammonites,
Moabites, Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, &c.

Is not this therefore a very particular thing, and that which made the
prophets very illustrious, That the great lustre 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 do's not extend it felt
any farther: Now why, I pray, should there be no impostors after Mala-
cly, as well as there were impostors before him?

One may imagine perhaps, That the prophecies were immediately
disputed, some being uttered in one place, and some in another: Some in
the kingdom of Judah, and others in the kingdom of Israel: Some
in Babylon, others in Egypt, which might give opportunities for impostors.

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, those of Judah would charge themselves with the writings
published in a kingdom so much an enemy to them, without examination,
when every thing which comes from thence, ought to appear sus-
ppected.

II. They were all collected into particular volumes: But the pro-
phesies of Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremy, and the most considerable of the rest,
are preserved in books which contain many other things.

III. They are all exactly joined with the history of the same nation,
each one in a place where there was an equal concern to preserve, and
to gather them together. But besides, they were all collected into one
body. In short, the LXXII. Interpreters translated them into Greek in the
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 forever may be made of these reflections, 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 Messiah's, 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 consent to a forgery which thwarted their common Idea's 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 authorize 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, that they should receive their books, with a profound submission, and preserve 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 alleged 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.

**CHAP. VII.**

For what Reason the Oracles, which relate to the Messiah, were interwoven
with other things, which seem to be very widely distant.

NE of the greatest difficulties which may be raised against the
oracles of the Old Testament which concern the Messiah, is
that surpising mixture which one fee's 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 pre-
dictions which should explain the miraculous birth of the Messiah, his
family, his preaching, his miracles, his sufferings, his resurrection, his
affection 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,
Tho' 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 Eudoxia
made
made a Canto out of Virgil's poem, which contained the same history, tho' 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 it self. 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; Tho' it is well known that common use do's not allow men to join foreign idea's 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 antient Patriarchs before Moses, and Moses himself, who form'd the commonwealth of the Jews, had prepar'd the minds of the people to such sort of expressions as were rais'd 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 those 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 anything 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 Psalm LX. 22. of his being sold for thirty pieces of silver: Zechar. XI. 3. or then several others of a like nature, which at present I shall not stand to reckon up.

It must be confessed 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 perfon 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 prefigur'd over this mixture of these oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other idea's which seem to be wholly foreign to the subject.

In short, it may be urged, That the belief of a Messiah form'd of so apparent contradictions, cannot easily be received of the suddain. A Messiah
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 weaknesses of youth, who at the same time is called a mighty God, and the father of eternity, &c.

However, these ideas, which seem so opposite, ought of necessity to have been so separated by the prophets, lest they should have been looked upon as chimerical descriptions, and incompatible in one and the same subject.

A second reflection 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 foretold. 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 interest 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 adverse party, which ought to have place, until the fulness of the Gentiles should profess Christianity.

Let any one therefore judge if it was not necessary in this state of affairs, that there should be some obscurity in the prophetical descriptions; and and by consequence that this interweaving of foreign ideas with those which concerned the Messiah, as also this dispersion of the oracles through different places of the sacred writers was not necessary, and so much the more as they were uttered upon several occasions by different authors.

And we may affirm it, as a certainty, That according to the purpose of God, this obscurity did not hinder either Jews or Pagans from perceiving those ruling ideas of a Messiah, when they read the Old Testament. Neither was the dispersion of these oracles through so 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 person of the Messiah; when the events of a nearer date did not answer to the greatness or magnificence of the predictions.

Several ages had passed 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 amongst the Jews, in our Saviour Jesus Christ's time, as is plain from the answer which they gave to Herod.

There are several other examples might be given, which shew that the Jews in our Saviour's time applied the very same oracles to the Messiah which
which we do; and without question, if it had not been so, the apostles would first have proved that these oracles had relation to the Messiah, which they took for granted, as a thing constantly acknowledged, whereas now they only endeavoured in the gospel to justify that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, by shewing one by one that all the characters which the Jesus attributed to the Messiah, were to be found in him.

Besides, it is manifest from our Saviour's explication of the CX Psalm, that though the Jesus could not conceive the solution of that difficulty which naturally appears in those words, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, yet afterwards they immediately applied that oracle to the Messiah, without seeking after any other subjects to which they might apply it, as the Jesus endeavour to do at this day.

But after these remarks upon the mixture of those oracles which relate to the Messiah, with others which seem to be of a more foreign nature, we ought to come to some general rules by which we are to apply the ancient oracles to the Messiah.

CHAP. VIII.

General Rules for the Understanding of ancient Oracles, and for the Application of them to the Messiah.

I. It appears very natural to conceive, that the most ancient revelations ought to be expressed in the most general terms, because they were fureft from the time of their accomplishment, and so one ought to find in them a more imperfect 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 idea's 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 sudainly 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 idea's, 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 promis'd some illufrious perfons, 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 joyn the promise of the Messiah with it, as the principal object which the Jesus ought always to have in view, until it should actually happen.

A a 4
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. 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 some body else besides the Messiah, tho' 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, Num. 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 apply'd 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 joyning these idea's with every thing that was great and considerable in those events, and in those persons to whom the prophetick 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 at least they cannot dispute these following truths.

I. That the most part of those oracles which we apply to the Messiah, were apply'd 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 apply'd to the Messiah in those predictions; some perfectly glorious, and others every way contemptible: so there is no injustice done, in explaining 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 their

(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 Apostles 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 scowring 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 preposterously to a great degree of obstinacy.

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.

I. From the Prophet's often joyning the idea's 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 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 there from, 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 those books piece by piece, which afterwards were put into this order, without having always a regard to the time in which they were writ, 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 sense 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 seem’d 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 (m).

Secondly, since the Messiah is described as one who should unite in his own person, the glory of the Divinity, and the meanness 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 idea’s 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 affirms us that 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 affirm us was done by the Apostles in a very great number of oracles. But because this supposes a prophetick character in the Apostles before it has been established by solid proofs, I shall waive the proposal 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 Evangelice. 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 idea’s which are made use of to express it.

II. Because of the necessity of the encrease of light in the Revelations, proportionably as the time drew near; so that, it is of use to observe how the Divine wisdom follow’d 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 explanation of the same truths at several times, and in several places and circumstances, which hinder men for the most part from agreeing in the most common matters, which are the subjects of their reflections.

(m) Lib. de Regibus, cap. xii.
I have already considered that the wisdom of God follow'd rules very conformable to the condition and inclinations of the Patriarchs, when it spake of the Messiahs. 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 set upon his throne. He explains almost all the circumstances of his coming, his humiliation, his exaltation, the oppressions he should meet with, the victories he should obtain, and his offices, prophetical, priestly, and royal.

One fee's afterwards that the Prophets explain in a more particular manner all these idea's 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 Messiahs 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 forerunner of the Messiah, and the empire under which he was to appear, and the very year in which he was to dye, 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 designed to give infallible proofs to his church, of his design 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, shew that he designed 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 designed 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 design whereof had been proposed to mankind immediately after the fall.

C H A P. IX.

Of those Oracles concerning the Messiah which are to be found in the Book of Genesis.

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
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, tho' 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 expresses 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 prefers thereby the memory of the temptation, by inspiring all mankind with an invincible hatred against all serpents in general, tho' 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, tho' 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 exprest by God's telling Abraham, That in thy seed 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 idea's 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 depository 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 follow'd 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 tho' 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 blessing should be quite of another nature from temporal ones, as the encrease for instance, and the power of Abraham's posterity, which had been promised to him before. S. Paul's reflexion 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 Israiel in the year 2200, 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 reflections. This ought only to be added, That God restrained the honour of bringing forth the Messiah to Jacob the Son of Israiel, that the Edomites might not come in to challenge the right, as I have very particularly explained in my reflections 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: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter 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 fœt unto the vine; and his affes colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes shall be read with wine, and his teeth white with milk. Gen. XLIX. 8.—12. I know very well, that some of the Jews have pretended, that Moses ought to be underfooted for Shiloh; But this is so ridiculous an opinion, that there is not the least probability to maintain it: What scepter 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, by Onkelos the Chaldee paraphrast, by the Jerusalem Targum, and Jonathan's, by R. Solomon Jarchi, Abenezra, and Kimchi are agreed.

Now these reflections 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 scepter, 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 concern'd 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, 83.* In *Jotham's* time this tribe took its division without drawing lots for it. One see's that God ordered the tribe of *Judah* to lead the people out to the conquest of the rest of the country. One see's the same prerogatives in the book of *Judges*, tho' 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 Chaldea. The book of *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 transplanted, *II Kings XVII. 18.* It almost swallowed up *Benjamin* and *Levi*, who settled in their country; and indeed *Josephus* affures 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 preeminency 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 loft 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*, tho' afterwards the *Babylonians* subdued the *Jews*, and deposed the kings of *Judah*. At last they absolutely loft all that authority which they had hitherto kept. They recovered a little in the person of *Zorobabel*, and tho' they were soon after invaded by the *Seleucides*, yet the *Maccabees* preferred 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 observe, I. That God intended to oblige the *Israelites* to wait for the scepter 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*. Those words, *It shall not depart*, denote a continuance of the scepter in the house of *David* for some considerable time.

II. It is easie to comprehend a lessening of the dignity in the term *lawgiver*, [See *Judges V. 14. בָּנֹר] which God seems to have made ufe 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 assigns the *epocha* in grofs 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 curfe the people of *Israel* that lay in the plains; the other uttered the same year by *Mofes* the famous legislator of the *Jews*; the firft is inserted by *Mofes* in the XXIV Chapter of Numbers; the other is in the XVIII of Deuteronomy.

The firft 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 scepter 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 preference 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: tho’ 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 *Jacob’s* prophecy in favour of *Judah*. III. Tho’ he hints very clearly at the effects of those blessings and temporal victories which *Jacob’s* posterity was to obtain over their neighbours, yet at the same time he intimated 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*, *Izaac*, 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* paraphraf; and it was acknowledged so 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 intended to mark that impostor for the true Messiah, by foretelling what name he should be called by.

The oracle which *Mofes* uttered a little before his death, is very considerable. 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 *Mofes* should give them an account of whatever
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 liv'd 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 reform'd 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 fee's amongst two intimate friends: in which 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 fame 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 apply'd to the Messiah in the following oracles, proportionally as the revelation increased, and as God unravelled the idea's 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 dyed, 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 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 sentiments of gratitude; and as his oracles would be much more famous, being uttered by a royal Prophet; and the rather because God employ'd him in the making a just regulation of the service of the sanctuary; so we see that David employ'd 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, tho' 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 follow'd 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 XL 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 obediencethan 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: 

Psalms XL. 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 XVI. Psalm he describes the inviolable steadfastness 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. 

Psalms 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 XXII 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 CIX Psalm he speaks of the oppressions of the Messiah, pronouncing great numbers of imprecations against that very person who should signalize himself by perfecting his innocence. For 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, verse 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, verse 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, verse 16, 17, 18.

In the CXIX Psalm he carries this argument further, in his description of the zeal of the Messiah for the house of God, and of those insults 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 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, verse 1, 2. Yet 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, verse 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 loins continually to shake. Pour out thy indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them, verse 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

In the XCVII and XCVIII 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 XCVII. 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, verse 7, 8, 9. O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm have gotten him the victory. The Lord has made known his salvation:
In the LXVIII Psalm he explains the glory of the Messiah, and his ascension 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 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. Ascribe 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, purposed all his ideas. One see's 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 his 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 see's 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 then that princes was, and he represents to us a God consecrated with oyl 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 scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with oyl of gladness above thy fellows. Verse 16. In stead of thy fathers shall be thy children whom thou maft make princes in all the earth.

One see's the same Prophets inviting all nations in the XLVII Psalm to acknowledge the kingdom of God: which Daniel afterwards describes as that which the Jews already knew to be governed by the Messiah.

One see's Asaph describing in the L 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 B b 2
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 he-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 LXXII 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 foretells the continuance of his kingdom as long as the sun and moon endures; that all the kings of the world should bring presents to him, and that all the nations of the earth should worship before 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 Ezrabite, 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 immoveable in the LXXXIX 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 say'st, 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 faithfulness 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 he 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 contradiction, by considering two Psalms, the one whereof describes the prodigious humiliation of the Messiah; and the other describes his
his advancement at the right hand of God; two of the greatest truths declared by the Prophets, and two the most singular of all the characters which belong to the promised Messiah.

**CHAP. XI.**

Considerations upon the Sufferings of the Messiah, and upon his glorious Ascension into Heaven, foretold by David in the XXII and CX Psalms.

It cannot be deny'd, when one reads the XXII Psalm, but that the person there spoken of, is describ'd 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 it self over all the nations of the world, and afterwards universally adored.

I. He that speaks, cries out as if God had forsaken him, and had flipp'd his ears unto his cry.

II. He describes himself as a worm, and no man, as the reproach of men, and one despisèd 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. Ezech. XXII. 25.

V. He joyns the dogs with them, that is, prophane 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 dry'd up, from the loss of blood when he was crucify'd.

VIII. He takes notice of their parting his garments, and IX. Of their casting lots upon his vesture.

In short, one see's 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 it self 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 tryals 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 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 XXII Psalm to the Messiah. They applied it to him in earnest, even after the time of Jesus Christ, when the comparision of these characters of the Messiah, which may be found to exactly in the death of Jesus Christ, led them to an oppostion of this truth.

And certainly there needs very little equity to acknowledge that this oracle, or rather this heap of oracles belong'd 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 wrat [םננ] like a lion, instead of [םננ] they have pierced my feet, as they have done since. In short, Aquila who lived 100 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 Messiah's, 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 reflexion 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, 2 Sam. XXIII. 1—8. were to be applied to the Messiah, by comparing them with Balaam’s oracle of the Messiah, Num. 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 poesy, 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 CX 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 form’d 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 by 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 points 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 afferts, 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 constantly 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 set 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 could never 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 CX Psalm; tho' they could not explain the manner how David should call the Messiah Lord, when they allow'd him to be his son, Matth. XXII. 48.

One sees nothing so urgent'd by the Apostles as this CX 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 CX Psalm supposing still, as a thing beyond dispute, that David spoke of the Messiah in this famous prophecy.

So that what evasions ever 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 follow'd 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; tho' I intend at the same time to make more particular reflexions 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. XIII.

That the Messiah was to have a Forerunner, and what was to be his Character.

I shall make it manifold in the sequel of the discourse, that the Messiah was to appear in a very despicable state, and consequent-ly that his appearance would be very distasteful to those who expected him in the splendour of a great king and conqueror. To oppose this preconceived 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 ministrv 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 usher’d in by a person thus distinguished; the following prophecies are very expressive to this purpose.

The first of these we find in the XL 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 mention’d 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 shew up the vision, precisely points at the time wherein he was to appear, viz. during the second temple, Chap. III. verse 1; 2, 3, & 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 in,

(a) Isai. xl. 3. (b) Abenezra.
in, behold he shall come, faith 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 refiners fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall fit as a refiner and purifier
of silver: and he shall purifie 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 (e).

But we ought to observe in the foregoing passages, 1. 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 con-
ciderable, because he was a priest. 2. By an attentive considering the
passages themselves. 3. By the common content of the Jewish church,
who by a generally received and undoubted tradition, that Elijah the
Tithbite (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.

2. We may observe, That the character of the forerunner of the
Messiah, being that which the Jews had much in their eye, it was need-
ful for it to be as notable and extraordinary, as was that of the Prophet
Elias; whose ministry was without dispute the most remarkable and il-
lustrious of all the Prophets since Moses; which gave the Prophet Mal-
achy occasion to call him Elias, much upon a like account as the Pro-
phet 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 expres
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, saith he, I send
my messenger. He speaks of it as of a thing at the door. Now it is
evident,

(c) R. Saad.  (d) Matth. iii. 1.  Mark i. 2.  
(e) Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.
CH. 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 that prophecy evinces three things: 1. That the scepter was to be in the house of Judah, before ever the Shiloh was to come. 2. That the scepter 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 do’s 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 propos’d in general terms; he doth not only point at the time of his appearance, but the very year of his death, and he do’s it with that exactness, that it is impossible to be mistaken about it.

See what he faith in the IX. 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 the

(f) Pfalm 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 that 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 obligation to cease, and for the ever-spreading 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 title of the law, Levit. 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, Jachaites, 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 son 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 joyned with the sixty nine weeks, by saying, that the Messiah was to be cut off after the term of seven weeks, and sixty 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 prophesy 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 483 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
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 closing 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 Nthus, and make them to end with the destruction of the Jews, which happened in the year 490, accounting from the second year of the said Darius; and they conceive themselves oblig’d thereto, by an argument, they believe invincible, because from the second year of Darius Nthus to the thirty second of Artaxerxes Mesiorn, 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 joyn 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 prophesy 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 precifely by Daniel, as leaves no pretence to doubt of this truth. And indeed, tho’ 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 hath 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, finish’d under Darius son of Hystaspes, and destroy’d 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, faith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, faith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former faith the Lord of Hosts: and in this place will I give peace, faith 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.
Messiah to the time of the second house, that is to say, of the temple built by Zerobabel. 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 Zachariah 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 Zachariah speaks thus concerning it, Chap. III. ver. 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 figtree.

Malachi expresses himself, concerning the approaching coming of the Messiah, thus, (Chap. III. ver. 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 faith the Lord of Hosts.

One ought to obverse two very considerable things in this Prophecy: the first, That the Messiah was to come suddainly. 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 Vespasian.

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 despair'd of his coming (taking the promise of the Messiah's coming to be conditional, when as 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. 'Tis but of late that they have try'd 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 be expressly tells us, That the defolation of the temple was to be for ever, as
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 LXXXIX Psalm.

The following prophets have express'd themselves to the same purpose; Isaiah XI. vers. 1, 2, 3; and the prophet Jeremy hath purposed the same idea's, Chap. XXIII. vers. 5, 6; and Chap. XXXIII. vers. 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 observ'd, 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 designing 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 (ε) 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 'tis well known that the promise of the Messiah was something far greater than the birth of these now mention'd, how illustrious soever 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. vers. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

Galat. iii.
above. But Ahaz said, 'I will not offer; 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 he 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 forsoaken 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 Juda, 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 consternation.

3. The prophecy was utter'd by a very illustrious prophet, who was of the royal family.

4. It was seal'd 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 offer'd 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 easie 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 own'd 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. ver. 31.

Justin Martyr observ'd, That the notion of this oracle, as we understand it, hath been entertain'd 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 reflections 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. 'Tis evident that the Jews did not dispute this character, till after they saw that the Christians apply'd 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 LXX interpreters have in translating this prophecy,
phecy, 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 (f), 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 setting an eternal kingdom upon it, which could not be accomplished but by means of the Messiah.

The fifth is, That tho' 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 jo on this occasion have dropt 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 reprefented 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 hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Psal. XLV. 7, 8.

The seventh is, That the prophet Isaiah having alleged and cited two witnesses, Uriah the son of Shemaiah, a prophet, who was put to death by Jehoiakim, and Zebchariah the son of Jeberachia; the former of which lived long after Ahaz, 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) Rofebi in. h. i.
(b) Gemin in Sanbed. Cap. Chelech.
That the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem of the Family of David, which
at that Time was reduc'd 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 expressly promised 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 believ'd this himself, from Psalm CXXXII.
ver. 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 said, Verse 12. That if his children would
keep his covenant, that their children also should sit upon his throne for ever-
more. And this because (Verse 13 & 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 satisfie her poor with bread; that he would
verse 16. Clothe her priests with salvation, and make her saints shout for joy.
He subjoyns verses 17 & 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 Sa-
vior, puts the matter out of all doubt.

3. Hence it was the prophets took occasion to give to the Messiah the
name of David. So Ezek. XXXIV. ver. 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 expressly point out
Bethlehem for the birth-place of the Messiah. Micah the V. verse 2.
But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of
Judah, yet out of thee shall he 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 in-
deed the prophet distinguishing by Bethlehem adding the word Ephratah
(whence the family of David was) from that Bethlehem which belonged
to another tribe, makes it apparent that nothing could be spoke 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 fore-mentioned place of Micah, Matthew II. ver. 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 XI 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 king, sitting on the throne in Zion; but as riding to Jerusalem on an ass; and he gives him the title of Lowly, which signifies as well a mean condition, as the vertue 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 so to do, because they acknowledged him to be the son of David.

2. That those who deny 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, tho' 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. vers. 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 recompence; 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 sing; for in 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 hath named some only, to give us a specimen of the rest; and it seems as if the Prophet had chosen these four sorts 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 affirm'd, 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 Josephus (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. ver. 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 his 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 propound the power of working miracles, as a character which would render the Messiah very illustrious, and certainly known.

**CHAP. XVII.**

That the Messiah was to be an illustrious Prophet.

HIS truth I have already asserted 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 precifully signifies this, Isai. XI. vers. 1, 2, & 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. So
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 constant-ly 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 Testa-ment 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. ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Eleth 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 smoking 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 faith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and strethed them out; he that spreadeth the earth, and that which cometh out of it: he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thee, 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, 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 Gods 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 thundring character which distinguished the rest of the Prophets, who were as so many publick censors; 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 idea's, Chap. LXI. ver. 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 be might be glorified. And they shall build the old waste, 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 plowmen, 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 ye shall boast your selves. For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion.
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 foever that character might 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 those 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 prophetical 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 infinuated, when God tells us that he was to begin his ministerial functions in the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulon. Isai. IX. verf. 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 bath 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.

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 it self, 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 CX. 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 ministry, after he had despised it in comparison of the spiritual worship. Psalm XL. 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 L. 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 he-goats out of thy fields; for every heaf of the forest is mine, and the cattel 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 prescribed, and to dignify 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 faith 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 you come to appear before me, who hath 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 hear 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. v. 21, 22, & 23.

But besides, God directly promiseth this new covenant by Isaiah, Chap. XLII. 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 implyes that it was not the old covenant, forasmuch as from it several were excluded.

The same covenant is also mention'd, Chap. XLIX. ver. 8, 9. Thus faith 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,
darkness, Shew your selves, they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

He pursues the same notion, Chap. LV. vers. 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. vers. 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 off-spring 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 universally 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. XXXI. vers. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36. Behold the days 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 brake, 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 desired more particular than this oracle; 1. It tells us that God would make a new covenant with his people, which supposes an abolishing 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 those with whom it was made. 4. That this covenant was to be made after those days, that is in the time of the Messiah. 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 remission of sin is promised.

The same thing is also expressed, Chap. XXXII. vers. 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. L. ver. 5. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us joyn our selves 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. verfs. 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 sisters, 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. 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 (Angel) of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he shall come faith the Lord of Hosts. I know very well that the Jews apply these words to Elias, whose minis, as they pretend, was to consist in leading the Jews to repentance. But if we read the text with attention, we shall find two messengers mentioned; the first who 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 surprize 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 authorized 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
sin to which they were peculiarly inclin'd; as appears from Psalm LXIX.
verfs. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 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
defoliate, and none dwell in their tents: for they persecute him whom thou haft
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 right-
teous.

One see's the same thing in Isaiah, Chap. VI. verfs. 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 he answered, until the cities
be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be
utterly defolateth 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 refuting the Prophet, which God expresses 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 Hoseah describes the very same complaints of God against
the Jews for their blindness and ignorance, for which he denounces their
destruction. Hos. IV. verfs. 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 stealing, and com-
mittting 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 destroy thy
mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou haft re-
jected knowledge I will also reject thee, that thou haft be no Priest to me; see-
ing thou haft forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

The Prophet Jeremy speaks to the same purpose, Chap. V. verfs. 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 sand
for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it, and the
waves thereof tos themseles, yet can they not prevail; tho' they roar, yet
can they not pass over it? But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious
heart; they are revoluted and gone. And he reiterates the same, Chap. VIII.
verfs. 7. The flock in the heavens knoweth 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. ver. 5, and 8. calling the Jews a rebellious house. And Chap. XII. ver. 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 referre 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. ver. 18.

Secondly, David, Psaln CXVIII. v. 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. ver. 6. Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation, be 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. ver. 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. XXI. ver. 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. ver. 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. ver. 20. And are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. And I Cor. III. ver. 11. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. And when Jesus Christ himself faith to Peter, Mattb. XVI. ver. 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 applyes also to the Jews those prophecies which foretell their being offended at the Ministers of heaven, in particular that of

Isaiab
Isaiah, Chap. VI. vers. 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. vers. 21. But to Israel be faith, all the day long, I have stretched forth my hand unto a disobedient and gain-saying 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 Judaeo, Lib. VII. cap. 3. gives of them, where he compares them with the Sodomites, which is the comparison Isaiah makes Chap. I. vers. 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. vers. 26.

CHAP. XX.

That the Messiah was to dye; and an Account of the several Circumstances of his Death.

O 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 prophetic passages of holy Scripture, is to be understood of the Messiah; and the reading of them alone is sufficient to establish 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 provid 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 idea's which point to other prophetical passages avowedly owned by the Jews to have relation to the Messiah. Thus if we compare Psalm XXII. vers 28, with Psalm LXXII. vers. 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 can't 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 forsaken by his own friends, Psalms XXII. verse 11. Be not far from me for trouble is near; for there is none to help. And Psalms LXIX. 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. Psalms XXII. verses 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 shoot 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 Psalms LXIX. verses 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 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. verses 4, 5. Surely he hath born our griefs and carried our sorrow; 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.

They take notice that he should be beaten and abused, as appears from Isaiah LIII. verses 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 born 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 shearers 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 sold. Zach. II. verses 12, and 13. And I laid unto them, if ye think good, give me my price, and if not forbear: 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 prized 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. Psalms II. verse 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed. And Psalms XXII. verse 16. For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. And Psalms LXIX. verse 12. They that sit 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,
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 Zach. 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. vers. 6, 7, 8. But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and
depisefed of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shot out the
lip, they shake the head, &c. And Psalm LXIX. vers. 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
haft 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. vers. 18. They part my garments amongst them, and cast lots upon my
vesture.
10. That the Messiah should complain that God had forfaken him in
the hands of his enemies. Psalm XXII. vers. 1, 2. My God, my God,
why haft thou forfaken 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. vers. 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. vers. 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 potter's, and my tongue cleaveth to my
jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have com-
passed me, the assembly of the wicked have encircled me; they pierced my hands
and my feet. I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me. And
Isaiah LIII. vers. 7, 8, 9.
13. That not one of his bones should be broken. Psalm XXXIV.
vers. 20. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.
14. That he was to be buried in the sepulchre of a rich man, Isaiah
LIII. vers. 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 Psalm, there are many expressions which cannot be ap-
plied to David.
3. That
Ch. XXI.

That the Messiah was soon after to rise again.

As much 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 dispoal, to submit to death, that he could not long continue subject to it. He who was to restore life to those who were dead, could never be confin’d and imprison’d in a grave: and he who was superiour to Enosb 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. Psalms XVI. vers. 10, 11. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew 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, Psalms. XXX. vers. 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 Psalms. XLII. vers. 8, 9, 10. An evil diseased, say they, cleaveth fast unto him, and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more. Yea, 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 raife me up, that I may requite them. And Psalms. XLIX. vers. 15. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me. Psalms. LVI. vers. 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. Psalms. LXXII. vers. 20. Thou who hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Psalms. CXLIII. vers. 11, 12. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy names sake, for thy righteousness sake bring my soul out of trouble.
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. ver. 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. ver. 8. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And yet more expressly Chap. LIII. ver. 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, he 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, compriseth 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 Jesus Christ speaks Matt. XII. ver. 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 possessors of the same advantages.

3. That most of these texts were quoted by the Apostles, who in so doing followed the sense of the whole nation, as appears from Acts II. ver. 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 speaketh concerning him; I foresaw 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. ver. 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.
Wherefore he faith 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. vers. 14. in 1 Cor. XV. vers. 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.

HIS was a thing which might rationally enough be expected (b); for the Messiah being to re semble Moses, who had not only the gifts of the holy spirit himself, but also in a manner communicated the same 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. vers. 1, 2. where he represents the Messiah sitting at the right hand of God. The Lord said 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. vers. 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. vers. 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. vers. 5, 6, 7. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the kings enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oyl of gladness above thy fellows. 'Tis evident that David addresses himself there to the Messiah, because he titles him a God anointed above his fellows.

(b) Deut. xviii. 18.
lowes. And he pursues the same idea, Psalm LXVIII. vers. 18. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou had received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them. Nothing can be imagined more express 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. vers. 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 fite of the Prophets, are nothing else but the graces of God’s Spirit.

Joel expresses himself very plainly in this matter, Chap. II. vers. 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 whosoever 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 upon 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. vers. 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: he 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.

Ezechiel goes on with the same views with Joel, Chap. XXXVI. vers. 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. vers. 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 Zachariab agrees with both the foregoing Prophets, Chap. XII. verse 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.

'Tis obvious to make these following observations upon these oracles.

D d 2

1. That
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.

CHAP. 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 serpents head (I); that is, the works of the Devil. And we can't 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 off-spring 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 increas'd, 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. XLIX. verse 10. The scepter 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.

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 jealousie, 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 law giver 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. Psalms 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. verss. 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. verss. 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 CII. 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 paeages which are to this purpose.

The Prophet Hosea declares in general terms, That it was not an impossible thing for thos 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 laid 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. verse 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 Jesse, 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. XLII. 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 fume shall he not quench, he shall bring forth judgment unto the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. Chap. LV. ver. 4, 5. Behold I have given thee for a witness 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 fee's these truths in their greatest lustre in the LX Chap. of his prophecies, ver. 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 see; 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. LXII. ver. 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 ver. 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. ver. 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. verse 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 same thing, Chap. IX. ver. 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 pass over 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. Micah. IV. ver. 1, 2, 3. But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it 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 plowshares, 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. ver. 11. They shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen. And Chap. III. ver. 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 dispossessed shall bring mine offering.

Jeremiah in the fourth Chapter of his prophecies, ver. 2, confirms the same truth; as likewise Chap. XVI. ver. 19. and more expressly Chap. XXXI. ver. 34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and
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 idea’s. Haggai II. ver. 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 Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, faith the Lord of Hosts.

Zechariah speaks in like manner, Chap. II. ver. 10, 11. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for 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 Hosts hath sent me unto thee. And Chap. VIII. ver. 20, 21, 22. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, 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 Hosts, I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. And Chap. XI. ver. 10. he expresses the same thing more distinctly. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battel 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 same purpose with the greatest clearness imaginable, Chap. I. ver. 10, 11. Who is there among you that shutteth the doors, or kindles fire on mine altar for nought? I have no pleasure in you faith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand: for from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, faith the Lord of Hosts.

On all which passages one may make these observations:

1. That all this whole series of idea’s 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 seem’d thereby to have hinted to them, that what he had enjoyn’d 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 believ’d, that the Messiah should lead the Gentiles to repentance. So Kimchi, Moses Mai-monides, and many other authors, since the Talmudists.

6. That the opinion which the Jews have entertained, that the Messiah,
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, seem'd 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 fruitfulnes which continually usher'd 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 rais'd 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. ver. 28, 29. The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and thou shalt graze 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 everywhere, 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 mention'd at the 49th. verse of that Chapter, being not only applicable to Nebuchadnezzar, whom Ezechiel, 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 forsets 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., XLII., L, and LXVI. and in his XXV. Chapter he speaks as if no restoration was to be expected.

4. Amos represents the same thing, Chap. V. ver. 16, 17, and 21, 22. Therefore the Lord the God of Hofts, 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 faith the Lord. I hate, I despise your feast-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-offerings 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. ver. 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 the commandment, to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks the street 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 destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war defolations are determined. 'Tis worth our observing, That Josephus (o) the historian a little after the destruction of Jerusalem, acknowledges that this prophecy of Daniel did expressly foretell the ruin of the temple of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish government, by the arms of the Roman empire, which himself was an eye-witness of.

7. Zecharias speaks after the same manner, Chap. XI. vers. 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 rest eat, every one the flesh of another.

8. And Malachi follows these common idea's, Chap. I. vers. 10, and 11. Who is there among you that looketh the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.

I cannot conceive how any that consider the succession of these idea's, so interwoven one with another, can have the least doubt whether the Jews were to be rejected at the coming of the Messiah, or no; especially since the Apostles and St. Paul in particular have made it appear, that the Prophets so plainly did foretell this truth.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the Time which succeeded the Publishing of these Prophecies, till the Coming of the Messiah.

US we have seen an abridgment of the most remarkable oracles utter'd, either by God himself, or by Prophets, whom he made use of to declare his designs. I might easily have alledged a far greater number, but I chose rather to content myself with these, to avoid the confusion which the multiplicity of citations is apt to occasion. And I question not but these I have mention'd, will suffice to give us an idea of God's promise concerning the Messiah sufficiently great, and enable us to make a judgment, whether that which the Christians declare to have been the accomplishmient of it, be so indeed.

In the mean time, for the further clearing of this matter, I desire the reader to make some reflexions on the whole matter, which seem 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 potter's 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 professing 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 prefer 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 Salmanaffar, 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
had given them till Malachy'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 reflection 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 Malachy, 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 publick 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 contents 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 reflections with a short view of the state of the common-wealth 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 where-with Alexander the Great treated their high priest, and that when he was appointed arbitrator of the difference between them and the Samaritans, he determin'd 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 bow their ground, and consequently could not reap.

And if we find that Ptolemy took Jerusalem on a sabbath day, the Jews making confidence 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, prophaned 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 impovable 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 his Antiquities: yea, we find their name and glory at that time spread as far as Lacedemon, with which common-wealth 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 situated between Syria and Egypt, was ordinarily the theatre of war between those two states. 'Tis 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 intestine 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 publish'd.
publish’d 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 don’t 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. verse 4. Remember the law of Moses my servant, &c.

One see’s 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 see’s 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 preferring 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 least 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 disputacious than they were before. The authority likewise of their kings, who were high-priests also, may have had a great stroke in blustering 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 substanee of their religion. They no sooner found the spirit of epicurism to creep in amongst them, but they framed such additions to their publick 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 authentick: 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 assert (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.

THE
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 idea’s 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 common-wealth, 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 ease, 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 idea’s 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 idea’s of the Messiah were very strong in the minds of the Jews at the very time that Jesus Christ appeared in the world.

This
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 idea's 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 design 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 common-wealth 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 idea's of the Messiah were at that time very strong in the minds of the Jews, and it supposeth without any affectation that that 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.

Saint 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 conspire 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 refute all these articles one by one, in that natural order in which I have proposed them.
REFLEXIONS
UPON THE
BOOKS
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,
to
ESTABLISH THE TRUTH
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

That there appears a very just Connexion between the Idea's of the Old Testament, and those of the New, the latter borrowing Light from the Former.

S it is not much the character of romances, even then when they are most tyed up to the rules of probability, to borrow either the file or idea's 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
cal Writings, one finds in them a perfect conformity of idea's, with the writings of the Old Testament.

One may to this purpose observe in general, That the Gospel sup-
pofeth 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 Testa-
ment have an essential relation to those of the Old, in their most prin-
cipal 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 ac-
cording 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
that first of all, That the Christians have the same object of their faith
which the Jews had; this Jesus Christ himself declares, where he faith;
This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Behold here the true character of the Chris-
tian 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 two former articles, tho' they dispute the last.

I say in the second place, That the laws of the Gospel, which regu-
late 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 ethicks,
had no other end but to restore the true sense and meaning of those laws
God had given upon mount Sinai; and tho' 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
dispenations which were only given to make the Messiah known when-
over he should appear.

The prayer which Jesus Christ taught his Apostles, is full of notions
which reigned among the Jews, as several expounders have manifested. I
shall content myself with alleging 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 pro-
phets. And the washing practised under the law of Moses, signifies that
the proselyte, who was admitted to the same, was resolved to renounce
his former courses, and for the time to come to follow an opposite way
of living, according to the rules prescribed him by the Ministers of hea-
ven, after that they in the name of God had assured him of the remission
of his sins.
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 the Egyptians. This ceremony did perpetuate the memory of that deliverance till the coming of the Messiah. Jesus Christ hath substituted to this figure an instance of the curse of God against the posterity of Cham, the idea of his death, by which he hath 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 sins 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 paschal lamb but once a year, Jesus Christ seems to appoint a much more frequent celebration of the eucharist, when he faith, As oft as ye shall eat this bread, &c. the reason of which, without doubt, is taken from the greatnes of the benefit which his death confers upon us.

It is well worth our observation, That ordinarily the same prophetic idea's 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 Zachariah and Ezekiel. Jesus Christ himself pursues the idea's of the Prophet Joel in the XXIV 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 VII Chapter of his book, the destruction of the Roman monarchy by the Chrisrians, whom he titles The People of the most High. St. Paul follows the same notion, i Cor. VI. 2, where he supposeth it as a known thing: The Saints (faith he) shall judge the world. And St. John in the XX of the Revelations, verse 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 ears 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 oft 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 sith of Jerusalem was wont to be burnt up and confounded. Tis upon this account that believers are exhorted to remember Lot's wife, Luke IX. 62. and XVII. 32. and to depart from the midst of the wicked, Heb. 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 Jacob brought with him into Egypt. These passages, To 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 Zebedeæ are called Boanerges, 'tis 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 instance 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 stammering speech, Zachary the father of S. John the Baptist was struck dumb, when he was to pronounce the solemn blessing to the people; whereas Jesus Christ on the contrary has this character given of him, that never man spake like him. God said at the beginning, Encrease 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 S. Peter, and that Jesus Christ restored it again, to shew that the synagogue had loft 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 perswaded that so great a conformity of idea's, 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 forasmuch 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 idea's of the Messiah continued very fresh in the minds of the Jews, and this shall be the subject of the following chapter.

**C H A P. II.**

That the Idea's 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 easie matter for me here to shew that the idea's 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 Zedebiah, and Abiab, whom the king of Babylon burnt, for perswading the Jewish women, 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 affluency 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 deflations before the kingdom of the Messiah could subdue the Romans as well as Herod: one see’s that the multitudes would have taken Christ and proclaimed him their king, and submitted themselves to him as the true Messiah: one see’s 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 they beg 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 be 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 no, and if not, why he exercised a function, which that prophecy seem’d 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, saith 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 XVIII. of Deuteronomy. And we find that when Jesus Christ called 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 Messiahs: the Messiahs, when he appears, say they, will he do greater signs than this man doth? Others are offended because Jesus Christ was of Nazareth, arguing from hence that he could not be the Messiahs: others maintain that when the Messiahs should come, it would not be known whence he was; and others again assert, that the Messiahs was to continue for ever. All which is an evident sign that the ideas of the Messiahs were very familiar among the Jews.

This must have been so of necessity, because the Samaritans themselves were possest with the same ideas 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, did manifestly shew that the characters of the Messiahs 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 scepter was already departed from Judah, the weeks of Daniel were ended, and the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt were over-turn'd; so there were several good men, who were filled with an expectation of the Messiahs. Anna and Simeon are represented to us, as those who by their study of the Holy Scriptures, had discover'd that the time of the coming of the Messiahs was near at hand, much in the same manner as Daniel is represented to us, to have learnt from the prophecy of Jeremiahs, that the captivity was almost expired.

I shall add one argument more which seems beyond exception. That many perfons were found about the time of Jesus Christ, who were either drawn by others into an opinion of their being the Messiahs, 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 Messiahs. Of this number were Theudas and Judas Gaulonites, with some others: thus also soon after some applied the prophecies concerning the Messiahs to Pufpansion the emperour, 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 Messiahs, as of a great king, was very common in the east, and not unknown in the west.

We know that under the emperour Adrian Barchochab was the cause of a terrible sedition, by making the Jews believe that he was the Messiahs: 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 Messiahs 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 Messiahs in their Commentaries on the Scriptures.
CH. III.

That the Common-Wealth of the Jews did still subsist, and follow the Model which God had formed, in Order to the certain Knowing of the Messiah.

Here 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 republick 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 promised to them.

'Tis 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 tho' they have already been deceived by a great
great number of false Messiahs, yet do not they for all that look upon the condition of their common-wealth as irrecoverable.

Now, if during fo 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 inclinations for them; whereas since the time of their dispersion, they have scarcely met with any one prince that has been favourable to them, if we except Julian the apologist, 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 republick 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 amongst 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 the Scripture in Greek, and between those of Jerusalem, who had it in Hebrew, whereas now all this is altogether ceased, 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 70, 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 tho’ 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 Hereticks, whom they tore to pieces, to execute the rigour
of the law.

If we find that a Roman proconful 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 enjoy’d an entire liberty within
Judea? And indeed we find the priests sending their commissioners to
Damacles (b) against the Christians, without doubt with design to exe-
cute the law against impostors. S. 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 govern-
ment, 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 traditioinary Jews, whom Christ continually cen-
fures, had introduced, did still continue pure enough, to answer the mo-
del which God had framed.

They rejected the Samaritans, as appears from the IV of S. John,
and looked upon them as Hereticks, having no commerce with them.

They lived in a perfect alienation from the Heathen; ’tis with this S.
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 joyn’d to these up-
on 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

They assisted at these solemn festivals with much regularity.

They did not till their ground in 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 Jofe-
phus 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 sequestred, and that they observed the
different of the several kinds of leprosy, according to the law of
Mofes.

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 extremally corrupt in their doctrines, with which Christ upbraids the Pharisees and Saduces: 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 mint 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 witnesses against a Heathen. Hence also they concluded that it was lawful for them to kill their enemies, and this fomented 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, tho' it obscured the excellency and sublimity thereof.

As for the Saduces, 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 secur'd 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 encreased, the rules whereof they have infinitely multiplied, and thereby encreased this corruption) how can it be imagin'd that the religion of the Jews was wholly loft, 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 easie 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.
CHAP. IV.

That all the Distinctions necessary for discovering of the Messiah, still continued in the State of the Jews at the Time of our Lord.

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 tho' 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 Abner, and S. 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 Canaanites.

It is known that Galilee was less esteemed than Judaea, 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 distinct, 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 of Judah, which is related as a thing publickly 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 the Jews.

As also the practice of polygamy, which was so common amongst them, that S. Paul thought himself obliged to forbid the same to the pastors of the

(d) Jos. xxii. 10, 11.
the Christian church, that he might abolish it by little and little amongst those that embraced the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

One see’s from the nineteenth of S. Matthew, that divorces were publickly practised amongst them, as they are to this day.

If one makes any reflexion upon the objection the Sadducess 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 extream 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 signifie to us, not only the extream honour which the Jews had conceived against adulterers; (thus we find Jesus Christ upbraiding the Pharisees, that adulterers, that is the greatest of sinners, entred into the kingdom of heaven before them;) but also that the laws against adulterers and adulteresses were severely executed.

In short, one see’s 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 ch. of S. John, and not a person actually married, whose punishment, according to the law, was to be strangled.

One see’s that S. 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 I Chron. XXIV. 11. and he offered incense according to the law, set down Exod. XXX. ver. 7, 8.

One see’s that the Jews would not suffer the dead bodies to hang upon the crosses after sunset, according to what we find was practis’d at the time of Joshua, in pursuance of that law which we find Deut. XXI. ver. 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 fore-runner, 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.

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 Zach, Gen. XLIX, to. The scepter 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 it self.

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 authentick proof of the servitude of that people to the Romans.

It will not be amiss here to take notice, first, Of Moses his 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 publick registers of the Roman empire; in his apologietick addressed to the Roman magistrate, who refided 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 baptisin 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 reflexion 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 Jews 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 reflexion, which is very natural, upon a passage related by the Evangelists. They come and ask our Saviour, Whether it were lawful to yield obedience to the Romans? For since God had chosen this 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 Jerem, yet they could not consent to submit. This is that which 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 soever he should take. Their question is, Whether it be lawful to pay tribute to Cesar? To which he answers with a Divine wisdom; Render to Cesar the things which are Cesar's, and unto God the things that are God's; which words being joyned with the money that he made them produce, which was stamped with the emperours 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 reflexions, we need only observe the manner of our Saviour's sufferings, as it is described to us. The Jews do agree, as may be seen in the Jerusalem 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 crucifie your king? They answer, We have no other king but Cesar, which confession was the confession of the whole Jewish nation, who were assembled at the feast of pasover. In short, one sees that accordingly the Roman magistrate past sentence upon him.
was scourged before they led him to be crucified, which was a punishment amongst the Romans. His body is not taken from the cross but by permission from Pilate; and the Roman soldiery are those dogs, that is, profane Heathens who enclofed 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 differing of the accomplishment of that prophecy of the scepters not departing from Judah, for some centuries after the said captivity; 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 poorest and most miserable were left behind.

Secondly, the captivity lasted only 70 years, whereas this last dispersion 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, tho' 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 alleged; at least the Jews will find nothing to object against the prophecy of Daniel, concerning the weeks 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 less certain that he entred upon his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and was crucified the nineteenth year 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.
That Jesus Christ had precisely such a Fore-Runner as the Prophets had described to precede the Messiah.

We 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 his manner, the year of the world 3292, almost 700 years before the birth of our Saviour. Malachi had expressly foretold the same 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 splendour, and dying a violent death, tho' very glorious for him, was a proper forerunner to that Jesus, who himself was to be crucified.

Our business therefore is to enquire 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 S. John led, being a Nazarite, ought to be carefully considered. He liv'd in a solitary place, as the Prophet Elijah did before him.

Thirdly, his preaching also had the character of that ancient Prophet, being thundring 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 ministrv of this great man.

He baptized publickly 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 proselytes 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 gain’d, 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 stirr’d up jealousy in the mind of Herod, who cast him into prison, and at last caufed his head to be cut off in the castle of Macherom, to satisfie the lewd Herodias, whose marriage, or rather incest, with Herod he had reproved.

Before S. 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 S. John had before alleged as a proof of his call.

All these facts were so illustrious, and so well known, that S. John constantly pass’d for a great Prophet amongst the Jews, the Pharisees themselves not daring to question it: he received publick 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 publick 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 S. 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 S. John.

It appears afterwards that S. John was look’d 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 S. John was rais’d 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 (f), which also made the LXX add to the text the word Thysbite, 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 comes after me, faith he, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

2. He gave a second oracle, tho’ not so plain as the former, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; Whose fan is in his hand, 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;

(f) 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 acknowledg'd for a
Prophet, may confirm the authority of another, by attesting him to be a
true Prophet (g). And this is that which S. 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 S. 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 others 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
jealousie 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 con-
cern'd for his glory and reputation, tho' 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 S. John, as well as of Jesus
Christ.
The third is, That when S. John was beheaded, who never 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, seem'd to be quite for-
gotten.
The fourth is, That it is not probable that they could ever entertain
da design of imposing on the world in such a matter as this, which relat-
ed to publick facts known to all Judea, to all the priests, yea to the
whole nation assembled at their publick 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 S. John had wrought in them, they were easily won to
the faith of Christ. This is evident from the example of Apollos a Dis-
ciple of John the Baptist's Disciples, who became afterwards so excellent
a preacher of the Christian religion.
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, 2 Sam. VII. 12. 1 Chron. XVII. 11. in the year of the world 2599. 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 appear'd 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 tho' at first sight seems to be of small importance, yet we cannot but think that S. 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 see's 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 joyned to this, is, The manner of Elizabeths expressing her self 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 her self as the person in whom the promise made to Abraham, was accomplished, Luke I. vers. 54, 55: which promise concerned the Messiah; she sets forth her self, as heirest to the kings of Judah, and chosen before any 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 her
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 heir 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 consider'd 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 miraculouslv 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, S. 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 Judea, 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 Virgins going to Bethlehem to be there enrolled, according to the decree of Augustus Cæsar. There had been several numbrings 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 4000 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 unlook'd for; and yet it was certainly an accomplishment of that prophecy of Micah, Chap. V. ver. 2. But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, &c.

This remark upon the decree of Augustus is of great moment, because thereby the virgins 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 subfitted 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. 3. 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 envolved Jesus Christ in the massacre which swept away
away the innocent children, it 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 own'd 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 tho' 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 S. Peter's sermon, Acts II. and in the epistles of S. Paul, where we find our Saviour always styled 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 fluck 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 past 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 2d is, That the differences which are found between the genealogy of Jesus Christ set down by S. Matthew, and that by S. 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 whom 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 otherwise 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 pottersity of Rehoboam was afterwards dethroned by Nebuchadnezzar, who carried Zedechiah the king into captivity in the year 3416.

After their return from captivity, they were entirely thrust 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 enquiry 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 expresses in her song. She was descended from the younger brothers of deposed princes, and reduced to 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 confirm'd 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.
CHAP. VIII.

That Jesus Christ was conceived by the Virgin Mary, without any Operation of Man.

This article is one of the most important of our religion, so it is well worth our attentive considera-
tion. 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. How-ever, 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 adul-
teresses, amongst which thofe 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 S. John, which I have illustrated in the fourth chapter of this fourth part.

3. It appears that the fame laws which engaged parents to preserve the virginity of their daughters, did continue, and were still observed by the Jews, as well as thofe other laws which constituted the body of their religion: when Jesus Christ upbraids the Jews for having changed the true fense of the law, yet he never reproaches them upon this account.

4. The relation set down in the eighth chapter of S. John, makes it appear that the waters of jealoufie still retained their virtue; that which Jesus Christ writ on the ground being probably nothing else but the curfes which the law denounced againft 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 thofe laws concerning the marks of virginity, to prevent any doubts that might arise concerning the fame: it remains now to confider the several passages of the Evangelifts, and to fee 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 Evangelifts 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 Typh. p. 297. Isai. 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 thing known throughout all Jerusalem, and which had no relation to
their matter. Besides, we know the jealousy that was between the Disci-
iples of S. 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 ri-
gour 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 dislike, as conceiving her to be de-
bauched, and was resolved not to receive her, but by an order from hea-
ven.

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 sup-
position 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 her
self, who was designed to effect it; because she could not easily make
the application at first.

2. It caus'd exceeding joy to the person who saw her self chosen by
God to fulfil so glorious a promise, whereby the family of David was to
be restor'd 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 concern-
ing 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.

S. 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
loth something obscure the distinct notion of virginity; and secondly,
That the Blessed Virgin did always pass for the wife of Joseph, even ac-
cording to the style of Jesus Christ himself. And lastly, That the rela-
tion which the Evangelists give of this matter, was not known till long
after the death of Jesus Christ.

But

(i) Contr. Helvidium.
Reflexions upon the

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 pass'd for the wife of Joseph; the her self faith, I and thy father fought 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 preferv 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 says, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? that is, kinmen. 'Tis probable that Joseph was dead, before our Saviour entred upon his ministry; however his making no mention of his reputed father, shews how careful he was to avoid any thing that might obscure his miraculous birth.

Last of all, it is very considerable, that this passage being not the only character which was to distinguish 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 vailed 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 this truth, and that the Evangelists had put it in writing before the destruction of the Jewish common-wealth; 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 set her self 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 kill'd by them between the temple and the altar, with which our Saviour upbraids the Jews. I know also that they affirm that she was forced to confirm the truth of her virginity, by submitting her self to a search of matrons: yet I cannot believe that she ever underwent any such examination, of which the silence of the Evangelists, and S. Luke's in particular, fully convinces me, and therefore 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 Zachariah 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 publickly 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 S. John, as well as those of Jesus Christ, tho' the Disciples of S. 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 Jews 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 she 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 concern'd her self, 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, tho' we have no other testimony concerning them, but that of the Prophets themselves.

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 encrease of which I have already taken notice of 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), seem'd 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 idea's 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 so without the least hesitation, and said, That when the Messiah should come, he would tell them all things.

In short, one fee's 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 serv'd 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, tho' he was born at Bethlehem, he was therefore look'd 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 lefts the great Prophet, the Messiah, who by way of eminence is so called. 'Tis 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 dwelt 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 prophane 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

(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 Messiah 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 follow’d 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, i. In correcting those abuses which the Jewish Doctors had introduced into the law. Secondly, In declaring that the effect of sanctification was to be look’d 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 address’d 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 so ordinary and familiar amongst the Jews, that we find most of them at this day in the writings of the Jews, tho’ they apply them to another use.

3. That he descend’d to particulars, without using any thing 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.

(q) Isai. ix. 1. (r) Isai. lxi. 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 prepar'd 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 publickly, 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 carpenters 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 less 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 accuicted his enemies of so many? Who of you, faith he, accuseth me of sin? We find him only accused of words ill understood, which they were resolved to misinterpret: his saying, That if they destroy'd 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 heightned 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 restorer 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 dispoze the minds of his auditors and Disciples, to conceive and believe him to be the promised Messiah. The first act of his publick 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 Soveraign. And lastly, He explains himself in this matter by a question, when he asked his Disciples, What cenfures were paffed 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 u

(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 extreamly 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 eft 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.

CHAP. X.

That the Miracles wrought by our Saviour, clearly prove that he is the Messiah.

S the Messiah was to be very clearly distinguished from all others by his miracles, and as the Prophet Isaiah, 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 sick son of a courtier; he delivered one that was possessed in the synagogue at Capernaum; he healed S. 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 wither’d hand; he deliver’d a possessed person that was blind and dumb; he recover’d the centurion’s servant, and rais’d to life the son of the widow of Naim.

Neither are these that follow any less considerable; he restores sight to two blind men, he casteth forth a dumb devil, he afflicteth a tempest by his word, he delivers two possessed 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 dropzie 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 it self.

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 mark 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 reflection belongs to the subjects upon whom these miracles were wrought; for we scarce find any of them, except his curing S. 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 reflection may be drawn from the places where they were done, and from the witneffes that were present. In short, they were wrought in publick 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 Palestine.

One may add alfo, That these miracles were of very different kinds, wrought in several places, and with very considerable circumstances, at the most solemn feafts, the passover and pentecost.

One ought to consider alfo, That Palestine 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 obverse, 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 before.

And lastly it must be oberved, That these miracles were lasting; the three.
three dead men, whom our Saviour raised to life again, were very young, and who in all probability lived longer than decrepit old men, were in the sight of all Judea; 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 fallly 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 his disciples was ever so bold as to say to Heathens, as Tertullian did in the second century, in his apologetick, Bring to us what perverted 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 wine; 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-
concerning 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.

C H A P. XI.

That the Predictions of our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly prove him to be the Messiah.

ONE might have observ'd, 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 foretells 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 send 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 foretells 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 foretells the rejection of the Jews; The children of the kingdom, faith he, shall be cast out into outer darkenss.

He foretells 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 foretells 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 encrease, according to what David had foretold, Psalm CX. verse 3. alluding to the sudden fruitfulness which is caused 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, S. Peter deny him, that his Apostles should be scattered, as soon as they should see him smitten. He foretels the martyrdom of S. Peter, which he was to suffer for his false, and to S. 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 Messiah's should come after him, whom the Jews should receive, tho' 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 acts which he sent his Disciples for, those of his death and resurrection, of S. 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 see's 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 of 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 S. Peter, When thou shalt be old, another shall guide thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not (u); 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 prophetical idea's taken from the Old Testament, from Genesis, Isaiah, Ezechiæl, Zachariah, &c.

G g 2

(u) Joh. xxi. 18.
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 magistrature? 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, S. 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 publick 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 'twas 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 thence-forward 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 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 foretells 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 *Enniads* 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 persecutions. 'Tis 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 finely have been of so long continuance as the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which nevertheless was attack'd by all that was great and powerful in the world. Who see's 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 penn'd 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 from after, every one endeavouring to take notice of their accomplishment.
4. They have been alleged 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, tho' 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.

\[ G g 3 \]

CHAP. XII.

(x) Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 23.
Reflexions upon the

C H A P. XII.

That Jesus Christ died preciely in the same Manner as it was foretold that the Messiah should dye.

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 hangeth 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 idea’s 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 idea’s to be received, which seem full of contradictions; the Messiah having been at first set forth as the Fountain of Bleffing: 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 fo, because of the nature of these events, which were so strange, and at such a distance from the common idea’s 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 imagin’d 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 dipose 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. (γ).

2. He was befeft with a band of Roman soldiers, and the servants of the principal men among the Jews, who apprehended him, under the conduct of Judas; which exactly answers, 1. To the description which we find Psal. XXII. Dogs, that is Heathens, whom the Jews treated as such, and strong Bulls, that is Jews, represented by clean Beasts, have befeft 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 fouldiers that he was the man they looked for; he opposed S. Peter’s attempts towards his rescue, and declares that he did not fly from death, but was willing to satifie the intent of the prophecies.

4. He is forfaken by his Disciples, as he himself had testified of it as foretold by the Prophets, Zach. XIII. 7.

5. He is smitten on the face before Annas, as Jeremiah had foretold Lament. III. 30. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him.

6. He appears before Caiaphas, surrounded by every thing that was great among the Jews, whether lawyers or church-men, 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 sheep before his shearsers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth, Isaiah LIII. 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, Psal. 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 let apart by the Jews for the burial of strangers, as was foretold by Zachariah 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 LIII. vers. 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.

16. He is afterwards delivered to the fouldiers, who before they crucified him, insulted over him with a thoufand indignities, and scourged him again, according to the prophecies fo often before alluded.

17. They crucifie him with two robbers, which answers to that prophecy Isaiah LIII. 12. He was numbered with transgresfors.

18. They give him gall and vinegar to drink, as was foretold Psalm LXIX.

19. They pierce his hands and feet in nailing him to the crofs, which answers to Psalm XXII. 17, 18.

20. They part his garments, which is represented in the fame Psalm, verse 19. and cast lots on his vesture, according to the fame Psalm in the very fame place.

21. He suffers a thoufand reproaches upon the crofs, according to what we find Psalm XXII. verse 8. and Psalm LXIX. ver. 8, 10.

22. And in particular the Jews and Scribes reproach him in the very words of Psalm XXII. verse 8.

23. Jefus Chrift cries out, applying to himself the beginning of Psalm XXII. My God! My God! Why haft 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 Jefus Chrift, which one fee's to be exactly agreeable to the prophecies going before concerning them: let us now confider thofe which followed his death, which we fhall not find to be lefs particular.

1. The bones of Jefus Chrift were not broken. as thofe of the two thieves, which one may fee foretold Psalm XXXIV. verse 21.

2. They open'd his fide with a fpear, according to the idea of Zechariah, Chap. X. verse 12. They fhall look upon him whom they have pierced.

3. His body is buried by Joseph of Arimathea, in a new fepulchre, which answers to the prophecy of Isaiah, Chap. LIII.

These remarks do, in my judgment, clearly prove, that in the death of Chrift all the characfers by which the Prophets have diftinguifhcd the death of the Messiah, are actually found.

But that we may yet be more fenfible how juftly these oracles are applied to Jefus Chrift; here are fome reflexions upon the application which the Apoftles make of these particular facts which happened to Chrift, to thofe oracles which I have now mentioned.

The first is, That the relation of thofe facts is joyned with an account of the weakness whereinto they all fell: they relate their own flight, and forsaking their master, with S. Peter's denying of him, whilst they fet down the courage of thofe women, and that entire love which they fhowed to the perfon of Jefus.

The second is, That the account of the accomplifhment of thofe ancient oracles is interwoven with the accomplifhment of thofe which were uttered by Jefus Chrift, which alone are fufficient to make good his claim.

The third is, That our Saviour did never on any occasion more openly stand to his pretention of being the Messiah, than when he applied to himself
himself those oracles which by their publick consent were referred to the Messiah, which the Jews at that time more obstinately contester than ever.

The fourth is, That there never was a more exact description of all circumstances which might allure 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 extream 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 Hea
then 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 publick, 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 a clock in the morning till noon; the vail of the temple is rent. These are miraculous actions, and such as the Jews might easily have refuted, wheresoever 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 prophesies; 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.

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 prophesies set down in my third part, he rose again the third day, and afterwards ascended into heaven. As these two facts are the most im-

important
important 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 indubitably 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 tho' the Jews did not all of them look upon it as an impossible thing, yet there were Sadduces amongst them, whose doctrine was publickly taught. It is certain, that tho' 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, tho' 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 prophesie, defir'd of Pilate, that a guard might be set on Jesus his grave, yet they expressly tell us, that the Disciples, none excepted, were in such a consternation at the death of Jesus Christ, that they had entirely loft the hopes of seeing the accomplishment of that prophesie. Some pious women, who had accompanied him to the crofs, 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. Tho' 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 impetuous, 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 joyns 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
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 allured, 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 S. 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 resurrection; 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 afterward to seven of his Apostles upon the lake of Tiberias, where he confirms S. 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 allure 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 reflection, 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 of 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 liv'd.

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 tho' the resurrection of Christ was accompanied with very peculiar circumstances, sufficient to convince both Jews and Gentiles of the truth of it, being usher'd in with an earthquake, with apparitions of Angels to the soldiers that guarded the sepulchre of Jesus, and were frighted thereby, yet the council of the Jews contrived, with the soldiers, a most impudent lye to out face 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 linnen 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, do 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 forook 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 Apostles' 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 publick, 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 publickly that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead? And yet this was what they did with surprising diligence when they inferred this terrible accuation 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 gainfayers, as we shall shew hereafter.

One may add to this proof the conversion of S. Paul, and the care which he afterwards took to confirm this 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 ministrv in the minds of the Galatians, who preferred S. 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 profelyte, that is a Gentile by birth, but a Jew by profession, and by the imployment he was in, he had occasion of being more particularly informed of the deposition of the soldiery, 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 dyed a martyr for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The great affection which S. Luke had for S. Paul confirms the same truth. S. Luke had never seen our Saviour, he was born at Antioch, where in all probability he exercised his profession of phvlick, yet he was converted to Christianity, and followed S. Paul in all places, and wrote 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 S. 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 it self seems hard to be believed, and was otherwise so much contefted, is, 1. Proved by ten several apparitions; 2. It is attested by above five hundred Disciples; 3. It was publickly preached by the Disciples of Christ at Jerusalem it self, and throughout all Judea, where it was most of all disputed: 4. It was received by the very enemies of Jesus Christ, as S. Paul and Cornelius,
nelsus, and by thousands of those, who having demanded his death, were converted by the preaching of the Apoftles: 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 perpons whom Chrift had railed to life, and who lived one of them at Bethany, fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, where Jesus ascended to heaven; another at Nain, &c. But it was further verified by several refurreftions wrought by the Apoftles, to whom Chrift had vouchsafed that affonnement power.

It was also a very considerable thing that the commonwealth of the Jews continued near forty years after the time that the Apoftles undertook openly to preach up the refurreftion of Jesus Chrift as the capital article of their religion; and yet in all that time it was never oppofed by any publick writing either of the Jews or Gentiles. If the Jews in their unjust intrigues againft Jesus Chrift and his religion, endeavoured to abuse the world in this matter, with calumniating stories, neither have the Apoftles been wanting to accuse the principal men of their nation of impiety, and they have defpifed the moft cruel of their punishments, to maintain the justice of their charge; and yet none of them would undertake to fatisfie the calumnies of their council, tho' they faw Chriftianity spreading it felf not only over all Judea, but in all parts of the world. To fpeak of it, as it is, this conduct of theirs was a manifeft betraying of their caufe, or rather an open acknowledgment that what they had published againft the innocency of the Di fpies, and the truth of the refurreftion of Jesus was without all ground.

I forefee only one probable difficulty which can be oppofed to the folidity of these reflexions. A Jew may demand, why Jesus Chrift after his refurreftion did not concurve as openly amongst the Jews as before, that fo he might have been known by thofe who had crucified him, which would have put the truth of the refurreftion out of doubt?

But to fpeak truth, this objeftion is not reafonable; for 1. Jesus Chrift had threatened the unbelieving Jews, they fhould fee him no more, and he ought to make good his threatening. 2. Who fees not that they would have loofed upon his appearing amongst them as a phantaffick apparition, after they had feen him work fo many miracles, and had attributed them to the devil. 3. I fay that fuch an apparition was not agreeable to our Saviour's doctrine in the parable of the rich man; They have Mofes and the Prophets, if they hear not them, neither will they be perfuaded the one rofe from the dead (z). 4. Jesus Chrift having for the moft part con- verfed in Galilee at Nazareth and Capernaum, it was to the Galileans and his Di fpies that he was chiefly to fhow himfelf, to be acknowledged by them, as being the perpons who were particularly to bear witnefs of this truth. After fo strong a prefumption as the governours of that people had of Chrift's refurreftion, founded upon the earthquake which accompanied it, and upon the deposition of the foul diers to whom the Angels had appeared, had not they all the reafon in the world to believe the tes- timony of the Apoftles concerning this truth, which they heard ferveral times attested by them in full council, and faw confirm'd by miraculous cures which they could not queftion in the leaft.

Laftly, Is not this objeftion the moft ridiculous thing in the world?

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 that because he did not make choice of means (in order to perswade the Jews) which they preferr'd 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 attest it with the same proofs, and the same zeal, the reflexions 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.

* * *

C H A P. 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 S. 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 thence forward to 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 reflexions upon the relation which S. Luke gives us of it in the Acts.
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 S. 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 Sion, was solemnly promulg'd 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 to 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 defires 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 affirmed by the mouth of S. 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. 'Tis 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 S. 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 S. 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 S. Peter had preached to the Gentiles.

3. S. 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
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 hea-
ven, 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 publickly
acknowledged; Simon Magus is convinced thereof, and he who had made
himself famous by his forceries, becomes a Disciple. S. Luke in a his-
tory of the actions of thirty years, relates the continual miracles wrought
by the Apostles, and particularly by S. Paul, whom he constantly fol-
lowed.

It seems to me, that if one considers the history it self, and the per-
son who made it, that 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. S. 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 Syriack 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 com-
mon thing; S. Paul employing some part of his first epistle to the Corin-
thians to regulate those disorders which arose in the church, by reason
of the abuse of those gifts. S. James speaks of the power that the priests
had to cure the sick; and S. 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 ministry of the Spirit, in opposition to the letter
of the law, notwithstanding the tables of the law had been given to Mo-
ses 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 con-
vince mankind of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. God gave to Adam a pow-
er of speaking one language, and afterwards he divided the same to make
a confusion amongst 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

Vol. I. H h making
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 expresses 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 Jesus 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 S. 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.

### 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 Jesus 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 renew'd 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. XLIX. 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 tho' the most part of the idea's which the Pro-
phets 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
XXIV. of S. Matthew, This Gospel, faith he, shall be preached throughout
all 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, con-
trary 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 can-
not 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, worship 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 destroy'd, 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, en-
deavour 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 tho' 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 my self 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 employ'd in calling
of the Gentiles is S. Peter, to whom Jesus Christ had promised the ho-
nour 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 proselyte. 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 deposed 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 the 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 prov'd
the scandal of the Jews, who looked upon the Messiah as the fountain of
blessing, and the Cross as an accursed punishment; it was look'd up-
on no other wise 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 fee's a prodigious success, and a surprizing ex-
ten of this call. Within a little time the world was fill'd with Chris-
tians: S. Paul writes to those that were in Asia, Greece, and Italy; S.
Peter to those of Pontus; S. John to those who were among the Par-
thians. There were not wanting some in the very emperor's court,
even that of Nero, who put S. Peter and S. Paul to death in the sixty
seventh year of our Lord.

One cannot attend to a success of this nature, without being extrem-
ely surpriz'd; let us conceive of a dozen, or thereabouts, of poor beg-
gars, a dozen of unlearned men coming out of Judea, who should ac-
cuse the whole world of folly and impiety; every one opposing them,
especially the Jews, who were incensed to see them go about to eftablish
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 fill'd all the East, and which
had rendred 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 S. 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 hea-
ven; 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 smites us, and to leave our cloak also with him who takes our coat from us; to go two miles with him who confines us to guide him one; to love our enemies, and to with 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. Tho' 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 me? (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 cross 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 certain as the Truth of it.

His 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, profligate person, 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 confirm'd by 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 assure 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 publick person; and it was when he was employ'd in his publick function in the temple; they are seconded by miracles which were known to the whole nation of the Jews; they are follow'd by the publick 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 distinguishing from those of our Saviour, who were spread throughout all Judea, and who continued after the death of our Saviour; there were Disciples of a man, who besides all this, doth not keep up any correspondence with our Saviour, and who at left falls by the hand of Herod for cenfuring his inceft 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 preserve'd as long as they were in being.

That the Angels testified their joy at his birth, is a fact which was confirm'd 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 publick 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 kill'd in Syria, under
two years of age, he had kill'd 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 learnt 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 S. John, and that he received a most glorious testimony from him, is a fact of which all those Jews whom the ministry of S. 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 dispers'd.

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 wish for his appearance; a fact confirm'd by publick oracles, and known to the whole nation, yea to the Heathen 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 pasover, 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 had not been as confessedly 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.
day as long as they liv’d, by a constant law, because they considered this resurrection as the seal of those truths which Jesus Christ had taught them. 'Tis a fact, the truth whereof they have maintained before magistrates, before the people, in all parts of the world. 'Tis a fact which they have publickly preached up, notwithstanding all prohibitions which have been made: in short, it is a fact which they have asserted 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, maintain 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 found to be fill’d 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 master, is a fact the truth whereof is established upon indubitable testimonies, infomuch 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 confin’d to their nation, is a fact so well attested, that it cannot be called in question, if we consider the first dispute, which gave occasion to the first council of the Apostles, and to the contests of S. 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 S. 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 annul’d 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 conficts of the Jews, the opposition of Atheists, the cavils of Hereticks, 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 publick order, and by an effect of the hatred of the whole nation, I say, to attribute to them the design of perverting 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 confirm’d it by all the proofs which might convince those, who tho’ they were not prejudic’d, yet were asto-nish’d at the difficulty of the things themselves, so that nothing can be more certain than facts so confirmed, as we pretend that these actually were.

CHAP. XVII.
CHAP. XVII.

That it cannot be questioned, whether the Books of the New Testament were written by the Apostles.

Before we allege 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 mention'd. 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 these 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 Cefar.

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 those facts had not been beyond contest. Now we find very few oracles of which they did not make an application to the life and actions of our Saviour. We'll 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 reflexion 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 assisted 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 resolv'd 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 Soudiers had Depos'd the same in the forms of law before Pilate. From all which it appears that they were faithful Historians, and not at all precipitated, 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 reflexions being once supposed, I say, it is impossible to dispute the truth of these books, or to call their authority in question: to be convinc'd 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 S. 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 in anse of 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 alledge nothing; but we can alledge the same in favour of the books of the New Testament. They tell us that Moses, under the penalty of a curfe, had Forbid the adding any thing thereto; and do not we read the fame threatening in the last book of the New Testament? The philosophers of each sect, have nothing of this weight to alledge 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 Hereticks, as of Marcian 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 S. 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 Refs (a), where a book which was fallly attributed to S. Peter was preserved, supposing it to have been his, the other churches not confenting to it, that abuse was soon remedied, the writings abolished, that there is scarce a weak remembrance left of them.

One fee's 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 suffer'd martyrdom under Antiochus, to preserve the books of the Old Testament, we have like examples, and as numerous, of those who have done so 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 subjecling of them to the utmost rigour of Ecclesiastical discipline, in the third century and before.

(a) Euseb. lib. vi. cap. 12.  

CHAP. XVIII.
CHAP. XVIII.

That one cannot doubt of the Faithfulness of the Witness of the Apostles concerning those Facts which they relate.

Either 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 their 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 learnt 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 forswore all that they possessed in the world; S. 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 murmurings. S. Matthew tells us that he was a publican, that is a servant of the Roman power, whom the Jesus look’d upon as an excommunicated person, and as an enemy of their own nation. He relates the ridiculous pretension of the sons of Zebedee, founded on the carnal notion of their mother concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. They set down S. Peter’s denying of his matter; they do not dissemble their common ignorance, which made them
they expect a temporal king in Jesus Christ; they frankly publish their own incredulity, when Mary Magdalene brought them the news of our Saviour's resurrection; and they describe the obstinate resistance of S. 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 dependance one upon the other, and so interwoven with the most publick 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 publickly known to the kings of Judea, to the Roman magistrate, 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, Sadduces, and Essenes, who are attack'd, cenrured, 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 cenfrured, the Sadduces 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.

S. 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 publickly known and attested by a vast number of witnesses. Thus S. Peter speaks of them in the tenth of the Acts, and the other sacred writers speak 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 anathematiz'd him as an impostor, 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 despise the anathema's of the Jewish synagogue, they contemn their publick 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 it self to decry the gods they worshipt, 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 falsity of the facts related in the Gospel; they had the books of the Apostles in their hands, they were masters of the publick 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 sect, of whom Pliny the younger tells us, that all sorts of people joyned with them, tho' they were persecuted with incredible violence. In the mean time we find no body 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, call'd The Acts of Pilate, published by the order of the emperour 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.
More Reasons to manifest the Faithfulness of the Apostles.

That I have already alledged 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 supberadd some few more reflexions.

First of all, It cannot be deny'd 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.

S. Luke writes the history of the Apostles, and in particular that of S. 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 epistolar, 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 employ'd 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 leaft.

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 title of the Jews, in pointing out to us their solemn feasts, as that of the Gentiles, by setting down the year of the Roman emperour, 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 witnes: they contain a great number of sermons, preached upon several illustrious occasions in the synagogues, in the temple of Jerusalem, and before thousand 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 penn'd before the overthrow of the commonwealth of the Jews. There are only some of the works of S. John, which were writ after the destruction of Jerusalem. I have before observed that the Divine Providence order'd 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 encreased 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 contests and disputes between the Apostles and those first Christians, yet without calling those facts which are continued in the Gospel, in question by either side: S. Paul takes notice of the contests 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 see's that there arose a dispute amongst the Apostles themselves, about the calling of the Gentiles to the Gospel; one see's 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; infomuch 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 reflexion, That in comparing this dispute of S. Paul with the writings of the Evangelists, it clearly appears that they did not allude 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, employ'd in base professions, often cast into prisons, and from time to time oblig'd 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 lost 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 authentick 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; nor in Syriack, 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.
C H A P. 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.

That 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 these reflexions upon the books of the holy Scripture; and I believe I may with justice conclude, That as nothing is more uncontestable 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 reflexions: 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 as 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 luster. 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 reflexions 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 off-spring 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 infults 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 man, 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 patriarchs, or of paying them any tribute; which Jews that their authority was wholly extinct.

Thirdly, Their temple at Jerusalem being destroyed in the seventieth year of our Lord, as that in Egypt called Onison was the year following, it could never be built again, notwithstanding that Julian the apostate, out of his hatred to the Christians, favoured that enterprize 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 greatness of his works, he with vast expense designed to rebuild the splendid temple which was formerly at Jerusalem, which after many and bloody battels, being besieged by Vespasian, and afterwards by Titus, was at last taken with difficulty: be committed the care of hastening the business to Alypius of Antioch, who had formerly been Prefect of Britain. As therefore this Alypius was vigorously prosecuting the work, being assisted by the Lieutenant of the Province, terrible balls of fire frequently breaking forth near the foundations, sometimes burnt the workmen, and made the place inaccessible: thus the design was laid aside, the element it self beating them back on purpose. Julian early apprehended that their religion would perish, and that it could never be restored without the temple.

In the fourth place, the observation of some of their laws was absolutely forbidden, as being contrary to those of the Roman empire. Thus they were not suffered to have many wives.

Upon this overthrow many inconveniencies followed, which it will be convenient to represent at one view.

1. They no longer know those persons who at the first division of the land by Joshua, were owners of the different parts of the land of Canaan.

2. Their families and tribes are confounded; their jubilee, which could not be kept but in the land of Canaan, and which obliged them to study their genealogies, having ceased long since.

3. The

(b) Dispersi, palabundi, &c cali, &c soli sui exortes, vagantur per orbem, sine homine, sine Deo rege, quibus nec advenarum jure terram patriam saltem vestigio, salutare conceditur. Apolog. cap. 21.

(c) Lib. 23. Imperiique sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare, ambitiojum quondam apud Hierofolyman templum quod post multa & interviciwa certamina, obfidentes Vespasiano potestas Titio, aegra est expugnatum, inflaurare sumpibus cogitabant immodici: negotiationis: maturandum Alypius dederat Antiocheni, qui cim Britannias curaverat Pre-prestijs. Cum itaque idem iteriter inflairet Alypius, juvaret; provinciae Redor, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assaltibus erumpentes, fecere locum exspectis aliquoties operatibus inaccessum: hocque modo elemento destinatius repellente, cessavit 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, than 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 overturned, 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
That 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.

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 alluded. 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 sets down the accusation brought in against Flavius and Domitilla, 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 written 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 Gospel.

Secondly, These mysteries, as for instance, that of the Trinity, rela-
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 idea's 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 these 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 reflexions 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 Christianitv were
doubtful concerning the truth of these 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 consider'd 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 *millenium*, the truth of the promisés of Jesus Christ being equally believed by both the disputing parties; but differently understood, according to the temper of those that consider'd of them; some forming gross and fenfual 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 hath sprung up amongst Christians, is one of the moft solid proofs of the truth of the books of the New Testament. If some fools have endeavoured to decry some of them, or to falsifie 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 see's that Tertullian, tho' a Montanift, writ prescriptions againft Hereticks; 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 Karaîtes and Thalmai- dés, the jealousie 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 these human failings; but I will only instance in one, which has always seem'd to me very considerable; and that is, That these Hereticks 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 encrease, the more the sees himself confirm'd 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 perfections, 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 reflexions upon the holy Scripture here propounded, with a serious attention, and to examine the coherence and indiffoluble 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.