Part of the Library Inquest. By the Rev. C. Bonnar to the Theo. Sir. Princeton

To Mrs. Bradford
The Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion.

Vol. I.

By Robert Jenkin, D.D. late Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, and Master of St. John's College in Cambridge.


London,
TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN,

EARL OF EXETER.

May it please Your LORDSHIP,

THE general Decay and Contemt of the Christian Religion amongst us, has made me think, that I could not better employ the Leisure, which, by Your Lordship's Favour, I enjoy, than in using my best Endeavours to shew the Excellency and the Certainty of it. And what I have done, is here humbly presented to Your Lordship, as of Right, and upon many Accounts, it ought to be.
The Honour and the Satisfaction which I have often had to hear Your Lordship speak in the behalf of Religion and Virtue, encourage me to hope, that a Performance, though but such as this, upon that Subject, may obtain Your Acceptance. And the Name only of a Person of Your Lordship's Honour and Learning, and Knowledge of the World, may perhaps be of more advantage to the Cause I undertake, than any thing I have been able to write.

Religion may seem by Descent, and as it were, by Inheritance, to belong to Your Lordship's Care: The Wisdom and Piety of Your Great Ancestor, appear to distant Ages in the Reformation, which, through the Blessing of God, was in so great a measure, by his means established in this Kingdom. And I have with joy often thought, that I could observe the Spirit and Genius of my Lord Treasurer Burghley, now exerting it self more than ever in Your Noble Family. From whence, methinks, we may presage Happiness to the Nation, and may yet expect to see a true Sense of Religion revive, and may hope, that even in our Days, Christianity,
Dedication.

Christianity, amongst Englishmen, shall be more than a Name, which is everywhere spoken against.

An eminent Virtue is a Publick Good: There is a powerful and commanding Force in Great Examples, to countenance Virtue and discourage Vice and Profaneness; to make Irreligion appear, as it is, base and contemptible in the World; to degrade it, and thrust it down, among the lower and untaught part of Mankind. Much is not to be expected from the Schools and from the Gown, under such Contempt and Discouragement. But the Great and the Honourable have it in their power to do great things; things worthy of Themselves, and for the advancement of God's Glory. Persons of High Birth, and both by Nature and Education fitted for the Highest Undertakings, whose Virtues shall flourish with their Years, and add New Lustre to their Hereditary Honours, may yet regain a due esteem to Religion, and adorn the Gospel of Christ. This is a proper Object for the Ambition of generous aspiring Minds to express their Gratitude to him who has placed them so much above the rest of the World.
World; and when they find themselves happy now, to disdain to aim at any thing less than everlasting Happiness hereafter. To be miserable after Happiness, is an aggravation of Misery: but to receive Eternal Blessings, as the Fruits and Improvement of such as are Temporal, is the Privilege of those whom God has been pleased to distinguish from others by his Mercies, and who distinguish themselves by a Regard to his Honour and Service.

All that know Burghley, (and who is there almost that doth not know it?) are surprized with Wonder and Delight, to observe what Art can do, and to behold the Splendour and the Magnificence of foreign Countries in our own: But the Glories and Rewards of Virtue shall continue, when Burghley it self and the World shall be no more; and will make Death but a Passage and an Advancement from one Palace, from one Honour, to another; and a Removal only from the uncertain Riches and imperfect Felicities of this Life, to the Mansions of Eternal Bliss in Heaven.
DEDICATORY.

That these my Endeavours may prove but in any measure serviceable to the Ends of Religion and Virtue, and thereby to the Glory and Happiness of your Honourable Family, in this and a better World, is, My LORD, the unfeigned Desire and Prayer of,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Most Humble, and

Most Obedient

Servant and Chaplain,

R. JENKIN.
AM sensible, that the Publication of a Treatise of this nature, will be liable to Exceptions, from those for whose Use and Benefit it is chiefly designed, who will be ready to lay hold of all Pretences, to avoid the being convinced of what they have so little mind to believe. They will be apt to say, That if the Truth of Religion were so certain, and so evident, as it is maintain'd to be, there could be little Need of so many Discourses upon this Argument; for it is no Sign of Certainty, that though such Numbers of Books are published of this kind, which so many Men of Learning and Parts have written upon the Subject; yet others, it seems, are not satisfied in their Performance, but are continually offering something new upon it. They will likewise object, That many of the Professors and Ministers of Religion, do not live as if they believed themselves; at least, not as if they
they were so very certain of what they teach; and that if there were so great Certainty, there never could be so many Unbelievers, but all who heard of it, must needs be convinced by such Evidence. I shall therefore shew here, That the Number of Books written on this Subject, doth not prove the Uncertainty of Religion, but rather the contrary: and that the ill Lives of Men is no Argument against the Religion they profess. And then I shall enquire how it comes to pass, that a Religion which carries so plain and convincing Evidence along with it, should yet by too many be disbelieved, or disregarded.

I. To the First thing, it might be sufficient to say, That the Number of Writers is a great Confirmation of the Truth of our Religion; since as many as have undertaken the Proof of it, have always agreed in the main Evidence, and differ only in Method, or in the Management of particular Arguments: and though all have not written with equal Strength and Clearness; yet there is not, I believe, one Author, but has brought sufficient Arguments to confute the Adversaries of Religion. They are pleased indeed, to think otherwise: but they may at least take notice, how obvious it is, that if this Objection prove any thing, it must prove, that there is no such thing as Certainty in the World; because there is no Art nor Science, concerning which divers Treatises are not daily published. But are therefore the Natures of Virtue and Vice uncertain? Is it the less certain, whether Justice, Temperance, and common Honesty, be Virtues;
Virtues; or whether Murther, Adultery, and Theft, be Crimes; because Laws are made, and Sermons daily preached concerning these things? Or can any Man doubt, that these Crimes often meet with severe Punishments even in this World, tho' Men will take no Warning by never so many Examples, but have need of continual Advice and Exhortation to keep them from the Commission of them? Is there the less Certainty in the Mathematicks, because Euclid, Apollonius, and innumerable others of all Ages and Nations, have put forth Books and Systems of Mathematicks in several Forms and Methods?

When many write upon the same Subject, it is an Argument of the Excellency and Usefulness of it; not that they are dissatisfied in what has been already said by others, but that they think, more may be said, or that some things may be proved more clearly, in another Method, with more Advantage to some Capacities, and with greater Probability of removing the Scruples of some Men. It is, undoubtedly, very fit, that all necessary Doctrines, upon which the Eternal Happiness or Misery of Mankind depends, should be treated of in all kinds of Ways and Methods; and they cannot be too often discoursed of, nor by too many Men, that no Objection may remain unanswered, nor Scruple unobserved. Though a little may be sufficient, upon a plain Matter, to wise Men; yet too much cannot be said upon a Subject, wherein all Men are concerned: And it is the great Assurance of the Truth of Religion, and Charity to
to the Souls of Men, that has engag’d so many Authors in this Cause.

Besides the Primitive Fathers and Apologists, Men of the greatest Learning and Abilities in latter Ages have undertaken this Subject, having made it their Study and Business, to consider the Grounds of our Holy Religion. And I think few will pretend to more Judgment to discover Truth, or to more Integrity to declare it, than divers Authors; who have had no particular Interest or Profession in reference to Religion, but were under only the common Obligations of all Christians; which if they had valued as little as some others, they could with as much Wit and Learning have appear’d in the Cause of Irreligion, as any that ever undertook it. Many of the most eminent in all Professions and Callings have been the most zealous Affertors of Religion; as I might shew by particular Examples which are in every Man’s Memory. Indeed, I believe, few Men have so vain an Opinion of themselves, as to think they understand their several Studies and Professions better than many Persons who have given undoubted Evidence of their unfeigned Belief of the Christian Religion. Men of the greatest Sagacity and Judgment have not been moved with such Objections as others so much stumble at; but have liv’d and died the Glory of their Age, and an Honour to their Religion; such were the Learned Prince of Mirandula, and that Learned French Nobleman Mornæus; such were Grotius, Sir Matthew Hale, Dr. Willis; and many besides, both of our own and other Nations.
tions. I shall mention but one more, who indeed was so eminent, that I scarce need mention him, for he must be already in every Reader's Thoughts; I mean, the Honourable Mr. Boyle, who was as inquisitive, and as unwilling to be imposed upon, and knew as much of Nature, perhaps, as ever any Man, not inspired, did; and had withal as stedfast a Belief, and as awful Apprehensions of Reveal'd Religion; which he endeavour'd to establish and propagate, not only by his own Writings, but by the Labours of others, which he engaged and rewarded by his Last Will and Testament.

II. But Men do not always live answerably to what they profess to believe. It were heartily to be wished, that there had never been any occasion given for this Objection: For though it be very inconsiderable in itself, yet it does, I believe, the most Mischief of any; because Men naturally govern themselves more by the Example than by the Judgment of others, or even than by their own Reason. But if we will judge aright, the Example of one Man, who lives according to the Doctrines of Religion, ought to be of more Weight with us, than the Example of never so many, who live contrary to their Profession. Because when Men profess one thing and act another, their Actions are surely as little to be regarded as their Professions. And if we will not believe their Profession against their Actions, why should we regard their Example against their avow'd Principles and Profession? It is in all other Cases esteemed a good Argument for the Truth of any thing, when Men
Men confess it against themselves. And the Motives and Temptations are visible, by which they are led aside from their own declared Faith and Judgment; this Pleasure, or that Profit, is the Cause of it, which every Man can point to. But when he, who lives conformably to his Principles, denies himself, when he loses and suffers by it, he must needs be in great earnest; whereas the others are apparently brib'd, to forsake that in Practice, which, notwithstanding, they cannot but own in the Theory and Principles.

This was an old Prejudice against Philosophy, That the Philosophers did not observe their own Precepts. But it was rejected by wise Men, as no Argument against the Truth and Usefulness of Philosophy. It is a great Objection against the Men, but sure it can be no Argument against the Things themselves, that they are disregarded by those who understand their Worth, and pretend to have a due Value and Esteem for them. And whoever renounces the Faith, or takes up Principles of Irreligion, because of any ill Practices of others, too plainly declares either that in Truth and Sincerity he never had any, or that he is very willing to part with his Religion. All Men make some Pretence to Reason; and those Men most of all, who are so apt to decry Religion upon this account. That many who profess to believe it, do not always live up to its Rules and Instructions: But they do not consider, in the mean time, That Men generally act as much against Reason as against Religion; and that therefore this Objection, if it can signify any
any thing, must banish all Reason and good Sense out of the World. If there be no True Religion, because so few practise it as they ought; there can be no True Reason neither, because the Lives of so many Men contradict it. And some, perhaps, would be contented, that there should be no True Religion, rather than that there should be no True Reason; because then they must be no longer allowed to be able to reason against Religion.

But if the Truth and Reality of things depend upon the Practice of Men, then the same Religion may be true and false at the same time; it may be true in one Age, and false in another; or true in one Country, and false in the next; and must be more or less true or false, in the same proportion, as the Lives and Manners of its Professors are more or less virtuous or vicious. Indeed this is so unreasonable and unjust a Prejudice against Religion, though it be grown a very common one, that methinks every Man should be ashamed of it; especially Men of Reason, who scorn so much, in all other Cases, to depend upon the Practice and Authority of others. And it is hard to believe, that Men who think at all, can think as they speak, when they make use of this Objection. Will any Man suppose, that Temperance doth not preserve Health, tho' he should see his Physician run into Excess? Or, that Poison will not kill, tho' the Man who tells him so, and advises him against it, be so desperate as to take it himself?

But as absurd as this Objection is in itself, it is most of all absurd, when it is urged against the
the Christian Religion; of which we are assured, that one of the Twelve who first preach’d it, was an Apostate, and a Traitor: And our Saviour declares, that many who had preached and wrought Miracles in his Name, should be at last rejected by him, Matt. vii. 21. And therefore, for any to make this Cavil against Christianity, is only to shew, that they do not consider it, or will not remember the plainest and most remarkable Points of it.

III. The Causes of Unbelief amongst Christians, notwithstanding the clearest Evidence for their Religion, are too many to be here recounted: But I shall mention some of the Chief of them.

1. Vicious Men are very unwilling to believe that Religion to be True, which is so directly contrary to their whole Course of Life, and to all their Inclinations and Desires; but they are very ready to catch at any Cavils and Pretences against it. The Lives of too many Christians have brought a Scandal, though a very unjust one, upon the Religion which they profess: And Men who find themselves more inclined to do as they see them do, than as they hear them acknowledge they ought to do, make no sufficient Enquiry into the Principles of Religion.

2. Divers Men have had a strange Ambition to say something new upon every Subject they treat of; and in order to that, have set themselves, with all their Skill and Power, to contradict and overthrow what has been said by others, that they might make way for their own
own Opinions; or to refine upon the Notions of others, that they might appear New, and of their own Invention: which has made inconsiderate Men conclude, that we are always to seek in our Doctrine, and have no fixed Principles: Whereas Men of Learning and Judgment know, that commonly what is with so much Oftentation proposed and recommended to us for New, has been considered and rejected of old, though not, perhaps, in the very terms, yet in the Sense and Substance of it; or else it is some True Doctrine under a different Form and Manner of Expression.

The Improvements which have been made in Philosophy, this last Age, afford a real and great Advantage towards the Proof and Establishment of Religion in Mens Minds; and yet there are few things which have been more abused to the Dishonour of it. For when Men find it convenient to give some Vent to the Philosopherical Humour, they bethink themselves of a fit Subject for it to discharge itself upon; and. this must be something Great, and something that is very New and Surprising; and there is nothing which answers all these Qualities so well as a New Account of the Origine of the Universe, and then the History of the Creation in Genesis, as well as the World itself, must undergo all the Alterations which they are pleased to impose upon it, that it may perfectly submit and comply with their New Hypothesis. If this Fancy should hold, New Systems of the World will be as common as New Romances: They must pardon me the Ex-
preffion; for Des Cartes himself, among his
Friends, gave no better Name to his System;
which was the first Ground and Occasion to all
the rest. And nothing is more ease with a
Philosophical Wit, than to build or destroy a
World: But it is to be hoped, when they have
weared themselves with New Contrivances, they
will let us have our Old World again. In the
mean time, these Men, who have too much
Philosophy to have no Religion, put dangerous
Weapons into the Hands of those, who have
neither the one nor the other; and know not
how to use them but to do mischief. And there
is nothing so plain, but it may be rendered diffi-
cult and obscure to many Men, by long and sub-
tile Disputes. If great numbers of Men shouild
write concerning the Sun's Heat and Light, and
Motion for many Years, and every one shouild
still contradict all that went before him, and
strive to say something New and Strange upon
the Subject; the laft, for ought I know, might
pretend to prove, that perhaps there may be no
Sun at all: Which indeed, is no more than what
the Scepticks have faid. And this Infidelity and
Scepticism concerning God, and his Providence,
and Revelation, muft end in the Scepticism of
our very Senses, if these Principles be pursued
in their direct and unavoidable Consequences.

Others have been too bold with the Myste-
ries of Religion, and have pretended to explain
them so far, as if they would endeavour to pre-
sent us with a Religion without all Mystery, by
which at the same time they have exposed Them-
selves to reproach, and Religion to the Scorn of
of such as are glad to take all Occasions to shew their Good-will to it. The evident and declared Design of the Socinians, is, to retain no Mysteries, but by forced Interpretations of Scripture to expound them all to their own, that is, to a new and absurd Sense; and it is but too plain, that there is a combined Design carried on between Them and the Deists, who are contented to pass for Christians, with a Distinction, and without a Mystery: Anti-Trinitarian is a milder Word than Anti-Christian, and Unitarian is but a different Name for Deist.

Another sort have been very laborious in finding out Mysteries, where there are none; and under a pretence of reducing the plainest Doctrines to clear Principles, have only amused and confounded Men in the true and obvious Notions of them. Thus the Duties of Love to God, and to our Neighbour, are plain in themselves, and are as plainly set down in the Scriptures: And to raise abstractive and metaphysical Speculations upon so plain Texts, is only to tell us what we know before, in other and less intelligible Terms, or else to fall into the nice and rash Disputes of the School-men, or into the Enthusiastick Heats of the Mystical Divines; which can have no Tendency to the Peace or Edification of the Church, but gives an occasion to the Adversary to blaspheme.

3. A third Cause of Infidelity, has been the Rashness of some Criticks. For if any thing relating to Religion has been once called in question, by Men who have got themselves a Name, by writing more boldly than wiser Men have done,
done, the Authority of such Men shall be thought
a sufficient Answer to all the Arguments that
can be taken from any thing which they are
pleased to dislike. Criticism, when it falls to the
Share of a prudent Man, is, without doubt, a
necessary and most valuable Part of Learning:
But it must be confess'd, that there is hardly any
thing more impertinent, than an impertinent
Critick. It is a great thing, if it be well con-
considered, to set the Bounds, and fix the Territo-
ries of Learning, to adjudge to every Author
his own Works, and say, that this Book, or
perhaps some small part of a Book shall be his,
and the rest he shall have nothing to do withal.
This is no trivial Matter, nor of small Conse-
quence, and ought not to be at the Pleasure of
any one who has a mind to be taken notice of,
for contradicting the received Opinion, and be-
ing more confident than others. And the less
Occasion there is for these Criticks, the more
Danger there is from them; for if there be no
Work for them, they will be apt to make them-
selves Work: And what Author will be able
to stand before Men, whose Business and Ambi-
tion it is to find fault? But though the Jurisdi-
cition of Criticks be very large and absolute; yet,
I have taken care not to come under it, but have
purposely avoided insisting upon any Authorities
which have fallen under their Disputes, unless it
be, perhaps, in speaking of the Sibyls; but there
I have the Consent of the best Criticks, besides
evident Reason, on my side, so far as I am con-
cern'd for them.
4. A Pretence to Miracles and Prophecies, without Reason or Ground for it, in behalf of some particular Errors, has weaken'd the Belief of the True Miracles and Prophecies: And whilst laborious Endeavours have been used to shew, that the Christian Religion cannot be true, unless those Doctrines be true, which have no Foundation in it; the quite contrary has happened to what in Charity we must suppose these Authors design'd: for instead of owning their Religion to be true, Men, who are convinced of the Weakness of their Pretences, have taken them at their Word, and have been forward to grant them, that there is no Religion true, and therefore not theirs.

5. I shall shew at large, in due time, That the many Differences and Disputes in Religion, are no Prejudice to the Truth and Certainty of it; but they are, notwithstanding, a great Scandal and Temptation, and a great Hindrance to the Salvation of Men; especially as they are commonly managed; whilst by all imaginable Arts and Means, Men of different Parties and Opinions strive to run down their Adversaries. Those who are concern'd, would do well, I should think, to consider what Mischiefs may ensue, through the imprudent and unchristian Management of Disputes, even in a right Cause, which has no need of such Methods; and therefore they are the less excusable, who use them in defence of such a Cause. If we would convince or persuade Men in any other thing, we never are wont to think it a proper Expedient, to use them ill, and give them hard Words: And is a 3 rough
rough Usage proper only for the Propagation of the Doctrines of the Gospel, and of a Religion of Peace, and Meekness, and Charity?

I know what Examples may be produced to countenance this Practice; but those great Authors have Excellencies enough for our Imitation, we need not imitate their Faults. Our Blessed Saviour, indeed, himself, and his Apostles, did not always forbear severe Language; but then they spoke with a divine Power and Authority, and knew how to speak to the Hearts as well as to the Ears of Men, and fully perceived when this was the last and only Remedy to be used; they could strike dead with their Words, and were infallible in the Use of such Expressions as were proper for the present Occasion, either to comfort or to terrify Sinners, or awaken them to Repentance. There is no doubt, but a seasonable Reproof or Rebuke, though it be very severe, may be not only consistent with Charity, but may also be the Effect of it; and if ever we may speak with the Power and Authority, as well as in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, we must do it when the Truth of the Christian Religion is called in question, and that by Christians. We live in an Age in which Men think they have done a great thing, and enough for them to value themselves upon, if they can but start a bold Objection against the Scriptures, though it have never so little Sense in it. We have sufficient Warrant to treat these Men as they deserve: for the Apostles were commanded (according to a Custom in use among the Jews) to shake off the duf}
dust of their feet, against such as rejected their Doctrine: And the least we can say to them, is to let them know, that if they will not believe, we are sorry for it, but cannot help it, and that they will have the Worst of it. Mr. Hobbes himself will allow, that an Atheist ought to be banished as a publick Mischief, and scarce any Terms can be too severe for those who openly apostatize from the Religion in which they have been baptized, and blaspheme that Holy Name by which they are called. We must not so debase the Gospel of Christ, as to seem to beg their Approbation, which, I am sure, we have little need of, in the present case. I am far from thinking any thing small or inconsiderable, in which the Honour of God, and the Truth of Religion is concerned; but certainly a great Distinction is to be made between them from whom we differ in particular Points, tho’ of great Moment and Consequence, and those who reject the Whole. Our chief Zeal and Strength should be employ’d against the Common Enemies, who delight in our Quarrels, and sport themselves with the mutual Wounds we so freely give one another.

6. We have a sort of Men amongst us, who from hence have taken occasion to make it their whole Business both by their Discourses and Writings, to laugh all Religion and Morality out of the World: Which has made our very Wit to degenerate, though this be the only thing for which these Men seem to value themselves; and our Poems, with all their soft Numbers, and flowing Style, to be far from deserv-
vong Commendation: For this way of Writing is as much against the Rules of Poetry, as against those of Virtue; and they can never answer it to their own Art, whatever they may do to their Consciences; but ought to be censured for being ill Poets, as well as ill Men. A fine Saying, a soft or bold Expression, or a pretty Character! Is this all we have in Exchange for our Reason and Religion, which these Men have so labouriously decry'd? Some of the best Poets of our Age have been so sensible of the Dishonour hereby done to God, the Disservice to Mankind, and the Disgrace to so noble an Art, that they have employ'd their Genius a better way. But the extravagant Raillery against Religion has been the more licentious, and the more frequent, not only because it has met with Applause from so many, who are none of the wisest part of Mankind, but because it is the easiest way of Wit, flowing so naturally from the very Temper and Inclination of corrupted Minds; and any smart Reflexion may easily be taken from another Subject, and apply'd here with Advantage, because it looks more extravagant and daring, and surprizes for no other Reason, but for the bold irreverent use of it. What is there in Religion, if it were untrue, that can seem ridiculous? What, in the awful Majesty of the Lord of Heaven and Earth, that can provoke the Laughter and Mockery of any but Fools and Madmen? It is not obvious to conceive, why it should be thought a greater Argument of a Man's Parts, to revile his God, than his Prince; to speak Blasphemy, than it is
to speak Treason; or why the Wit should atone for the Crime more in the one case than in the other. But the Truth is, a very moderate share of that will serve the turn in both cases. 

Produce your Cause, faith the Lord; bring forth your strong Reasons, faith the God of Jacob.

7. And indeed, from the Wit and Drollery of some, others have taken the Confidence to proceed to Arguments, but they are very far from being either strong or plausible; for I never in my Life observed so much Disingenuity, so vain an Affectation of Learning, and so groundless a pretence to Reason, as in these Men. The Extravagancies of Cardan are known to all that ever heard of him: The Lust, and Pride, and base Flattery of Vaninus, is every where visible. Aut Deus est, aut Vaninus, is such an Expression, as no Man besides ever used in a Dialogue of himself. And Mr. Hobbes's Love of Singularity, and Spirit of Contradiction, is evident from his own Confession; my late Lord Clarendon, who knew him well, has acquainted the World both with the Temper and Design of the Man, and with the Errors of his Writings. But I shall come down lower, and examine a little the Arguments of later Writers, who would take it ill, if it should be thought that they have not retained and improved all the profound Reasonings of their Predecessors in Irreligion, which we may expect to find abridg'd in a Book bearing the Title of The Oracles of Reason, a Rhapsody of Letters, and some small Tracts of divers Men.
But here I need not much concern my self with what is taken out of the Authors of Religio Medici, and of the Archaeologica Philosophae; because these Authors, notwithstanding those Objections, profess an unfeigned Belief of Revealed Religion, in these very Books, though the Transcriber did not think fit to acquaint his Reader with such Professions, for fear of bringing an Antidote with his Poison: But since those Objections were so far from having that effect upon the Authors themselves, all that they can serve for, is to shew, that they can make a Deist of none but a weak or an ill Man.

I refer the Reader to the Preface of Religio Medici, to shew how disingenuous it is to quote any thing from that Book, as the fix’d and mature Thoughts of Sir Thomas Brown. But as if this had not been Disingenuity enough, we have him brought in, saying the quite contrary to what we find in his Book. — How all the Kinds of Creatures, (says Sir Thomas) not only in their own Bulks, but with a Competency of Food and Sustenance, might be preserved in one Ark, and within the Extent of Three hundred Cubits, to a Reason that rightly examines it, will appear very feasible. Thus it is both in the Book it self, and in the Annotations upon it; but our Tran scriber has made the Author say quite contrary, that this will not appear very feasible. What is transcribed likewise from the same Author’s Book of Vulgar Errors, is

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a Relig. Med. Part. 1. § 22.  
b Oracles of Reason, p. 5.  
c Vulgar Errors, l. v. c. 4.
not fairly cited, and no notice is taken, that this learned Author has a whole Chapter, in that very Work, concerning the Temptation of Eve by the Serpent; where that is cleared, which was before brought only as an Objection, and transcribed by Mr. Blount. How the Translator has dealt with the Author of Archæologia Philosóphica, I have not his Book by me to examine, he is living to vindicate himself. One thing I have observed, that Mr. Blount assures us, that this learned Author doth as strenuously affirm, as 'tis possible, that the World had a Beginning about Six thousand Years since; whereas the Translation which this Gentleman sends Mr. Gildon, with his Letter, says, That to prescribe the Divine Creation fo short an Epocha as the limits of Six thousand Years, 'tis what he never durst. Now, either Mr. Blount or the Translator are mistaken in their Author, and I rather think the latter must mistake him. For whenever the World had been created, there must have been a time when it had existed but Six thousand Years; and then the Shortness of the Epocha might have been objected, as well as now. So that there was no Possibility of preventing this Objection, unless the World could have been Eternal; which was likewise impossible, from the Nature of Time, which being successive, necessarily implies a Beginning; and as this Author, by his Translator, speaks in that place, we cannot

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d Ibid. p. 9.  
e Ibid. l. c. i.  
\footnote{f} Oracles of Reason, p. 3.  
g Ibid. p. 73.
form to our selves any Idea of a thing created from Eternity. But what is cited out of either of these Authors, will fall under some of the Heads that are to be treated of in another Book which I design upon this Subject; I shall therefore here only single out such Particulars as are the proper Notions and Conceits of our Deists, and of which I had no Thought or Occasion to speak elsewhere.

Mr. Blount will have the Prophecy of Jacob, concerning the Scepter's not being to depart from Judah, till the Coming of Shiloh, to have been first applied to the Messiah by the Cabbalists in the time of the Maccabees, and not to have been expounded of David's Line, till the Reign of Herod, at least not generally; for here he is not so positive, as a Man might have been in a thing purely of his own Invention. But doth he bring any Proof or Probability for what he says? No, it is mere Conjecture, contrary to all the most ancient Expositions of the Jewish Writers. But the Jews had a Cabbala, and the Pharisees hated Herod, and the Herodians flattered him, and Josephus flattered Vespasian; and therefore from some Circumstances superficially framed and put together, he will needs gather the Uncertainty of this Prophecy, and conclude, that it is contradicted by others, without any Consideration had to what so many have said to reconcile them. In the same place, he says, that the Jews reckon the Book of Daniel among their Hagiographa

h Ibid. p. 160.
or Sacred, but not Canonical Books. But * J o s e-
phus magnifies the Prophet Daniel as the most
eminent of all the Prophets; or at least inferior
to none: And Father Simon, to whose Writings
I suppose this Gentleman was no Stranger, might
undeceive him in this matter; his Words are
these, i Novi quidem Judæos de germanâ vocis il-
lius (Cetuvim) significatione inter se non convenire;
et si omnes sentiant Cetuvim, seu Hagiographos non
minus divinos esse & canonicos, quam reliquos vete-
ris instrumenti libros: And he plainly proves his
Assertion.

The same k Gentleman tell us, that J o s e-
phus confesses, That he durst not presume to com-
pare the Nation of the Jews with the Anti-
quity of the most ancient and infallible Wri-
tings of the Ægyptians, Chaldaëans and Phæ-
nicians. For which he refers his Reader to
J o s e p h u s contra Apion. lib. 1. where he will find
the quite contrary; for J o s e p h u s makes it his
business to confute the Heathen Historians,
and to vindicate the Jewish Antiquities against
them, and to shew how they contradict them-
selves and one another, in what they relate of
the Jews different from the Scriptures. And
yet i this notorious Mistake is again repeated by
our Author; which any one may confute, that
will but look into J o s e p h u s. The Design of his
first Book against Apion, is, to prove the Truth
of the Jewish Antiquities against the Greeks,
from the Writings of the Ægyptians, Phænici-

* Antiq. i. x. c. 7.  i Cafligat. ad Opusc. Isacci Vossii, p. 238.
 k Oracles of Reajen, p. 221.  i Anima Mundi, p. 25.
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ans and Chaldeans. Josephus says, He wonders at those, who think that the Greeks alone ought to be regarded in Matters of Antiquity; whereas there was nothing to be found among them of Ancient Date: Their Cities, their Arts, their Laws, were but of late Original, and their Histories later than all these. But the Greeks themselves confess, that there were very ancient Accounts of former times among the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Phœnicians; m For I omit, says he, for the present to put our Nation into the Number with them. This is far enough from a Comparison; for he doth shew soon after, that the Jews had taken as much Care in the writing and preserving their Antiquities, as these Nations, or any other, could possibly do. But it had not been to his purpose to mention the Jews in that place with the rest: because he brings his Argument from the Confession of Foreign Historians, who were acknowledged by the Greeks to be of much greater Authority in things of this nature, than they could pretend to themselves.

n A little before, having translated something out of Ocellus Lucanus, to prove the World Eternal, this Gentleman thus subjoins, Now it is very much, that this Author, Ocellus Lucanus, who, for his Antiquity, is held to be almost Contemporary with Moses, (if not before him) should have so different a Sentiment of the World's Beginning, from that which Moses had: methinks, if Moses his History of the Creation, and of

m 'Εις γας νυμ ἡμας ωκενος σωματικετι.

n Oracles of Reason, p. 218.
Adam's being the first Man had been a general received Opinion at that time; Ocellus Lucanu, who was so ancient and so eminent a Philosopher, should not have been altogether ignorant thereof. But what shall we say? if Ocellus Lucanu was not so ancient, but of no Antiquity in comparison of Moses; then, methinks, this Author might have spared his Pains and his Inferences. And of what Antiquity Ocellus Lucanu was, is shewn by Ludovicus Nogarola, who translated this Piece of Ocellus Lucanu into Latin, and publish'd it with his own Observations upon it. For he makes it appear, from Plato, that the Ancestors of this Ocellus being banish'd from Troy, under Laomedon, came to Myra, a City in Lycia; but Laomedon was the Father of Priamus, in which time, as every body knows, happen'd the Destruction of Troy; and Jair was then Judge of Israel, about three hundred Years after they had been in Possession of the Promised Land. He farther shews, from Lucian, that Ocellus Lucanu was a Scholar of Pythagoras; who lived, sure, long enough after Moses, to save our Author's Criticism, or to expose it. Indeed, the best Account we have in Heathen Antiquity, agrees exactly with the History of Moses, concerning the Creation of the World. *Aristotle* himself was not satisfied in his own Doctrine of the Eternity of the World; and he confesses, that all the Philosophers asserted the Creation; *he* says, it was esteem-
ed a very ancient Doctrine, and thought by some, to be the Doctrine of the most ancient Theologists, That it was formed out of Water: It is certain, that Thales, the first Greek Philosopher who treated of these things, one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, and the Wiseft of them, in Tully's Judgment, taught, That God formed all things out of Water: Which Notion, Homer, as well as Thales, was supposed to learn from the Egyptians.

The same Gentleman has observed, 'That the Epicurean Deists labour to have to their Vices imputed rather to a Superiority of their Reason above that of others, than to a Servitude of their Reason to their own Passions; which shews, Vice is naturally esteemed a base and low thing. This is transcribed from Mr. Boyle, without any mention of him: Mr. Blount, it seems had a mind to give himself the Honour of the Observation. It is but too plain, that this was his own Case, as his unhappy Death declared.

This, I think, is sufficient to shew, how little this Book deserves the vain Title of The Oracles of Reason: it will be hard to meet with any Book, which has left right to fo high a Pretence. I shall take notice but of one thing more, and that is, Mr. Gildon's Attempt to prove the Materiality of the Soul; his Arguments are as unlikely to prove it, as most I have seen: but I shall shew the Notion to be absurd in itself, and impossible to be maintained.

* Tull. de Nat. Deor. l. i. De Legib. l. 2.
The Essence of all Matter must be the same, whether Extension, or any thing else, be assign'd as the Essence of it; and though we may be ignorant of the Essence of Matter, yet we know it cannot be Essential to it to think: For then all Matter would necessarily think. But the Difference in the several sorts of Matter can be only in Accidents, that is, in Bulk, Rest, Motion, Situation, and Figure, none of which can render Matter capable of Thought. For if a different Bulk of Matter could produce Thought in it, and the Subtile Matter should be able to Think and Reason, though the Gross cannot; then the Parts of a Stone would think, when it is ground to Dust; though when they are joyned and compacted together, they make up a Body, as unlikely to think, as any thing we can imagine. If Rest could cause Matter to think, a Stone would be the most thinking Creature in the World. If Motion could cause it, then that which moves with most quickness would think most, as Fire, and the Sun, and Stars; but Motion is only a successive Change of Place, and there is no Reason why Matter should think in one Place, rather than in another; or why it should think, when it is moved in a Right Line, or in a Circle, or in any Curve Line, rather than when it lies still. Again, There is no Reason why Matter should be able to think, or not think, according to its Situation or Position; why it should think in the Brain, rather than upon the Trencher; or when it is digested, and reduced to Animal Spirits, rather than when it is in a more compacted Substance, and has a different Relation to the parts
of Matter about it. Lastly, If any sort of Figure could produce Thought, Stones must certainly think, as well as the best of us; and so, indeed, might any thing else: for what Body is there that may not subsist under all Varieties of Figure?

Neither can any lucky Conjunction of all these together produce a Power and Faculty of Thinking. For, imagine what Bulk, Rest or Motion, Situation and Figure you can, to meet together, they are all alike uncapable of so much as one Thought; since there is nothing in the Nature of any of these Accidents or Modifications of Matter, but it is as far from any Power of Thinking, as Matter itself is; and therefore Thinking can no more arise from a Combination of them together, than it can proceed from the amassing together of Matter. All the Accidents, but Motion, have nothing Active or Operative in them, but are only Matter under different Modes and Relations. And Motion, whatever the Figure, or Bulk and Contexture of any Body may be, can be but motion still; and suppose what Contexture or Modifications you will; what is Motion, under all Determinations, Collisions and Combinations, but change of Place? And, how can change of Place produce Thinking, under any Variety of Contexture in the Particles of Matter? Free-will is impossible to be accounted for by Matter or Motion, as Epicurus found, who was therefore forced to have recourse to his Declinationes Atomorum; for which he is so justly exposed by Tully. For neither can Matter determine its own Motion nor
nor can Motion determine it self, but must be determined by something External; whereas all Men find it in their power to determine themselves by an inward and voluntary Principle.

It is true, indeed, that the Soul, in its Operations, depends very much upon the Temperament of the Body: yet the Soul, even in this State, has Thoughts, which have no Relation to the Body, or any material Thing; as Thoughts of God and Spirits, its own Reflex Thoughts, or Consciousness of its own Operations. And if it were now capable of no Thoughts, but such as have some Dependence upon the Body; yet this can never prove, that the Soul it self is Material, or that Matter Thinks. A Man writes with his Pen, and cannot write without one; Is it therefore his Pen properly that writes, and not the Man? The Body is the Instrument of the Soul, in its Operations here; and as the Instrument is fit or unfit, so much its Operations be more or less perfect.

But it is strange, that the chief Part of us should be of such a Nature, that we can form no Idea of it. We may form an Idea of it, though but an imperfect one: And do we not know, that the Eye, the noblest Part of the Body, cannot see it self, but imperfectly, and by Reflexion? And let any Man try, whether he can form a better Idea of a Material Soul, than of an Immaterial one. But this Writer, by Idea seems to mean a Material Idea, or Imagination; and we cannot, indeed, form a Material Idea of an Immaterial Spirit. Yet, after all which he, or any Man else, has said, the Nature of the Soul
is as clearly understood, as that of the Body; and there is nothing encumbered with greater Difficulties than Extension, if that be the Essence of Matter; and if that be not, it is as hard still to know what the Essence of Matter is. The Instance which he brings of Brutes, is easily answered, Whether they can think, or not. If they cannot, the Objection falls of itself; If they can, I should rather suppose, that their Souls may be annihilated, or may transmigrate and pass from one Brute to another, than that the Souls of Men must be Material, that the Souls of Brutes may be Material too.

Another Gentleman, of late, has asserted, That it is impossible for us, by the Contemplation of our own Ideas, without Revelation, to discover whether Omnipotency hath not given to some Systems of Matter, fitly disposed, a Power to perceive or Think; and, That there is a Possibility that God may, if he pleases super-add to Matter a Faculty of Thinking: which is what he likewise calls a Modification of Thinking, or Power of Thinking. But it seems not intelligible, how God should super-add to Matter this Faculty, or Power, or Modification, of Thinking, unless he change the Nature of Matter, and make it to be quite another thing than it is, or joyn a Substance of another Nature to it. But the Question is, Whether a Faculty of Thinking can be produced out of the Powers and various Modifications of Matter?

And we can have no more Conception, how any Modification of Matter can produce Thinking, than we can, how any Modification of Sound should produce Seeing: all Modifications of Matter are the same, as to this Point; and Matter may as well be made no Matter by Modifying, as be made to Think by it. This is just as if a Man should maintain, That though all Immaterial Substances are not extended and divisible, yet some of them may possibly be, or Omnipotence may super-add to them a Faculty of Extension and Divisibility: for Immaterial Substances may become divisible and material by the same Philosophy, by which we may conclude, that Matter may Think; which is the same thing as to become immaterial, and to surpass all the Powers and Capacities of Matter. He urges, that there may be Capacities in Matter, which no Man can conceive, since that Gravitating Power, which Sir Isaac Newton has proved to belong to all Bodies, would before have been thought incredible. But there is nothing in this Power above the Nature of Matter, any more than there is in Motion. For Gravitation is only a determinate Mode of Motion: and it is very easy to conceive, that Matter is as well capable of one Determination of Motion, as of another; since Matter is herein only Passive, and not Active, or enabled to move voluntarily, and determine it self, as humane Souls do. That, which is capable of any one Determination of Motion, may be capable of all kinds of Determinati-
on; but that, which may be determined all
ways may not be capable of determining it self
any one way. Matter must ever remain un-
capable of Thinking, unless it could change
its Nature, and become Immaterial, and then
it would not be Matter, which would think,
but something else. And it is of little U/e or
Consequence to enquire, what Omnipotence can
do by a Super-addition of Faculties to Matter;
when between those, who prove the Soul to
be immaterial, and such as suppose it to be ma-
terial, the only Question in Dispute is, not what
a Divine Power can effect, (for these Men are
unwilling to grant any such Power presiding o-
ver Matter) but whether a Faculty of Thinking
can be produc’d out of Matter by any Modifi-
cations, or any Changes and Determinations of
Motion. But tho’ I have, upon this occasion,
mention’d this Gentleman here; yet it would
be a great Injury done him, to rank him with
the Authors of The Oracles of Reason.

There is prefix’d to these Pieces, an Account
of the Life and Death of that unhappy Gentle-
man, Mr. Blount, with pretence to vindicate
his Murther of himself, because his deceased
Wife’s Sister refus’d to be married to him; by
all the Topicks and Arguments of Reason and
Philosophy. Which is such an Undertaking,
as I am confident was never heard of before, to
prove, that a Man may very gravely and philo-
sophically kill himself, if a Woman, whom he
ought not to marry, will not be his Wife. It
is strange to see, that Men should think it fit to
vent such things, as these in the Face of the
World;
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World: but this discovers the Reason and Philosophy of these Men, and is a fit Preface to such a Book. *This Wisdom descendeth not from Above.* Behold the Men in their Principles and Practices, the demure Pretenders to humane Reason, and moral Virtue, and the Enemies of Reveal'd Religion.

We are fallen into an Age, in which there are a sort of Men who have shewn so great a Forwardness to be no longer Christians, that they have catch'd at all the little Cavils and Pretences against Religion; and, indeed, if it were not more out of Charity to their Souls, than for any Credit Religion can have of them, it were great Pity but they should have their Wish: for they both think and live so ill, that it is an Argument for the Goodness of any Cause, that they are against it. It was urged, as a Confirmation of the Christian Religion, by Tertullian, that it was hated and persecuted by Nero, the worst of Men: And I am confident, it would be but small Reputation to it, in any Age, if such Men should be fond of it. They speak evil of the things they understand not; and are wont to talk with as much Confidence against any point of Religion, as if they had all the Learning in the World in their keeping; when commonly they know little or nothing of what has been said for that against which they dispute. They seem to imagine, that there is nothing in the World, besides Religion, that has any Difficulty in it; but this shews how little they have considered the Nature of Things, in which multitudes of Obje-
utions and Difficulties meet an observing Man in every Thought. And after all, Religion has but one Fault, (as they account it) which they have been able to discover in it, and that is, that it is too good and virtuous for them; for when they have said all they can, this is their great Quarrel against it, and (as it has been truly observed) no Charity less than that of the Religion which they despise, would have much Care or Consideration for them.

Thus have some Men dishonour'd Religion by their Lives; some by an Affectation of Novelty; some by invalidating the Authority of Books relating true Miracles and Prophecies, and others by forging false ones: Some again, by their too eager and imprudent Disputes and Contentions about Religion, whilst from hence others have taken the Liberty to ridicule it, and to dispute against it, but so as to expose themselves, whilst they would expose Religion. And thus has the clearest and most necessary Truth been obscured and despised, whilst it has been betray'd by the Vanity and Quarrels of its Friends, to the Scorn and Weakness of its Enemies.

However, in all their Opposition and Contradiction to Reveal'd Religion, I find it asserted by these Men, that Atheism is so absurd a thing, that they question whether there ever were, or can be an Atheist in the World. I have therefore here proved, from the Attributes of God, and the Grounds of Natural Religion, that the Christian Religion must be of Divine Revelation; and that this Religion is certainly true,
true, as it is, that God himself exists which is the plainest Truth, and the most universally acknowledged of any thing whatsoever. And because there is nothing so true or certain, but something may be alledg'd against it, I shall besides discourse upon such Heads as have been most excepted against: In which I shall endeavour to prove the Truth, in such a manner as to vindicate it against all Cavils; though I shall not take notice of particular Objections, which is both a needless and indeed an endless Labour; for there is no End of Cavils: But if the Truth be well and fully explain'd, any Objection may receive a sufficient Answer, from the Consideration of the Doctrine against which it is urged, by applying it to particular Difficulties; as one Right Line is enough to demonstrate all the Variations from it to be crooked.

It is very easy to cavil and find fault with any thing; and to start Objections, and ask Questions, is even to a Proverb esteemed the worst Sign that can be of a great Wit, or a sound Judgment. Men are unwilling to believe any thing to be true, which contradicts their Vices; and the weakest Arguments, with strong Inclinations to a Cause, will prove or disprove whatever they have a mind it should. But let Men first practise the Virtues, the moral Virtues, which our Religion enjoins, and then let them disprove it, if they can: Nay, let them disprove it now, if they can, for it stands in no need of their favour; but for their own sakes, let them have a care of mistaking Vices for Arguments,
guments, and every profane jest for a Demonstration. I wish they would consider, whether, the Concern they have, to set up Natural against Reveal’d Religion, proceed not from hence, that, by Natural Religion, they mean no more than just what they please themselves, or what they judge convenient in every Case and Occasion: Whereas Reveal’d Religion is a fixed and determin’d Thing, and prescribes certain Rules and Laws for the Government of our Lives. The plain Truth of the matter is, that they are for a Religion of their own Contrivance, which they may alter as they see fit; but not for one of Divine Revelation, which will admit of no Change, but must always continue the same, whatever they can do. Unless that were the case, there would be little Occasion to trouble them with Books of this kind; for the Arguments brought against the Christian Religion, are indeed so weak and insignificant, that they rather make for it; and it might well be said, as M. Paschall relates, by ‘one of this sort of Men, to his Companions, If you continue to dispute at this rate, you will certainly make me a Christian. I shall venture, at least, to say of this Treatise, in the like manner as he does of his, That if these Men would be pleased to spend but a little of that time, which is so often worse employed, in the perusal of what is here offer’d, I hope that something they may meet withal, may satisfy their Doubts, and convince them of their Errors.

But though they should despise whatever can be said to them, yet there are others, besides the
The profess’d Adversaries of Reveal’d Religion, to whom a Treatise of this nature may be serviceable. The Truth is, notwithstanding the great Plainness of the Christian Religion, I cannot but think, that Ignorance is one chief Cause why it is so little valued and esteemed, and its Doctrines so little obey’d: A great part of Christians content themselves with a very slight and imperfect Knowledge of the Religion they profess; and are able to give but very little Reason for that, which is the most reasonable thing in the World; but they profess it rather as the Religion of their Country, than of their own Choice; and because they find it contradicts their sensual Desires, they are willing to believe as little of it as may be; and when they hear others cavil and trifle with it, partly out of Ignorance, and partly from Inclination, they take every idle Objection, if it be but bold enough, for an unanswerable Argument. Whereas, if Christians were but thoroughly acquainted with the Grounds of their Religion, and sincerely disposed to believe and practise according to them, they would be no more moved with these Cavils, than they would be persuaded to think the worse of the Sun, if some Men should take a Fancy to make that the Subject of their Raillery. To have the more doubtful and wavering Thoughts of Religion, because it is expos’d to the Scorn and Contempt of ill Men, is as if we should despise the Sun for being under a Cloud, or suffering an Eclipse; not knowing that he retains his Light, and Religion its Excellency still, though we be in Darkness; the Light may be
be hid from us, but can lose nothing of its own Brightness, though we suffer for want of it, and lie under the shadow of death.

The Consideration of the Grounds and Reasons of our Religion is useful to all sorts of Men: For if ever we would be seriously and truly Religious, we must lay the Foundation of it in our Understandings, that, by the rational Conviction of our Minds, we may, (through the Grace of God assisting us) bring our Wills to a Submission, and our Affections to the Obedience of the Gospel of Christ; and the more we think of, and consider these things, the more we shall be convinced of them, and they will have the greater Power and Influence in the Course of our Lives. For though the Truth of the Christian Religion cannot, without great Sin and Ignorance, be doubted of by Christians; yet it is a Confirmation to our Faith, and adds a new Life and Vigour to our Devotions, when we recollect upon what good Reasons we are Christians; and are not such by Custom and Education only, but upon Principles which we have thoroughly consider'd, and must abide by, unless we will renounce our Reason with our Religion.

And what Subject can be more useful, or more worthy of a rational and considering Man's Thoughts? These things, which are now made matter of Cavil and Dispute, will be the Subject of our Contemplation, and of our Joy and Happiness to all Eternity in the other World. We shall then have clear and distinct Apprehensions of the Means and Methods of our Salvation, and shall for ever admire and adore the Divine Wisdom,
Wisdom, in the Conduct and Disposal of those
very Things about which we now are most per-
plex'd.

But I find my self concerned to subjoin to this
Preface, already too long, something in Defence
of that which will first occur to the Reader in
the following Treatise. For in the Opinion of
a learned Writer, whatever, has been or can be
said concerning the necessity of a Divine Reveala-
tion, may be easily confuted in very few Words.
He confesses, that there is great ground of hope
and Probability, that God may vouchsafe some
Revelation of his Will to Men; but he says, that
yet it does not from hence at all follow, that God
is obliged to make such a Revelation: For then it
must needs have been given in all Ages, and to
all Nations, and might have been claimed and de-
manded as of Justice, rather than wisht for and
desired as of Mercy and condescending Goodness.

To which I answer, that my Reasoning does
not proceed upon the Justice of God only, but
principally upon his Mercy, and jointly upon the
Consideration of his Honour, his Holiness, and
all the Divine Attributes. But I know no-
thing in the World, which any Creature can
claim or demand as of strict Justice from God.
St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews tells them,
God is not unrighteous to forget your Work and
Labour of Love, which ye have shewed towards
his Name, in that ye have ministered to the
Saints, and do minister. Heb. vi. 10. But did he.
thereby warrant them to claim and demand
as of Justice a Reward due to their Charity?
To claim and demand any thing of God is Language unknown in Scripture, and allowable neither according to Revealed nor Natural Religion. The Justice of God is indeed understood with reference to his Creatures, and is implied and concerned in all his Proceedings with them. But, if we may presume to say, that God is obliged to do, or not to do any thing; the Obligation is not to his Creatures, but his own Infinite Perfections oblige him to act, or not to act, in such cases. He must act consistently with his Justice and Mercy, and every other Attribute, that is, consistently with himself, and suitably to his own Divine Nature. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself; 2 Tim. ii. 13. But will any Man therefore claim and demand of him, as of Justice to keep his Word, and perform his Promise? God is declared in Scripture to act for his own sake, for his Name sake, and for his Word and Promise sake, Isa. xliii. 25. xlviii. 9. Psal. cv. 42. Acts xiii. 23. And his Creatures are secure in his Infinite Justice and Veracity, and Honour and Goodness; but none can plead any Right or demand Justice of him, upon any account, which would be Blasphemy to imagine. We could therefore argue with no Certainty concerning Divine Revelation, or any other Blessing to be vouchsafed to us, if we could be assured of nothing from him, but what we can in strict Justice demand. But from the Consideration of the Divine Attributes, and of the Condition of Mankind, we have the greatest Reason not only to hope, but assuredly to conclude, that
that God would not leave Men wholly destitute of Revelation.

Nor must this needs have been given in all Ages and to all Nations. For as to its universal Reception, it was sufficient, that Revelations should be made to such Persons, and in such Ages and Nations, as might best communicate them to other Nations and Ages of the World. And I have, I presume, sufficiently proved, that by a peculiar Providence in the Conduct of the Patriarchs, and the Dispensation of the Law, and the various State and Condition of the chosen People; all Nations have been the better for the Informations and Instructions delivered down to them from the first Progenitors of Mankind, to whom Revelations were vouchsafed; and divers Rites and Doctrines of Revealed Religion have been preserved among the most remote and barbarous Gentiles.

But as to particular Ages and Nations, the Knowledge and Profession both of Revealed and of Natural Religion must be different, according to the different Capacities and Abilities of Understanding, and the Tempers and Dispositions of Mind, in those, who had the Opportunities of receiving and of communicating to others, the Truths of Religion. God has been pleased frequently to declare, what Natural Reason may suggest, and every Days Experience testifie; that he deals not with Mankind according to the Severity of strict and abstracted Justice. And since every other Attribute persuades and promises, and Justice itself does not forbid a Revelation, but rather directs and appoints it; the Argument
Argument from the divine Attributes is as strong and cogent in this, as in any other Case, where we have no divine Promise or Declaration. Since God as necessarily acts in Conformity to his other Attributes, as to his Justice; I am convinced, that a divine Revelation is necessary, not because it might have been claimed and demanded as of Justice; but expected and assured from his Mercy, his Righteousness, and every other Attribute.
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THE
Reasonableness and Certainty
of the
Christian Religion.

BOOK I.

PART I.

In Discoursing of the Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion, I shall use this Method: I. I shall shew, That from the Notion of a God, it necessarily follows, that there must be some Divine Revelation. II. I shall enquire into the Way and Manner by which this Revelation may be suppos'd to be delivered and preserved in the World. III. I shall shew, That, from the Notion of a God, and the Nature and Design of a Divine Revelation, it follows, That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are that Divine Revelation. IV. That no other Books or Doctrines whatsoever can be of Divine Revelation. V. I shall from hence give a Resolution of our Faith, by shewing, That we have the same Evidence for the Truth and Divine Authority of the Scriptures, that we have for the Being of God himself; because it follows, from the Notion of a God, both that there must of necessity
be some Divine Revelation, and that the Scriptures are that Divine Revelation. VI. Having done this, I shall, in the last place, endeavour to clear such Points as are commonly thought most liable to exception in the Christian Religion; and shall propose some Considerations, which may serve to remove such Objections, and obviate such Cavils as are usually rais'd against the Holy Scriptures.

CHAP. I.

That from the Notion of a God, it necessarily follows that there must be some Divine Revelation.

In the first place, I shall shew how reasonable and necessary it is to suppose, that God should reveal himself to Mankind: And I shall insist the rather upon this, because it is not usually so much consider'd in this Controversy, as it ought to be; for if it were, it certainly would go very far towards the proving the Divine Authority of the Scriptures; since if it be once made appear, that there must be some Divine Revelation, it will be no hard Matter to prove, that the Scriptures are that Revelation: For if it be proved, that there must be some Revealed Religion, there is no other which can bear any Competition with that contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. My first Business therefore shall be to shew, from the Consideration of the Attributes of God, and of the Nature and State of Mankind, that, in all reason, we cannot but believe, that there is some Revealed Religion in the World.

There is nothing more evident to Natural Reason, than that there must be some Beginning, some First Principle of Being, from whence all other Beings proceed. And nothing can be more absurd, than to imagine
of the Christian Religion.

gine that That wonderful Variety of Beings in the Heavens, and Earth, and Seas, which all the Wisdom of Man is not able, in any measure, to understand, or thoroughly to search into, should yet be produced and continued for so many thousand Years together, without any Wisdom or Contrivance; that an unaccountable Concource of Atoms, which could never build the least House or Cottage, should yet build and sustain the wonderful Fabrick of the whole World; that when the very Lines in a Globe or Sphere cannot be made without Art, the World itself, which that is but an imperfect Imitation of, should be made without it; and that less Skill should be requir'd to the forming of a Man, than is necessary to the making of his Picture; that Chance should be the Cause of all the Order, and Fortune of all the Constancy and Regularity in the Nature of Things; and that the very Faculties of Reason and Understanding in all Mankind, should have their Original from that, which had no Sense or Knowledge, but was mere Ignorance and Stupidity. This is so far from being Reason and Philosophy, that it is down-right Folly and Contradiction.

From a Being therefore of infinite Perfection must proceed all things that are besides, with all their Perfections and Excellencies, and among others, the Virtues and Excellencies of Wisdom, Justice, Mercy and Truth, must be derived from him, as the Author of all the Perfections of which the Creatures are capable. And it is absurd to imagine, that the Creator and Governour of the World, who is infinitely more Just, more Wise, and Good, and Holy than any Creature can be, will not at last reward the Good, and punish the Wicked. For, Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Is it to be supposed, that the Wise and Good God would create Men only to abuse themselves and one another? To live a-while in Sin and Folly here, and some of them in the most extravagant and brutal Wickedness, and then go down to the Grave, and so
there should be an end of them for ever? What is there worthy of the infinite Wisdom of God, in so poor a Design as this! Doth not the Voice of Nature itself teach us, and has it not been the general Belief and Expectation of all Ages and Nations, that the prosperous Sinner, who is subtle and powerful to do Mischief, must suffer in another World, for what he has done amiss here? And, that all is not to pass away with us in Sport and Extravagance, in Laughter and Noife, in Riot, or in Violence and Cruelty, as some Men are willing to believe; as if the World were made for the Wicked, and they to abuse it?

It appears likewise from the common Belief and Experience of Mankind, that as there is a God of infinite Goodness and Holiness; so there are wicked and malicious Spirits, which are ever contriving the Mischief and Ruin of Men. For besides the Evidence of this from Scripture, which we must be allowed here to allege in the Nature at least of an History, it is Folly to imagine that all the Oracles and Prodigies of the Heathens could be mere Forgeries, and that there was no Ground nor Foundation for such a Belief, as universally obtained in all Nations and Ages of the World, and for the Customs and Practices which followed upon this Belief, that there are Daemons, or Spirits, of an evil and malicious Disposition and Power. I shall instance only in the unnatural Cruelties which the Heathen World, even the Greeks and Romans themselves, were continually put upon, by the Instigation of these malicious and wicked Spirits. For the Heathen Nations offered up Multitudes of innocent Men and Women, and even their own Children, in Sacrifice to their Fallow Gods; which is as sure an Evidence that there are such Beings, which required these Cruelties from them, as it is, that there are Tyrants and Persecutors, when they cause innocent Men to be murdered, and Children to be torn from the Arms of their Parents, and slain in their Sight. And tho' the Domi-
Dominion of Satan be now restrained by the over-ruling Power of the Gospel, we have as great Evidence from all History that there are such Beings as Devils, as we have for any other Matter of Fact whatsoever. There have been indeed many false Stories concerning Spirits, as well as in other Matters of History: But does this prove that there are none true? Or could the Historians of all Times and Places be perpetually imposed upon, or conspire to impose upon others? If we may credit Authors of as high Esteem as any human History can afford; Men of good Learning and true Courage, and of little Inclination to believe Things of this Nature, have been Witnesses of Apparitions. Instance in a Dion, Brutus, b Curtius, Rufus, and Athenodorus the Philosopher. When Dion and Brutus, Men famous for Philosophy, not prone to Fear, but of great Constancy of Mind, became so concerned, that they acquainted others with what they had seen; this, as Plutarch remarks, is a mighty Argument for the Truth of this Doctrine. There is no ancient History but gives some Instance or other of these Things; and all the modern Histories of Heathen Nations are full of such Relations as confirm this Truth to us; and even among Christians, those who have by unlawful Arts put themselves under the Power of wicked Spirits, have been convinced that there are such Beings; which is proved, not only by the publick Confessions of Witches in all Nations, but by the private \[d\] Acknowledgments of divers learned Men, both Physicians and others, who have made Attempts to discover the Truth of this Matter, in different Places, and were Persons neither timorous nor superstitious. But the Apparition of Spirits is Preternatural; and therefore, that Good Spirits, who live in perfect Obe-

\[a\] Plut. in Dion. & Brut.  \[b\] Plin. Epist. I. 7. ad Suram.  
\[c\] In Dion. initio.  \[d\] See Mr. Boyle's Excellency of Theology, \&c. § 1. and Dr. Calaoubon's Preface to Dec of Spirits.
dience to the Divine Will, and in conformity to the Order of their Nature, should appear, is now no more to be expected than any other Miracle: But there are frequent Apparitions of Bad Spirits in Countries where the Christian Religion is not received; and where it is received, they appear to such as are willing to come under their Power, but very rarely to others. And if the Devil, after so much Human Blood as he has caused to be spilt in his Sacrifices, and after so many Oracles and Impostures, can yet persuade some Men, that there is no such Being; this is one of his subtilest Stratagems of all, and proves how great Power, tho' in a different kind and manner, he still retains over the Minds of Men.

Since therefore it is most certain, that there is a Being of Infinite Power, and Wisdom, and Justice, and Goodness; and that there is likewise a malicious cruel Spirit, ever watchful and industrious to abuse and destroy Mankind: it is highly reasonable to believe, that a Being of such Infinite Perfections, after he had created Man, would communicate himself to him, would set him a Rule by which he ought to live, and prescribe him Laws whereby he might answer the Ends of his Creation, and attain to that Happiness which he was made capable of, and designed for by his Maker. We cannot suppose, that the God of all Goodness and Wisdom would create Man, and then leave him to himself, to follow his own Inventions, and to live at random, without any Law or Direction, to frame his Actions by, and to be exposed to all the Assaults of an implacable subtle Enemy, without any Caution and Instruction given him, or any Help and Assistance afforded for his Defence. Man, in his Innocence, was not thus to be left to himself. And we have all the reason in the World to believe, tho' we had not the express Word of Scripture for it, that the God of Infinite Goodness would not disregard this corrupt State of Mankind, but would use some Means-
Means to reclaim them from the Error of their Ways, to bring them to a Knowledge of themselves, and of the Divine Majesty, to inform them of their Duty, and direct them to Happiness.

How Man became so prone to all Evil, we can know only by Revelation; and therefore since the Notion of the Pre-existence of Souls is groundless, (as I shall here-after prove) those who reject all Revelation, must suppose, that Man was first created in the State of Sin and Misery; which is a very heinous Imputation upon the Goodness and Justice of God: But to suppose him placed in this Condition, without all Help or Remedy, is to charge God still more foolishly. But how Men became so, is not here the matter of Enquiry; it is evident, that Man is of himself in a miserable and helpless Condition; and considering the great Ignorance and Wickedness which have been from the Fall of our First Parents visible continually in the World, and still reign in it; considering, I say, the notorious Wickedness and gross Ignorance of Men, which, from the earliest Records of Antiquity, have continued down to our own Times; nothing is more reasonable than to think, that a Being of Infinite Perfection would take some Care to rectify the Mistakes, and reform the Manners of Men. Can we believe it consistent with Infinite Truth, never to manifest it self in the World, but to suffer all sorts of Men, of all Nations, to be exposed to all the Designs and Delusions of Impostors, and of seducing and apostate Spirits, without any sufficient means afforded them to undeceive and rescue themselves? Can we suppose, that God, of Infinite Majesty and Power, and who is a Jealous God, and will not give his Honour to another, should suffer the World to be guilty of Idolatry; to make themselves Gods of Wood and Stone? Nay, to offer their Sons and their Daughters unto Devils, and to commit all manner of Wickedness in the Worship of their False Gods; and make Murther, and Adultery, and the worst of Vices, not only their...
Practice, but their Religion? Can we imagine, that the True God would behold all this, for so many Ages, among so many People, and yet not concern himself to put a Stop to so much Wickedness, and to vindicate his own Honour, and restore the Sense and Practice of Virtue upon Earth?

I shall, in due Place, prove at large, That Mankind have in all Ages had the greatest Necessity for a Revelation to direct and reform them; and, That the Philosophers themselves taught abominably wicked Doctrines, who yet were the best Teachers and Instructors of the Heathen World. And we have no true Notion of God, if we do not believe him to be a God of infinite Power, and Knowledge, and Holiness, and Mercy, and Truth; and yet we may as well believe there is no God at all, as imagine that the God of Infinite Knowledge should take no Notice of what is done here below; that Infinite Power should suffer it self to be affronted and despised, without requiring any Satisfaction; that Infinite Holiness should behold the whole World lie in Wickedness, and find out no Way to remedy it; and that Superstition and Idolatry, and all the Tyranny of Sin and Satan, for so long a time, should enslave and torment the Bodies and Souls of Men, and there should be no Compassion in Infinite Mercy, nor any Care over an erroneous and deluded World, in the God of Truth.

Would a wise and good Father see his Children run on in all manner of Folly and Extravagancy, and take no care to reclaim them, nor give them any Advice, but leave them wholly to themselves, to pursue their own Ruin? And if this be unworthy to suppose of Natural Parents, how much more unreasonable is it to imagine this of God himself, whom we cannot but represenl to ourselves, as beholding our forlorn Estate with all the Compassions of the tenderest Father or Mother, without the Weakness and Infirmities that accompany them in Human Parents? How unreasonable is it to enter-
tain such a Thought of Almighty God, Infinite in Goodness and Mercy, as to suspect that he would suffer Mankind to make themselves as miserable as they can, both in this World and the next, without putting any Stop to so fatal a Course of Sin and Misery, or interposing any Thing for their Direction, to shew them the Way to escape Destruction, and to obtain Happiness! The Fall of our First Parents is known to us only by Revelation, and therefore is not to be taken into Consideration, when we argue upon the mere Principles of Reason. But I consider Mankind, as we find it in Fact (setting aside the Advantages of Revelation) Wicked, and abandoned to Wickedness, in the snares of the devil, taken captive by him at his will, unable to work out their own salvation; lost and undone, without Power or Strength, without any Help or Remedy. And in this State of the World, however it came to pass, is there no Reason to believe that Infinite Goodness should take some Course, and not disregard all Mankind lying in this Condition? The great Argument of the Scoffers of the last Days, St. Peter tells us, would be this, That all Things go on in their constant Course, and that God doth not meddle or concern himself with them. Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the creation, 2 Pet. iii. 4. And if no Promise had ever been made, they would have had some Reason in their Arguing. For that which rendered the Heathen without Excuse, was, That they did not make use of the Natural Knowledge that they had of God, to lead them to the Knowledge of his Revealed Will, which they had frequent Opportunities of becoming acquainted withal, and had many Memorials of it amongst them in every Nation: But, they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. And this is the Force of St. Paul's Argument, Acts xvii. and Rom. i. (unless this latter Chapter were to be understood, as Dr. Hammond interprets it, of the Gnostick Hereticks:)
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That the Gentiles ought not to pervert and stifle those Natural Notions which God had implanted in their Minds, but from the Law of Nature to proceed to find out the Written Law; and for this Reason, the Bounds of the Habitation of other Nations were determined and appointed by God, according to the number of the Children of Israel, that they might seek the Lord, and might be able to find and discover the True Religion and Way of Worship among that People to whom he had revealed himself, Deut. xxxii. 8. Act. xvii. 26, 27. They might have been less vicious than they were, without the Knowledge of a Revelation; and therein they were inexcusable, that tho' they could not free themselves from the Power of Sin, yet they might not have given themselves so wholly up to it, as to become excluded from the Grace and Salvation to be obtained by the Revealed Will of God. And when God has revealed himself, all who will not use the Means, and by a due Improvement of their Reason endeavour from Natural Religion to arrive at Revealed, become inexcusable for their Negligence and Contempt of God, and the Abuse of those Talents and Endowments which God has bestowed upon them. For when God has once given Men warning, and directed them in the way of Salvation, and they will not regard it; they must be wilfully ignorant if they will not consider, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; and it is an Argument of his Patience and Long-suffering, that he doth not bring speedy Vengeance upon a disobedient and rebellious World: The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise (as some men count slackness) but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Now this is very well consistent and exceedingly agreeable with all the Divine Perfections, that he should give Men warning of the Evil and Danger of Sin, and afterwards leave them
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them to their own choice, whether they will be Righteous and Happy, or Wicked and Miserable; and then that he should not take the first Opportunity to punish them, nor lay hold of any Advantage against them, but give them time for second Thoughts, and space for Consideration and Repentance: But if they abuse so much Patience and Loving-kindness, that he should at last come upon them, when they least think of him, with a mighty and terrible Judgment, and with a sudden and unexpected Fury. But to stand by and look on unconcern'd, and then to take Men upon such a Surprize, without giving them any Notice of it before-hand, is a thing impossible to be accounted for, and can never be reconciled with the divine Attributes. St. Athanasius, insulfs at large upon this Argument, and carries it so far as to prove the Necessity of the Incarnation of the Son of God from it. He urges, That it would have been unworthy of the Goodness of God to suffer all Mankind to be destroyed by the Fraud and Malice of the Devil, or by their own Fault and Negligence; and that it had been more consistent with his Wisdom and Goodness, never to have created Men, than to have suffered them thus to perish: "An Earthly King (says he) when he has planted a Colony, will not carelessly suffer his Subjects to become Slaves to a Stranger, or to revolt from him; but he will, by his Proclamations, admonish them of their Duty, and often-times will send Messages to them by his Friends; and if there be a Necessity for it, will go to them himself, to awe them by his Presence, and recall them to their Obedience. And (as he there adds) "shall not God much rather be so mindful of his Creatures, as to use some Means to reclaim them from their evil Ways, and regain them to his Service; especially when they must be utterly undone for ever, unless he take care of them?"
St. Cyril of Alexandria speaks to the same Purpose. "It was necessary, (says he) it was necessary, "that the good God should save those, who were lost, "and defeat the Malice of the Devil." And afterwards, "What then should the Creator of the Uni-
verse do? Should he leave all Men under the Power "of impure Dæmons? And suffer the Devil's Malice "to disappoint his own Designs? Should he not "stretch forth his saving Hand to those who were "down? Should he not reclaim those who were en-
snared in the grossest Wickedness? Should he not "enlighten the Minds of those who were in Dark-
ness? Should he not call back those who were "gone astray? How then could he be Good, if "when without the least Trouble, he could effectu-
ally do all this, he had yet had no Regard for us? "Why did he at first bring Men into Being and Life, "if he would extend no Mercy towards them in this "miserable State?"

It is plain then, that tho' we had never heard of such a Thing as a Miracle, or a Prophecy, or of Revealed Religion; yet from the Consideration of the State of the World, and the great Ignorance and Corruption of Human Nature, it would be reasonable to expect that God should some Way make known his Will to Mankind; and we cannot reconcile it to his Attributes, nor conceive how it should be consistent with them, for him to be an unconcerned Spectator of so much Folly and Wickedness, without taking any Care to remedy it. God cannot be obliged to force Men to obey his Commandments, and comply with his Will, but rather to leave it at their own Choice, whether they will be Happy or Miserable: But it was necessary to propose the Terms of Salvation to them,

to offer them their free Choice, to set before them Life and Death, Blessings and Cursings, and so to leave the Obstinate without all Excuse.

And this is all which I am here concerned to prove, That it is reasonable to suppose, that God would reveal himself to Mankind, and that it is not conceiv-able how it should be consistent with the divine Attributes for him not to do it. To own the Being of a God, and yet to deny a Providence, is so great an Absurdity, that none of the Philosophers, but Epicurus, were guilty of it; and this was look’d upon, in him, as amounting to the Denial of the Divine Existence. And to grant both the Being and the Providence of God, and yet to confine the Divine Care and Providence to the Bodies only, and Outward Condition of Men, and to imagine, that the Spiritual and Immortal Part of Man is disregarded or neglected by him, is no less an Absurdity than wholly to deny his Providence or his Existence; because this is to deny the most considerable and inestimable Part of Providence, which concerns our Souls, and our Eternal State; and therefore it is, by consequence, to deny the Attributes of God, and to represent him not as he is in himself, but Unwise, Unmerciful, and Unholy. To say that there is no such thing as a Divine Revelation, is no better, in effect than Atheism: For whoever can be of this Opinion, must believe only the Being of such Gods as Epicurus owned, that never concerned themselves with Human Affairs; which was only, in other words, to say that they were no Gods at all.

It has therefore been the constant Belief and Opinion of all Nations, that their Gods did in some way or other reveal themselves to Men; and tho’ so great a Part of the World have worshipped False Gods, and have been mistaken as to the particular Revelations, which they received for Divine, yet it must proceed either from Ancient Tradition, or from the Reasonableness of the thing it self, or from both, that all the
the World should expect that the Divine Being should by some means communicate himself to Men and declare his Will to them.

CHAP. II.

The Way and Manner by which Divine Revelations may be supposed to be delivered and preserved in the World.

Mankind had so corrupted themselves, that the Will and Laws of God could not be effectually made known to them, but by some extraordinary way of Revelation. God had manifested himself in the Creation of the World, and by the Preservation of all things from the Beginning, according to their several Natures: For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead, Rom. i. 20. But Men had corrupted themselves even in the plainest and most fundamental Points of all Religion, and acted against all the Dictates of Natural Reason, in worshipping the vilest Parts of the Creation, rather than God himself, and, in contempt and defiance of Him, had set up even four-footed beasts and creeping things instead of Gods. How then could the Power and Authority of God be asserted, but by some extraordinary Way of Revelation; since the ordinary and constant Methods of God's revealing and manifesting himself by his Providence, in the Preservation and Government of the World, had been so far perverted and abused, as that Men were seduced to the Worship of anything, or of every thing, rather than of God? Mankind had neither the Will nor Ability to reform themselves, and had by their own fault brought themselves under an utter Incapacity of being reformed.
reformed but by some extraordinary Revelation. Natural Reason might have taught them to be less Wicked, but nothing could make them Righteous but a Revelation; and the gross Errors and Crimes, which the wisest Men had fallen into, shew the Necessity of an extraordinary Revelation from God, to instruct and inform the World. And the Ways of extraordinary Revelation are but these two, either an immediate Revelation of the Divine Will to particular Persons; or a Power of working Miracles, and of prophesying and foretelling future Events bestowed upon Some, to convince others that they are inspired, or come with a Commission from God, to instruct them in what he has revealed, either by himself, or by the Message of Angels.

1. But it cannot seem requisite, that God should immediately inspire, or make an immediate Revelation to every particular Person in the World: For either he must so powerfully influence their Minds and Affections, as to take away their Choice and Freedom of acting, which would be to offer Violence to Humane Nature; or else Men would, for the most part, have gone on in their wicked Courses still, and would have denied God in their Lives, though their Understanding were never so clearly and fully convinced of his Will and Commandments, as well as of his Eternal Power and God-head. For, as St. Paul testifies, the Heathens themselves were not ignorant of the Being of God; but when they knew God, they glorified him not as God. No Man can be more certain of any Inspiration which he can receive, than he is of the Being of that God from whom he receives it; and therefore he who denies the Being of God, must, by consequence, deny the Truth of any such Inspiration, unless it have that powerful Impulse upon his Mind, as both to convince him and force him to an Acknowledgment at once of the Being of God, and of the Operation of his Spirit upon his Soul. And it is hard
to conceive how any Inspiration, which doth not
over-rule the Will and Affections, as well as convince
the Understanding, should be of more Efficacy upon
the Minds and Lives of such Men, than the Notion
of a God is. For if Men can so stifle the Notion of a
God in their Minds, as to doubt whether there be any
God or no, or at least to act as if there were none;
no Reason can be given why they might not as well
act against any Conviction which they might receive
by Inspiration, or any other way of immediate Reve-
lation, (unless it had an irresistible Effect upon them)
and either take it all for Fancy and Delusion, or else to
harden themselves against it, as not to be reclaimed by
it: And of this we have Balaam for an Example, who,
notwithstanding the Revelations he received from God,
loved the wages of unrighteousness, 2 Pet. ii. 15.

But, above all Men, the profane and obstinate Un-
believers can have least Reason to expect that God
should vouchsafe them an immediate Revelation. e The
Jews have observed, that the Spirit of Prophecy rest-
ed only upon Men of regular and pure Affections, of
gentle, and meek, and tractable Dispositions. For
the Lord will be found of them that tempt him not, and
sheweth himself to such as do not distrust him, for froward
thoughts separate from God: into a malicious soul Wisdom
shall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto
sin. For the holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and
remove from thoughts that are without understanding, and
will not abide when unrighteousness cometh in, Wisd. i.
2, 3, 4, 5. And to the same purpose h Philo speaks.
And for this reason, when Joseph had the Interpretation
of Dreams revealed to him, i the Word of the Lord is said
to try him, or to purge, to clear, and justify him; it
being evident, that God would not in that manner

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e Maimon. de Fundament. Legis, c. 7. § 1.
h Quis rerum divinarum Heres sit. Philo, p. 404.
i See Dr. Hammond, on Psal. cv. 19.
Inspire one who had been guilty of the Crimes which Joseph was accused of. It is not to be imagined that God should farther reveal himself to all such in particular, by an immediate Inspiration, who have rejected all the Manifestations which he has made of himself, in the Creation and Government of the World; but, that he would reserve these immediate Revelations, as peculiar Favours, to his faithful and obedient Servants. God has sometimes, indeed, made use of wicked Men, Balaam, Caiaphas, &c. as his Instruments both in Prophecies and Miracles, to shew that they are at his Disposal, and proceed from his Bounty, not from any Worth or Merit of Men; and that he can over-rule the Designs and Intentions of the worst of Men, and make them serviceable to him, even against their Will, whenever he pleaseth: But then these are peculiar Cases, in which these Gifts were afforded for particular Ends, and for the Benefit of others, and the Men themselves were never the better for them. But as for the Disobedient, St. Paul acquaints us how, in the general Dispositions of his Providence, God dealt with them; God gave them over to a reprobate Mind, Rom. i. 28. And he there sets down a Catalogue of those Sins which were the Consequence of this Reprobation. The Apostle all along maintains, that they had so much Knowledge of God, as to render them without Excuse; and that they would make no Improvement of it, to the attaining the Knowledge of the Laws of Nature first, and then of his Revealed Will; and it was the just Judgment of God, to give them up to their own hearts lusts, to abandon them to the Tyranny of their Sins, since they would take no Notice of his Works, and would not abide his Counsels: And it must needs have been highly inconsistent, to send immediate Revelations, or afford particular Inspiration to all such Men as are there described. God's Spirit will not always strive with man; but he withdraws his ordinary Grace from those that abuse...
abuse it, and therefore it can never be presumed he should confer higher Favours upon them.

If Men will believe upon reasonable Motives, they have sufficient Means of Salvation allowed them; but if they will not believe without some immediate Revelation, they are never like to have that in this World, but in the next God will reveal himself with Terror and Vengeance upon all the workers of iniquity. God doth, both by Nature and by Revelation, provide for the Necessities, for the Welfare and Happiness, but never for the Humours and Peevishness of Men; and those who will not be faved, but according to some new Way and Method of their own Invention, must be miserable without remedy. I doubt not but the greatest Infidels would own, that if Christ should personally speak to them in a Voice from Heaven, or appear to them upon Earth, and grant them that Conviction which he once granted to St. Thomas, or St. Paul, they would believe in him, as these Apostles did. But they would do well to consider what Reason there can be, why so much Favour should be shewn to those who reject with Scorn and Derision all the Tenders of Grace, and Means of Salvation; and what Obligation God can be under, to save them in such a manner as themselves shall prescribe, who will not be faved in his Way, and according to the Terms of the Gospel. And if God should vouchsafe to make some immediate Revelation of himself to these inoffent Offenders, and Blasphemers of his Name and Authority; how can we be assured, that they would be converted? Would they not rather find out some Pretence to persuade themselves that it was no real Revelation, but the effect of Natural Agents, or of Melancholy, and of a disturbed Imagination? For those who have so long not only rejected (that were a modest thing) but derided and reviled Moses and the Prophets, nay, the Apostles, and our Saviour himself, would not believe, though one should rise from the dead.
dead. They might be terrified, perhaps, for the present, but they would soon stifle those Apprehensions with their accustomed Arguments for Atheism and Infidelity. I hope to prove, in this Discourse, That all but Atheists must be convinced of the Truth of the Revelations delivered down to us in the Old and New Testament, if they will but take the pains to consider them; and Atheists could never be convinced of any Revelation whatsoever: For Men must first believe that there is a God, before they can believe that he reveals himself either to themselves or others.

But besides their being ineffectual, and never to be expected by such as this Conceit must be calculated for; this Supposition, of immediate Revelations to every Man in particular, would fill the World with continual Impostures and Delusions. For if every one had a Revelation made to himself, every one might pretend to others what he pleased; and we know, from the Example of the Prophet, who was sent to prophesie against the Altar of Bethel, that a Man may be deluded by the Pretence of a Revelation made to another, against an express Revelation made to himself; and we may conclude that this would often happen, from what we every day experience: For if Men can be perverted by the Arts and Insubinations of others, against their own Reason and Judgment, they might as well be prevailed upon to act against a Revelation made to them, tho' Revelations were as common and familiar a thing amongst Men, as Reason itself is.

So that immediate Revelations to every particular Man would have been needful and superfluous; they would have been unsuitable to the Majesty and Honour of God; and they would have been ineffectual to the Ends for which they must be supposed to be designed, and would have given many more Pretences to Impostures than there are now in the World.

But there were many Considerations, even in a wicked World, to move the Compassions of Infinite Mercy.
Mercy towards Mankind: Though all were under the Dominion of Sin, and unable of themselves to become righteous, yet some were more wicked than others; great Numbers of Men were carried away to commit heinous Impieties, through their own Ignorance, and the Example of others; and though the Heathen were never without Excuse, yet they were chiefly inexcusable, because God had always a Revealed Will, to the Knowledge of which, he would by some Means or other have brought them, if they had lived according to their Natural Knowledge of him, and of their Duty towards him; and though the Heathen had many Opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Revealed Will of God, yet much Allowance was to be made for the Times of Ignorance before the Gospel. God was pleased to reveal himself from time to time; and at last, by the Gospel, in a more wonderful and evident Manner than ever he had done before, and to afford Men fuller means of Conviction, and greater Measures of Grace to comply with it, and work out their own salvation. And God has made these Revelations of his Will, by enduing certain Men with a Power of Prophecying, and Working Miracles, who were to declare his Will to others, and to certify the rest of the World that it was indeed his Will and Commandments which they delivered.

And this was the most proper Method, and most worthy of God. For, as I have proved, God would not create Mankind, and then take no farther Care of them; since, in the State of Innocence, they better deserved his Care, and have ever after stood in so much need of it, and could at no Time be happy, either in this World or the next, without it: And it cannot with any Reason be objected, by those who have never so great a Mind to cavil at the Terms and Means of Salvation by the Gospel, That God should apply himself to every Person by a particular Revelation; both
both because so much Condescension and Indulgence would be ill bestowed upon those who have so little deserved it; and because it would have no better effect than Prophecies and Miracles have had towards the Conversion of Men; but a very ill one, in affording Pretences to all Sorts of Impostures: And where two several Means are alike suitable to any End, no Man, surely, will presume to prescribe to Almighty God, and say, that he ought to have used one rather than the other; much less when one is inconvenient, and the other the only proper Means to be used.

II. I proceed therefore to shew, That Prophecies and Miracles are the most fitting and proper Means for God to discover and reveal himself to the World by. It is evident, that they are not accompanied with those Inconveniences, with which immediate Revelations would have been; there is no Prophecy, nor Miracle, but it has the designed Effect upon many Persons; the Majesty and Honour of God is not exposed to the Scorn of every profane and obstinate Offender; and there is as effectual Care taken to prevent Impostures, as possibly could have been. And as Prophecies and Miracles have none of the Inconveniences which immediate Revelation would have had; so I shall shew, that they have all the Advantage and Usefulness which it can be supposed that immediate Revelations would have had, if they had been granted to every Person in particular. All that any immediate Revelation could do, is to afford Men the Means of Conviction, and Assurance that the Revelation proceeds from God, as certainly as that God himself is: And this Prophecies and Miracles do.

1. Concerning Prophecies, it is observable, That the Oracles and Lying Divinations with which the Devil has imposed upon the World, shew, That it is natural for Men to expect that God should reveal himself
himself by Prophecies: Which made them so prone to receive false Prophecies from their false Gods. And this may teach us, That True Prophecies are to be expected from the True God. Many Prophecies are of that Nature, that none but God Omniscient could be the Author of them; and these, in their Accomplishment, must carry an indisputable Evidence of Divine Revelation along with them. Such are the Predictions of Things to be fulfilled many Ages afterwards, which in the fulfilling, depend upon the Counsels and Determinations of free Agents; and Predictions of the Sins of Men, which they could not be determin’d to, but by their own Choice. It is above the Capacity of Human Understanding, to conceive how it is possible, that Things should be foreseen so long before either the Actions or the Agents themselves have any Existence, or how Contingencies can be the Object of Infallible Prophecy: And therefore, for God to foretell Things of this nature by his Prophets, is a most proper and certain Way of Revelation; because it is above the Power of any Finite Being to do the like. It is the Prerogative of him that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, to declare unto man what is his thought: The Lord, the God of Hosts is his name, Amos iv. 13. For which reason, the False Gods are challeng’d to foretell these Things; Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods, Isa. xlii. 23.

But because Things foretold may sometimes come to pass by chance, or it may be in the Power of Evil Spirits to foretell them when they are in Design and Agitation, and just ready for Action; or to discern Things done at distant Places, and to make probable Guesses, which may prove true, from the various Circumstances of Affairs which they observe in the World: We may therefore be assured, from the Consideration of the Divine Attributes of Goodness
of the Christian Religion.

ness and Truth, that God will not suffer false Rel-
gions to be imposed upon the World, under his own Name, by Diabolical Predictions, without affording Means to discover them to be such. When a Pro-
phet speaketh in the Name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken it pre-
sumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him, Deut. xviii. 22. This is the Mark of Distinction between a Falfe and a True Prophet, That whatever the latter fore-
told in the Name of the Lord, should come to pass; but whatever the first foretold in his Name, should not come to pass; which implies, that God will dis-
appoint such Predictions, as he threatens, Ezek. xiv. 9. and not suffer them to come to pass; otherwise, the coming to pass of Things foretold, could be no cer-
tain Mark of a True Prophet, because they might come to pass by chance.

The Prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the Prophet shall come to pass, then shall the Prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him, Jer. xxviii. 9. Maimonides delivers it, not only as his own O-
pinion, but as the received Doctrine of the Rab-
bins, that if a Prophet foretold prosperous Events, and they did not come to pass, it was a convincing Argument of a Falfe Prophet: But if he threaten'd Judgments, tho' they were not inflicted, he might be a True Prophet. Which Doctrine they advanc'd from a Misinterpretation of the Words of Jeremiab now mention'd. For the False Prophet Hananiah, having declar'd in the Name of the Lord, that Je-
coniah and all the Captives of Judah, with the Vessels of the Temple, should within two Years be brought back from Babylon to Jerusalem; Jeremiab

k Maim. de Fundamentis Legis, c. 10. § 6, 7. Pref. in Seder Zeraim, p. 8.
tells him, that he heartily prayed, that it might please God, that this should prove true; but that it was no new Thing to prophesy of Calamities that were to befall a People, which was the Thing that had raised so great a Hatred against him. The Prophets that have been before me, and before thee of old, prophesied both against many Countries, and against great Kingdoms, of War, and of Evil, and of Pestilence. The Prophet which prophesieth of Peace, when the Word of the Prophet shall come to pass, then shall the Prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him, Jer. xxviii. 8, 9. He speaks here of Peace, with relation to this particular Case in Question at that Time, and says, that the Event would shew who was the true Prophet: But he lays down no Rule to detect false Prophets, by the Prediction of Prosperous, rather than of Adverse Events; which is directly contrary to God's express Declaration by him: At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil, that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the Good wherewith I said I would benefit them, chap. xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10. And the righteous Man, that committed Iniquity, was to have no Benefit from the Promises made to him; as the wicked Man, upon his Repentance, was not to suffer the Punishment denounced against him, Ezek. xxxiii. 13, 18. So manifestly contrary is this Rule of the Rabbins for the discerning of false from true Prophets, to the express Words of Scripture; and Maimonides confesses it failed at the Destruction of

! Maim. de Fund. Leg. c. 19. § 7, the
of the Christian Religion.

the first Temple. But if no visible Alteration be made in the Case, either by Repentance on the one hand, or by Disobedience on the other; the Fulfilling of Prophecies, whether they contain Threatnings or Promises, is a certain Sign of a True Prophet, and when the Event doth not answer the Prediction, this is as sure a Sign that it was delivered by a false Prophet. But if the Prophecy were not pretended to be in the Name of the True God, but were given out with a professed Design to entice Men to the Worship of False Gods, then God might suffer it to be fulfilled, to prove his People, Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3. For this was consistent with God's Truth and Goodness, especially after Warning given, and after so clear a Revelation, both by Prophecies and Miracles: If any Man, in this Case would be seduced by any Wonder, or Prophecy, to follow other Gods, it must be great Perverseness in him. But when Prophecies are delivered by many Prophets, in divers Ages, and different Places, all teaching the same Doctrine, and tending to the same End and Design in their several Revelations, and that End is the Discouragement of all Wickedness, and the Maintenance of all Virtue and true Religion, these Prophecies have all that can be requisite to assure us that they are from God; and God, by suffering them to be fulfilled, and to pass so long in the World, under his own Name, and with all the Characters of his Authority upon them, has given us all possible Assurance that they are his, and engaged us, in Honour to his Divine Attributes, to believe that they really are by his Authority.

And the Certainty of Prophecies being thus grounded upon the Divine Attributes, besides the direct Evidence which they afford to whatever is delivered by them, they add an undeniable Confirmation to those Miracles which have been foretold, and are wrought at the Time, and in the Manner, and by the
the Persons foretold by the Prophets; and the Prophecies likewise receive as great a Confirmation from such Miracles. For Prophecies and Miracles, which are singly a sufficient Evidence of Divine Revelation, do mutually support and confirm each other; and hereby we have all the Assurance that can be expected of any Divine Revelation: And therefore, as Prophecy is in itself a most fitting and proper Way of Revelation; so, in conjunction with Miracles, it is the most certain Way that can be desired.

2. The Suitableness and Efficacy of Miracles, to prove a Divine Revelation. It is an extravagant Thing to conceive, that God should exclude himself from the Works of his own Creation; or, that he should establish them upon such inviolable Laws, as not to alter them upon some Occasions, when he foresaw it would be requisite to do it: For unless the Course of Nature had been thus alterable, it would have been defective in regard to one great End for which it was design'd; viz. it would have fail'd of being serviceable to the Designs of Providence upon such Occasions. The same infinite Wisdom which contrived the Laws for the Order and Course of Nature, contrived them so, as to make them alterable, when it would be necessary for God, by suspending the Powers, or interrupting the Course of Nature, to manifest his extraordinary Will and Power; and by the same Decree by which he at first established them, he subjected them to such Alterations, as his Wisdom foresaw would be necessary.

We can as little doubt, but that He who made the World, has the sole Power and Authority over it; and that nothing can be done in it, but by his Direction and Influence, or at least by his Permission; and that the Frame and Order of Nature which he at first appointed, can at no Time be alter'd, but for great Ends and Purposes. He is not given
given to change, as Men are, and can never be dis-
appointed in his Eternal Purposes and Designs. But 
when any thing comes to pass above the Course of 
Nature, and contrary to it, in Confimation of a 
Revelation, which, for the Importance and Excel-
lency of the Subject of it, and in all other Respects, 
is most worthy of God, we may be sure that this is 
his doing; and there is still farther Evidence of it, 
if this Revelation were prophesy'd of before, by Pro-
phets who foretold that it should be confirm'd by 
Miracle. As, when Men born blind, receiv'd their 
Sight; when others were cured of the most desperate 
Diseases, by a Touch, or at a Distance; when the 
Dead were rais'd, and the Devils cast out; these 
were evident Signs of a Divine Power and Presence, 
which gave Testimony to the Doctrine deliver'd 
by those by whom such Miracles were wrought, and 
the Divine Commission and Authority was produ-
ced for what they did and taught. For what could 
be more satisfactory and convincing to Men, or more 
worthy of God, than to force the Devils them-
selves to confess and proclaim his Coming? to cause 
the most insensible things in Nature to declare his 
Power, by giving way, as it were, and starting 
back in great Confusion and Disorder, at his more 
immediate and peculiar Presence, to inform Men that 
the God of Nature was there? This gave Testimony 
to the Things reveal'd, and challeng'd the Belief of 
all Men, in a Language more powerful than any 
Human Voice, whilst God shew'd forth his Glory, 
and made known his Will, by exercizing his Sove-
reignty over Nature, in making the whole Creation 
bow, and tremble and obey. All which was per-
form'd according to express Prophecies concerning 
Christ, that there might be a visible Concurrence 
both of Prophecies and Miracles in Testimony of 
him. And this Dispensation of Miracles was admi-
rably fitted to propagate that Religion which con-
cern'd
cerned the Poor, as well as the Rich, the Unlearned, as well as the Learned. Miracles were suitable to the Simplicity of the Gospel, and to the universal Design of it: For they are equally adapted to awaken the Attention, and command the Assent of Men of all Conditions and Capacities; they are obvious to the most Ignorant, and may satisfy the Wisest, and confute or silence the Cavils of the most Captious and Contentious.

And this is what all the World ever expected, That God should reveal himself to Men, by working somewhat above the Course of Nature. All Mankind have believed, that this is the Way of Intercourse between Heaven and Earth; and therefore there never was any of the false Religions, but it was pretended to have been confirmed by something miraculous. We may appeal to the Sense of all Nations for the Authority of Miracles to attest the Truth of Religion: For whenever any Thing happened extraordinary, they always imagined something supernatural in it; they expected that Miracles should be wrought for the Proof of any Thing that had but the Name of Religion; and no false Religion could have gained Belief and Credit in any Age or Nation, but under the Pretence of them.

The only Difficulty therefore will be, to know how to distinguish True Miracles from False; or those which have been wrought for the Confirmation of the True Religion, from such as have been done, or are pretended to have been done, in behalf of False Religions.

But here it must be observed, That it is not necessary, in this Controversy, that we should be able to determine what the Power of Spirits is, or how far it extends, and what Works can proceed only from the immediate Power of God: It is sufficient that we know, that God presides over All; that Good Spirits act in constant Subjection and Obedience.
dience to him; that Evil Spirits act for evil Ends; that Good Spirits will not impose upon Men, and that he will not suffer the Evil to do it, under any Pretence of his own Authority, without affording means to discover the Delusion. And the Question here is not concerning any strange Work whereof God is not alleged to be the Author, but concerning such as are wrought with a professed Design to establisht Religion in his Name. Suppose then that there have been many Wonders wrought in the World, which exceed all Human Power, and which yet we know not to what other Power to ascribe: This makes no Difficulty in the present Case; because here, not only the Works themselves, but the Design and Tendency of them is to be considered. For Instance, Whether the Miracles reported to have been done by Vespasian, were true or false, by a Divine or a Diabolical Power, they are of no Consequence to us; he established no new Doctrine, and pretended to no Divine Authority, but doubted the Possibility of his working them: And supposing them true, and by a Divine Power, the most that can be said of them, is, that as God mentioned Cyrus by Name to be the Deliverer of the Jews, so he might by Miracle signalize this Prince who was to destroy them. But the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles were wrought with this declared Purpose and Design, That they were to give Evidence to the Religion which they were sent from God to introduce, as necessary to the Salvation of Mankind.

Having premised this, I must resume what was before observed concerning the Means by which false Prophecies might be detected. It has been already proved from the Notion of a God, that there must be some Divine Revelation; and it has been shewn that Prophecies and Miracles are the most fit and proper way of Revelation, and that Way which Men have ever expected to receive Revelations by. If then there have
have been False Prophecies and Miracles, they must be supposed to have been either before, or at the same time, or after those Prophecies and Miracles by which the True Religion was delivered; if before, or at the same time, then the same Divine Wisdom and Goodness which obliges God to reveal his Will to Mankind, must oblige him to take care that the Impostures of those False Prophecies and Miracles by some means might have been discovered. But there is great Reason to believe, that true Revelations should be first made to Men, before God would suffer them to be tempted with false Ones; and if the false were after the true Revelations, then the true Revelations themselves are that by which we ought to judge of all others.

But to speak more particularly of Miracles which are the present Subject. It is inconsistent with the Infinite Truth, and Honour, and Goodness, and Mercy of God, to suffer Man to be deluded by false Miracles, wrought under a Pretence of his own Authority, without any Possibility of discovering the Imposture: And therefore if we should suppose, there had pass'd any Time before the Discovery of his Will to Mankind, he could not suffer Men, but through their own Fault to be imposed upon by such Miracles; but either by the false and wicked Doctrines which they were brought to promote and establish, as Idolatry, Uncleanliness, Murthers, &c. or by some other Token of Imposture, they might have been undeceived: And both in the Old and New Testament God has given us Warning against false Miracles, Deut. xiii. 1. Mat. xxiv. 24. Gal. i. 8. 2 Thess. ii. 9. so that we may be assured, that we are to give no Credit to any Miracle that can be wrought to confirm any other Doctrine than what we find in the Scriptures; and if we can but be certify'd, that they were true Miracles which gave Testimony and Evidence to them, we need concern ourselves about no other.

And
And the Miracles by which the Scriptures are confirmed and authorized must be true; because there is no precedent Divine Revelation which they contradict, nor any immoral or false Doctrine which they deliver, nor any thing else contained in them whereby they can be proved to be false: And in this Case, that which all the Wit and Understanding of Man cannot prove to be false, must be true, or else God would suffer his own Name and Authority to be usurped and abused, and Mankind to be imposed upon in a thing of infinite Consequence, without any Possibility of discovering the Imposture, which it is contrary to the Divine Attributes for him to permit; but either by the Works themselves, or by the End and Design of them, or by some Means or other, the Honour, and Wisdom, and Mercy of God is concerned to detect all such Impostures. If Miracles be wrought to introduce the Worship of other Gods, besides him, whom Reason, as well as Scripture, assures us to be the only True God; if they be done to seduce Men to immoral Doctrines and Practices; if they be performed to contradict the Religion already confirmed by Miracles, in which nothing of this nature could possibly be discovered; if never so astonishing Miracles be wrought for such ill Designs as these, they are not to be regarded, but rejected with that Constancy which becomes a Man who will act according to the Principles of Natural Reason and Religion. But when Miracles were perform'd, which, both for the End and Design of them, as well as for the Manner and Circumstances of their Performance, had all the Credibility that any Miracle could have, if it were really wrought by God's immediate Power to confirm a Revelation; if these Miracles have been foretold by Prophecies, (as, on the other side, the Prophecies were fulfilled by the Miracles) if they were done publickly before all sorts of Men, and that often, and by many Men successively, for divers Ages together, and
all agreed in the same Doctrine and Design; if neither the Miracles themselves, nor the Doctrines which are attested by them, can be discovered to have any Deceit or Defect in them, but be most excellent and divine, and most worthy of God; in such a Case we have all the Evidence for the Truth of the Miracles, and of the Religion which they were wrought to establish, that we can have for the Being of God himself. For if these Miracles and this Religion be not from God, we must suppose either that God cannot, or that he will not so reveal himself by Miracle to the World, as to distinguish his own Revelation from Impostures; both which Suppositions are contrary to the Divine Attributes; contrary to God's Omnipotence, because he can do all things, and therefore can exceed the Power of all Finite Beings; and contrary to his Honour, and Wisdom, and Goodness, because these require both that he should reveal himself to the World, and that he should do it by Miracles, in such a manner, as to make it evident which is his Revelation. But if he both can and will put such a Distinction between False Miracles and True, as that Men shall not, except it be by their own fault, be seduced by false Miracles; then that Religion which is confirmed by Miracles, concerning which nothing can be discovered to be either impious or false, must be the True Religion. For we have seen, that there must be some Revealed Religion, and that this Religion must be revealed by Miracle; and we have the Goodness, and Truth, and Justice of God engaged, that we should not be imposed upon by false Miracles, without being able to discern the Imposture: And therefore that Religion which both by its Miracles, and Doctrine, and Worship, appears to be Divine, and could not be proved to be false, if it were so, must certainly be true; because the Goodness and Honour of God is concerned, that Mankind, in a Matter of this Consequence, should not be deceived, without
of the Christian Religion. 33

out their own Fault or Neglect, by Impostures vented under his own Name and Authority. Upon which account, the Sin against the Holy Ghost, in ascribing the Miracles wrought by Christ, to Beelzebub, was so heinous above all other Crimes; this being to reject the utmost Means that can be used for Man's Salvation, and in Effect to deny the Attributes and very Being of God. The Sum of this Argument is, That though Miracles are a most fit and proper Means to prove the Truth of Religion, yet they are not only to be considered alone, but in Conjunction with other Proofs; and that they must necessarily be true Miracles, or Miracles wrought to establish the true Religion, when the Religion upon the account whereof they are wrought cannot be discovered to be false, either by any Defect in the Miracles, or by any other Means, but has all the Marks and Characters of Truth. Because God would not suffer the Evidence of Miracles, and all other Proofs, to concur to the Confirmation of a false Religion, beyond all Possibility of discovering it to be so.

III. How Divine Revelations may be supposed to be preserved in the World. It is reasonable to suppose, that Divine Revelations should be committed to Writing, that they might be preserved for the Benefit of Mankind, and delivered down to Posterity, and that a more than ordinary Providence should be concerned in their Preservation. For whatever has been said by some, of the Advantage of Oral Tradition, for the Conveyance of Doctrines, beyond that of Writing, is so notoriously fancifual and strained, that it deserves no serious Answer. For 'till Men shall think it safest to make Wills, and bequeath and purchase Estates by Word of Mouth, rather than by Instruments in Writing, it is in vain to deny that this is the best and se-

urest Way of Conveyance that can be taken: So the common Sense of Mankind declares, and so the Experience of the World finds it to be in Things which

Vol. I. D Men
Men take all possible Care about; and it is too mani-
feft, and much to be lamented, that Men are more
solicitous about Things Temporal, than about Eternal;
which affords too evident a Confutation of all the Pre-
tences of the Infallibility of Oral Tradition, upon this
Ground, That the Subject-Matter of it are things upon
which the Eternal Happines or Misery of Mankind
depends. Besides, the Obligations and the Motives
are the fame to transmit, with all Care and Faithfulness,
the Terms of Salvation to Posterity by Writing, that
they would be, if they were to be transmitted by Oral
Tradition: The only Difference is, that Writing is the
sureft Way of Conveyance; not that it wants any Ad-
vantage, which can be pretended by Oral Tradition.
And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial
in a Book, Exod. xvii. 14. Now go, write it before them
in a Table, and note it in a Book, that it may be for the
time to come, for ever and ever, Isa. xxx. 8.

IV. It is requisite that a Divine Revelation should be
of great Antiquity: Because, upon the fame Grounds
that we cannot think that God would not at all reveal
himself to Mankind, we cannot suppose that he would
suffer the World to continue long under a State of Cor-
rupftion and Ignorance, without taking some care to
remedy it, by putting Men into a Capacity of know-
ing and practifing the Duties of Virtue and Religion.

V. Another Requisite of a Divine Revelation, is,
that it should be fully promulged and published to
the World, for the general Good and Benefit of Man-
kind, that it may attain the Ends for which a Reve-
lation must be designed.

PART II.

ROM what has been already discoursed, it appears, that these things are requisite in a Divine Revelation: I. Antiquity. II. Promulgation. III. A sufficient Evidence, by Prophecies and Miracles, in Proof of its Authority. IV. The Doctrines delivered by Divine Revelation must be Righteous and Holy, consistent with the Divine Attributes, and suitable to their Condition to whom it is made, and every way such as may answer the Design of a Revelation.

CHAP. I.
The Antiquity of the Scriptures.

As it is evident from the Divine Attributes, that God would not so wholly neglect Mankind, as to take no care to discover and reveal his Will and Commandments to the World; so, when there was...
The Reasonableness and Certainty

f0 great a Necessity of Divine Revelation, in order to the Happines of Mankind, both in this World and the next, it is not to be believed that he would defer it so long, before he made known his Will, as 'till the Date of the first Antiquities amongst the Heathen. It cannot be denied, that some Books of the Scripture are much the Ancientest Books of Religion in the World; for it were in vain to pretend that the Works in this Kind (or indeed in any other) of any Heathen Author, can be compared with the Pentateuch, for Antiquity. And the Antiquity of these Books is one considerable Circumstance, whereby we may be convinced that they are of Divine Revelation. For if God would not suffer the World to continue long in a State of Ignorance and Wickedness without a Revelation, we may conclude, that he would not suffer the Memory of it to be lost; and therefore a Book of this Nature, which is so much the ancientest in the World, being constantly received as a Divine Revelation, carries great Evidence with it that it is Authentick. For the first Revelation, as hath been proved, is to be the Criterion of all that follow; and God would not suffer the ancientest Book of Religion in the World to pass all along under the Notion and Title of a Revelation, without causing some Discovery to be made of the Imposture, if there were any in it; much less would he preserve it by a particular and signal Providence for so many Ages. It is a great Argument for the Truth of the Scriptures, that they have stood the Test, and received the Approbation of so many Ages, and still retain their Authority, though so many ill Men, in all Ages, have made it their Endeavour to disprove them: But it is still a farther Evidence in behalf of them, that God has been pleased to shew so remarkable a Providence in their Preservation.

The Account we have of Divine Revelation, in the Writings of Moses, is from the Creation of the World;
for he relates the Intercourse which from the Beginning passed between God and Man; and this might be delivered down, either by Writing or by Tradition, till Moses's Time. For Methuselah living with Adam, and Shem with Methuselah, Isaac with Shem, and Amram the Father of Moses living with the Patriarchs, the Sons of Jacob, the History of the Creation, and of the Manifestations which God had been pleased to make of himself to their Fore-fathers, could not be unknown to that Age: Such a Posterity could not but be zealous to preserve the Memory of so great Honours and Blessings; and their living in God's separate from the Egyptians, did much contribute to the Preservation of their Antiquities; for there they lived in Expectation of a Deliverance, and of seeing the Prophecies fulfilled, that were made to their Fore-fathers concerning it. The famous Prediction made to Abraham, Gen. xv. 16. could not be forgotten in so few Generations; for the coming out of Egypt, was, as it was there foretold it should be, in the Fourth Generation, reckoning from Isaac, the first of the promised Seed, to Moses exclusively, Exod. vi. 16, 18, 20.

Moses seems to refer to some Things that happened near the Beginning of the World, as well known in his own Time, as Gen. iv. 22. where he says, The Sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah: For no probable Account can be given, why Naamah should be mentioned, but because her Name was then well known among the Israelites, for some Reason which it doth not concern us to be acquainted with, but which served to confirm to them the rest of the Relation. Some have delivered, that Naamah, by her Beauty, enticed the Sons of God, or the Posterity of Seth, to commit Idolatry, Gen. vi. 2. And so, Gen. xi. 29. we read, that Haran was the Father of Iscabar, as well as of Milcab; and Gen. xxxvi. 24. This was that Anah
that found the Mules (or the Hot-Baths, or that fell upon the Emins, or Giants, mention'd, Deut. ii. 10, 11. however the Word he understood) in the wilderness, as he fed the Asses of Zibeon his Father. In the Catalogue of the Kings of Edom, none of their Wives are mentioned, but the Wife of Hadar, and we are told, that her Name was Mabetael, and that she was the Daughter of Matred, the Daughter of Merahab, Gen. xxxvi. 39. Why such Particularity, but because these Names were then famous? These, and such-like Particulars, must have been preserved and commonly known among the Israelites, and were therefore inserted to serve as Epocha's and Notes of Remembrance, for the better understanding the rest of the History. The Story and Manner of Life of Nimrod was convey'd in a Proverb; Wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty Hunter before the Lord, Gen. x. 9. The Remembrance of Abraham's offering up his Son, was retain'd both by the Name of the Place, and by a Proverbial Saying, And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, Gen. xxii. 14. And there is no doubt to be made, but that there were other the like Remembrances of the most Remarkable Translations. Reasons are assign'd of the Names of Adam and Eve, of Cain, and Seib, and Noah, of Melchisedek, of Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Jacob. The Names of all the Patriarchs imported something remarkable in their Signification, and were design'd to preserve the Remembrance of what had come to pass. The Names of Places likewise were appointed for Memorials, Gen. xix. 22. xxviii. 19. xxxi. 49. xxxii. 30. And the Sepulchres of the

a Interp. Vulgat Invenit Aquas Calidas.

Dead were historical Monuments for the Information of Posterity. Abraham purchased Macpelah for a Burying-place; and when Jacob bury'd Rachel near Bethlehem, he erected a Pillar to her Memory, Gen. xxiii. 17. xxxv. 20. It may perhaps seem strange to some Readers, that the digging of Wells should be particularly taken notice of, and that the Names given them should be so carefully recorded by Moses, Genes. xvi. 14. xxvi. 20, 21, 33. But as Wells in those Countries were more rare, and of more necessary Use and Benefit, than in colder and moister Climates; so they serv'd as so many Memorials to Posterity, of what had befallen their Fore-fathers, and the Names of them stand register'd by Moses, in Confirmation of the Truth of what he wrote. But the Flood being the greatest Epocha of Time, the History of this is above all deliver'd with most Exactness: The Dimensions of the Ark, the Height of the Waters, and not only the Year, but the Month and Day, when the Waters were brought upon the Earth; and when it became dry, are punctually set down, Gen. vi. 15. vii. 11, 20. viii. 13, 14.

Josephus has prov'd, that Authors of all Nations agree, that in ancient Times Men liv'd to the Age of about a Thousand Years; and some are known to have liv'd to a very great Age in latter Times. But however, it had been more serviceable to Moses's Purpose, if he had had any other Design but Truth, that Men should not have been so long liv'd. For when he had so much Scope for his Invention, (if it had been an Invention of his own) he would never have fix'd the Creation of the World at the distance of so few Generations from the time in which he wrote, but would rather have made the Generations of Men more, and their Lives shorter, that so he might the better have concealed his Fictions in obscure and uncertain Relations, which must be suppos'd to be
be delivered through so many Hands down to that Age. Of the Ten Patriarchs before the Flood, all but Noah lived soon enough to see Adam and the other Patriarchs their Progenitors; and Noah himself was old enough to know all of them, but Adam, Seth, and Enoch. The Distance of Time from the Flood to Moses was more than it is from the Conquest to the present Age, but half of this Time Noah himself was living: And therefore allowing for the greater Length of Mens Lives in those Ages than in ours, the Time when Moses wrote cannot be computed at so great a Distance from the Flood, as we are at from the Reformation. But is it possible to make any Man of tolerable Sense, amongst us, believe that Henry VIII. was the first King of England? That there was a Deluge in his Time which swept away all the Inhabitants of this Island, and of the whole World besides, but some seven or eight Persons, and that all whom we now see were born of them? And yet this, as ridiculous as it seems, is no more absurd than Moses's Account of the Creation and the Flood, must have been to those of his own Time, if it were false.

For it is very reasonable to think, as Josephus informs us, that Writing was in use before the Flood: And it is not improbably, as some have conjectured, that the History of the Creation, and the rest of the Book of Genesis, was, for the Substance of it, delivered down to Moses's Time in Verse, which was the most easy to be remembered, and the most ancient of all Sorts of Writing, and was at first chiefly used for Matters of History, and consisted of plain Narration, without much of Art or Ornament. We read of Instrumental Musick, Gen. iv. 21, before the Flood; and Vocal Musick being so much more Natural than Instrumental, it is likely that Poetry was of as great Antiquity, both in their Hymns and Praises of God, and as a Help to their Memories, which are
of the Christian Religion.

are the two Ends to which Mōses applies his own Songs or Poems, Exod. xv. Deut. xxxii. If it be thought, that there was no Writing before the Flood, because there is no Account of the Invention of it, though the Inventors of other inferior Arts be mentioned; this rather proves the contrary, and that it was coeval with Mankind, or was the Invention of Adam. It is not probable, that in so long a Life, he should find out nothing for the use of himself and his Posterity, tho' no Invention be attributed to him; and Writing is so necessary, that the World could very ill subsist without it for between Sixteen and Seventeen Hundred Years. The Grecians, and other Nations, have recorded the first Inventors, as they supposed, of Letters, as those who best deserved a Memorial in History. But *Pliny is of Opinion, that the Assyrian Letters, by which we are to understand the ancient Hebrew, or Samaritan Characters, have been from the Beginning of the World. And since there is no other Mention amongst the ancientest Jewish Writers, but that they were before the Flood, some of them also ascribing them to Adam, this implies that they were of the greatest Antiquity, and the Time of their Invention is no more known than that of Ploughing and Sowing, and other necessary Arts, which were from the Beginning of the World.

But though it should be supposed, that before the Flood they had not the same Conveniencies for preserving the Remembrance of Things past, which we have had since, yet Things of this Nature could never be imposed upon the Generality of Men; and if they had less means of conveying Things past to Posterity, they had fewer Things to convey; and all their Histories being concerning the Ancestors of their own Families, they were easily remembered; and however short and imperfect, they could not be so

defective, as that Men should generally be so grossly ignorant as to swallow such Impostures: They had One Day in Seven purposely set apart for the Praise and Worship of God, and the Commemoration of his Mercies vouchsafed to Mankind; and they, who had Proverbial Remembrances of Nimrod, the third from Noab, could not be ignorant of Noab himself, and of the Flood in his Time.

In so few Generations of Men as had past, by reason of the long Lives of the Patriarchs, it was impossible for Moses to impose upon those of his own Age in things so memorable as the Creation of the World, and the Flood, and the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrab, &c. But when, so long after the Flood, the Sons of Noab were dispersed into so far distant Places of the Earth, and their Manners and Customs were different, and their Lives shorter, it became necessary, that a true and lasting Account of those things should stand recorded in a Book of infallible Credit and Authority, for the Benefit of future Ages, left, in process of time, the Remembrance of them should become obscure and confus'd, and fabulous Stories should be imposed upon the World for Truth, in Matters of so great Importance. For it has been observ'd by divers learned Men, that the most ancient Histories, as well as the Philosophy and Theology of the Heathens, contain many things concerning the Creation of the World, the first Propagation of Mankind, the Flood, and other Particulars; which have to plain an Agreement with what we read in the Book of Genesis, that they are supposed to be taken out of it; but they are obscur'd and disguis'd under other Names and Characters, to conceal from whence they were originally taken, and to gain them the better Acceptance amongst those for whose Use the Books containing them were design'd by their Authors. And when the Remembrance of God's Dealings with past Ages began to fail, and the Ways of Humane Convey-
ance were so uncertain, it was requisite that some infallible Account should be given of God's Dispensations, and his Communications of himself in the first Ages, which might be transmitted down to Posterity, unto the End of the World.

CHAP. II.

The Promulgation of the Scriptures.

The End and Design of a Revelation from Heaven, must be for the Good of Mankind, and therefore it was necessary, that it should be known and promulg'd in the World; and that Revelation which had been known to most Nations, and farthest divulged, carries another Evidence of its Divine Authority. For, since it is necessary, there should be some Divine Revelation, it is likewise necessary, that it should be sufficient to the Ends for which it was design'd; and it was revealed, not to be conceal'd, or confined to a few Persons, but to rectify the Mistakes, and regulate the Manners of Men; and therefore that which has been most known, and farthest propagated, we have Reason to think to be a True Revelation. If every thing else concur to prove it true, the very Promulgation of it is a considerable Evidence in proof of its Divine Authority: Because it is not to be supposed, that God would either suffer his own Revelation to be so stifled and suppress'd, as to become of little or no Use and Benefit to the World, or that he would permit false Revelations to be more known and divulg'd; either of which would very ill consist with the Intention of Revealing his Will to Mankind.

It has been already proved, That it is not to be expected that God should reveal himself to every Man
in particular, and it could not be requisite, that he should afford a constant and standing Revelation in all Nations of the World. For if Mankind be sufficiently provided for in the Necessaries of Salvation, this is all which in Reason can be expected from a Just and Good God to sinful and perverse Man. If Men be put in the ready Way of Salvation, and have sufficient Means allowed them to attain it; all beyond this is the mere arbitrary Effect of Infinite Goodness, and depends wholly upon the good Pleasure of God, being more than we could promise our selves from his Justice, or, by Reason, foresee from his Mercy it self. And his Wisdom so orders and disposes the Effects and Emanations of his Mercy, as to render them consistent with his Justice and Honour, as he is Governor of the World.

And if, in the first Ages, Revelations were frequent, and generally known amongst all Mankind, 'till by their own Fault and Neglect they were withheld from them; it was the great Mercy of God, afterwards, to continue to those Nations, who had despised and rejected him, an Opportunity of knowing his Will revealed to others: And this God was pleased to do, by appointing a chosen Seed, and selecting to himself a peculiar People, to bear his Name before the Nations; and, by the various Dispensations of his Providence, he so disposed of that People, that all Nations might be instructed in the Things revealed and delivered to them.

First then, I shall shew, That in the first Ages of the World, the revealed Will of God was known to all Mankind.

Secondly, That in succeeding Ages there have still been sufficient Means and frequent Opportunities for all Nations to come to the Knowledge of it.
of the Christian Religion.

1. In the first Ages of the World, the Revealed Will of God was known to all Mankind. And here we must have Recourse to the History of the Bible; since it is acknowledged, by all learned Men to be so much the ancientest Book which can give us an Account of Religion, in the World. For unless we will reject all History, and believe nothing related of Ancient Times, we must take our Accounts from such Books as treat of them: And 'till by the Method proposed, I have proved the Bible to be of Divine Authority, I shall allledge it only as an Historical Relation of Things past; in which respect, it would be unreasonable to deny it that Credit which is allowed to other Books of that Nature. And this is all that is now desired, in order to the clearing of what I am at present upon; which is to shew, That nothing requisite to a true Revelation is wanting to the Scriptures; and therefore, that they have been sufficiently promulged and made known to the World.

In the Beginning of the World, God was pleased to create but one Man, and one Woman, and to people the Earth from them; which must exceedingly tend both to the Preservation of Order and Obedience amongst Men, and to the retaining of the Knowledge of God, and of his Ways and Dealings with the first Parents of Mankind. But if Multitudes had been created, and the Earth had been peopled at once, the natural Effect of this had been Ambition and Strife, Confusion and Ignorance: For as the Inhabitants of the World multiplied, so did all Sin and Wickedness encrease; though all descended from the same Parents, and these Parents lived to see many Generations of their Offspring, and to instruct and admonish them; which, if any Thing could have done it, must have kept up a Sense of God and Religion amongst Men. Adam himself performed the Office of a Father, a Priest, and a King, to his Children; and the Office and Authority of these three descended upon the Heads
Heads of Families, in the several Generations and Successions of Kingdoms amongst his Posterity: For that the same Person was both King and Priest in the earlier Ages of the World, we learn from the best Antiquities of other Nations, and it was so likewise amongst the Hebrews, till God appointed an Order and Succession of the Priesthood in one Tribe: and therefore Esau is styled a Profane Person, for selling his Birth-right, because the Priesthood went along with it, Heb. xii. 16.

By all the Accounts we have of the World before the Flood, we are assured, that God was pleased, at first, to afford frequent Communications of himself to Mankind; and even to the Wicked, as to Cain, whose Punishment it afterwards was, to be hid from the Face of the Lord, and driven out from his presence, Gen. iv. 14, 16. And when the Wickedness of Men had provoked God to drown the World, he revealed this to Noah, and respioted the Execution of this Judgment an Hundred Years; and Noah, in the mean time both by his Preaching, and by preparing an Ark, warned them of it, and exhorted them to Repentance: by preparing of an ark to the saving of his house, he condemned the world, Heb. xi. 7. And he was a preacher of righteousness to the old World, 2 Pet. i. 19. In our Translation we read, the eighth Person, a Preacher of Righteousness. But it is rendered by some, and perhaps more exactly, the eighth Preacher of Righteousness, implying that there were seven before him. However he made it his Business, for above an Hundred Years together, to forewarn the wicked World of their approaching Ruin; which he did by all the ways

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\[d\quad \text{o} \quad \text{Omnesque primogenitos Noe, donec sacerdoto fungeretur Aaron, suisse Pontifices (Hebra\'i tradunt.) Hieronym. Qu\'estion. seu Tradit. Hebraic. in Genef.}

\[e\quad \text{O\'dy\'ed Noe diea\'stwv k\'e\'nu\'a e\'pl\'i\'az, octavum Justitiae Præconem Noe. Erasmi. Vid. Jud. } \text{x} \text{ } 14.\]
and Means that a Wife and Great Man could con-
trive, proper for that End.

Noah lived after the Flood, Three hundred and fifty Years, Gen. ix. 28. and it was between One and Two hundred Years before the Division of Tongues, and the Dispersion of the Sons of Noah. And when all the Inhabitants of the Earth were of one Language, and lived not far asunder, Noah himself living amongst them; the Judgment of God upon the wicked World, in overwhelming them with the Flood; his Mercies to Noah and his Family, in their Preservation, when all the rest of the Word perished; and the Commandments which God gave to Noah at his coming out of the Ark, with his Promises and Threatnings repectively to the Performance or Transgression of them, must be well known: and the Sin in building the Tower of Babel, for which the Universal Language was confounded, and the Race of Mankind dispersed, could proceed from nothing but the height of Presumption and Perverseness. After the Confu-

*See Sir W. Rawleigh, l. 1. c. 8. § 3.*
ded of Vessels to transport any great Numbers of Men, with their Families, and Flocks and Herds of Cattle, which were for many Ages their only Riches, and absolutely necessary for their Sustenance: For Navigation had never had so flow an Improvement in the World, if it had so soon been in that Perfection as to enable them for such Transportations.

And as for these Reasons, the Dispersion of Noab's Posterity over the Earth must be gradual, and many Generations must pass, before the remoter Parts of it could be inhabited; so the several Plantations must be supposed to hold Correspondence with those to whom they were nearest allied, and from whom they went out; they must be supposed to own some sort of Dependence upon them, and pay them such Acknowledgements as Colonies have ever done to their Mother-Cities. It is natural to suppose that they first spread themselves into the neighbouring Countries; and (as Sir Walter Rawleigh has observed) the first Plantations were generally by the Banks of Rivers, whereby they might hold Intelligence one with another; which they could not do by Land, that being overspread with Woods, and altogether unfit for travelling. And the great Affinity which is observable between the Eastern Languages, proves that there was a continual Correspondence and Commerce maintained between the several Nations, after the Dispersion.

All which, considering the great Age that Men lived to in those Times, must, without a very gross Neglect and Contempt of God, preserve a true Notion of Religion in the several Parts of the World: For Noab himself lived Three Hundred and Fifty Years after the Flood; his Sons were not soon dispersed; their Dispersion was gradual, and they held a Correspondence after their Separation, and lived long to educate and train up their Children in that Knowledge of God, which they had received and been instructed
trusted in themselves; and besides, they had little else to discourse upon, but such Things as would necessarily lead them to it: The History of their own Nation and Family is that which Men are naturally most fond of; and in these Ages the Particulars could be but few, and those very remarkable, and almost within the Memory of some yet living; and every Occurrence must bring to their Remembrance what they had heard, and had been taught concerning God, and his Dealings with them and their Fore-fathers.

Moreover, there was the special Hand of God, and a particular Over-ruling Providence, in the Dispersion and Division of Nations: For, when the most High divided to the Nations their Inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel, Deut. xxxii. 8. He determined the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, Acts xvii. 26, 27. This was the reason of the Division of the Nations, according to the number of the children of Israel, who are stiled, a Peculiar Treasure, a Kingdom of Priests, and a holy Nation, Exod. xix. 5, 6. There was a particular Regard had to the Number of the Chosen Seed, that they might bear a fit Proportion to the rest of Mankind, and might be as so much Leaven to the whole Mafs, as a quickening and enlivening Principle to excite and maintain due Apprehensions of God, and his Worship and Service in the World: And this is the Reason given, why Polygamy was permitted them: That they who were the peculiar People of God, and were to teach his Commandments to the rest of the World, might sufficiently encrease and multiply. For though it appears by our Registrers, * that here more Males are born than Females,
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to a considerable Disproportion, and that therefore
Polygamy amongst us would not tend to the Multi-
plication of Mankind, but rather to the contrary; yet in Judea it might be otherwise; or the Captive
Women, whom they were permitted to marry, might
raise the Number of Females above that of the Males;
or their perpetual Wars might lessen the Number of
Males to a degree beneath the Females. However,
this is the Reason all'd by learned Men, why Po-
lygamy, which was not permitted from the Beginning,
should be allowed the Israelites; for indeed it was of
great Consequence, that they should multiply so as to
have a due Proportion to the rest of the World; and
for the same Reason, the surviving Brother was to
raise up Seed to the Deceased. Barrenness was a Re-
proach; and to die Childless a Curse; and a nume-
rous Off-spring, a Blessing, so often promised, that
it is evident, that many Dispenations of the Divine
Providence depended upon it.

And the better to revive and keep up a Sense of
Religion amongst Men, those who were most eminent
for Piety were employed to be God’s Heralds and
Embassadors to the rest of the World, as the whole
People of Israel are appealed to as his Witnesses, Ifai.
xliii. 12. and xliiv. 8. The Jews have a Tradition,
That Abraham, refusing to worship the Fire, the
God of the Chaldeans, was thrown by them into it,
and was deliver’d out of it by Miracle: And therefore
they understand it, not that he went forth from Ur of
the Chaldees, as it signifies a Place, but from the Fire
of the Chaldees; Ur in the Hebrew Tongue signify-
ing Fire. But we have no need of Recourse to such
Traditions: This is certain, Abraham was sent, by God’s
Command, out of Chaldea into Canaan; and there he
had no fix’d or settled Habitation, but journeyed, going

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h S. Hieron. Quæst. in Genef. S. August. Quæst. in Genef. v. qu. 25.
on still towards the South, Gen. xii. 9. 'till a Famine happening in that Country, the Providence of God so disposed of Things, that he and Lot went into Egypt. And when he was there, he was by a very remarkable Accident taken great notice of by Pharaoh himself. For Pharaoh admiring the Beauty of Sarah. Abraham's Wife, takes her into his House; for which great Plagues were inflicted on him and his Household: And Pharaoh perceiving the reason of it, sends him away, with his Wife, and all that he had. By this it became notorious to Pharaoh and his Princes, that Abraham was under God's peculiar Care and Providence, and that therefore it concerned them to regard what he professed concerning Religion, and the Worship of God. Abimelech likewise, King of Gerar, sent and took Sarah: Upon which God appeared to him in a Dream, and declared to him that Abraham was a Prophet, and that he should pray for him; and this Abimelech told to all his servants, Gen. xx. 7, 8. And he calls upon God, by his Name Jehovah, ver. 4. which shews that he had knowledge of the True God.

After Abraham and Lot were returned into Canaan from Egypt; upon some Disagreement between their Herds-men, they parted from each other, Lot going towards Sodom, and Abraham to the Plain of Mamre in Hebron. And it came to pass, that there was War between nine Kings of that Country, four being Confederates on the one side, and five on the other. But the King of Sodom, and his Confederates being defeated in Battle, Lot, who dwelt in Sodom, was, with all his Goods, carried away by the Enemy: Of which, when Abraham was inform'd, he armed his Servants, and with no more than Three hundred and eighteen Men, gained a signal Victory, retook Lot, and brought him back, with all his Family and Goods. And at his Return he is met by the King of Sodom, and by Melchizedek King of Salem, who being the Priest of
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The most high God, in a most solemn Manner blessed Abraham, who gives him the Tenth of all his Spoil: Which whole Action must needs render Abraham mightily renowned in all that Country. So much Mercy did God extend to the Canaanites, who, after they had filled up the Measure of their Iniquities, were to be rooted out, to make way for the Israelites to possess their Land; that Abraham, and Lot, and Melchizedek, and their Families, were appointed as Monitors and Instructors to them in the Ways of Righteousness and Piety: And when all this was ineffectual to their Amendment, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by a most miraculous and visible Judgment, with Fire from Heaven, after God had declared, at Abraham's Intercession, that if there had been but Ten Righteous Persons in those Cities, he would have saved the rest for their Sakes. Lot, with his Family only, escaped this dreadful Judgment; and his Wife looking back, out of Fondness for the Place she had left, was turned into a Pillar of Salt; which were so strange and so remarkable Judgments, that it must be a prodigious Obstinacy in Sin, not to be reclaimed and brought to an Acknowledgment of God's Power and Authority by them.

The Moabites and the Ammonites were descended from Lot, and therefore it must be through their great Sin and Negligence, if they did not retain a true Notion of Religion. They had Possession given them of the Land they dwelt in, by God himself, by whom the former Inhabitants, a wicked and formidable Race of Giants, were destroyed before them, as the Canaanites afterwards were before the Children of Israel, Deut. ii. 9, 19. Our Saviour was descended from Ruth the Moabites. And the Ammonites are distinguished from the Heathen, Ezek. xxv. 7.

But as Abraham has the peculiar Character given him of, the Friend of God, and the Father of the Faithful;
ful; so his Power and Influence was very great. He
is said, both by Justin, and Nicolaus Damascus, to
have been King of Damascus; and the latter farther
adds, that in his own Time the Name of Abraham
was famous in that City, and that a Village was nomi-
nated from him, being called Abraham's House, or
Palace. He was a mighty Prince among the children
of Heth, and was respected as such by them, Gen. xxxii.
6, 10. The Oak of Mamre was had in great Devo-

tion by the Heathens. The Religion of the ancient
Persians, is stiled in the East, the Religion of Abra-
ham; and the Book which contains it, the Book of
Abraham; and the Indian Brahman, or Brabaman,
are supposed to derive their Name from him. Areus
King of the Lacedaemonians, in his Letter to Onias
the High-Priest, says, that it was found in Writing,
that the Lacedaemonians and the Jews were Brethren,
and that they were of the Stock of Abraham. The Sar-
racens, and other Arabians, were descended from Abraham;
and Circumcision, which was practised by so
many Nations, being a Seal of the Covenant, and a
Rite of Initiation, must be supposed to have some No-
tion of the Covenant it self communicated together
with it. For there is no Probability that Circumcision,
used, as a Religious and Mysterious Rite, could have
any other Original among Heathen Nations, than
from Abraham; and the only Reason brought to prove
that it had another Beginning amongst them, is, be-
cause it was used upon a Natural Cause, and varied in
the Time of Administration: But the Time might
happen to be changed by some unknown Accident; and
it was always, I think, used upon a Religious Account
at first, whatever Natural or Moral Causes might be
likewise assigned: And such the Jews themselves were


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wont to assign, as well as that of their Religion; and it is possible, that in some Places, the Religious Cause of its Observation might be forgot, and the Natural or Moral only retain'd.

Besides the other Sons of Abraham, which were many, Isaac and Ishmael must have been very instrumental in propagating the True Religion; and we can suppose none educated under Abraham, or belonging to him, but they must have been well qualified for that purpose, and must more or less retain the Impressions they had received from him; this being the Character which God himself gives of Abraham, I knew him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord, Gen. xviii. 19. The Jews made particular mention of the Care which both Abraham and Sarah took in instructing Proselytes; and Maimonides writes, that Abraham left a Book behind him upon that Subject. Ishmael was the Son of an Egyptian Mother, Gen. xvi. 1. and his Wife was an Egyptian: His Sons were Twelve in Number, and of great Power, being styled Princes, and their Dominions were of a large Extent, Gen. xxv. 16, 18. Isaac was to marry none of the Daughters of Canaan, but one of his own Kindred; and a Messenger is sent into Mesopotamia, to bring Rebekah from thence, God directing and prospering him in his Journey: Which Alliance and Affinity renew'd with the Chaldeans, could not fail of a good Effect, for the Preservation and Advancement of Religion in those Countries. But a Famine being again in the Land, Isaac removes to Abimelech King of the Philistines, unto Gerar, and by him the Beauty of Rebekah was admired, as Sarah's had been by Pharaoh in Egypt, and here by Abimelech: But tho' he

n Philo de Circumcis. Maimon. More Nevoch. Par. 3. c. 49. Ludolf. Hist. Æthiop. lib. 3. cap 1 n. 3.

o De Idololat. c. 1. § 9. had
had said she was his sister, (as Abraham said likewise of Sarah) meaning in that Latitude of the Word usual in those Countries, whereby Women were called the Sisters of all to whom they were nearly related; yet the Providence of God so order'd it, that no Attempts should be made to her Dishonour, but the King of the Philistines had a great Regard and Reverence for Isaac and his Wife: the Blessing of God was visible in all his Undertakings; he became much mightier than the Philistines, and therefore they envy'd him; which occasioned his Remove to Beersheba, whither Abimelech, with his Friends and Attendance, came to enter into a strict League and Covenant with him, professing that they saw certainly that the Lord (that is, Jehovah the True God) was with him, and declaring him to be the blessed of the Lord, Gen. xxvi. 11, 14, 16, 26. And for the same reason, the Philistines had formerly desired to make a Covenant with Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou dost, &c. Gen. xxi. 22.

Esau, at the Age of Forty Years, marry'd two Wives of the Daughters of the Hittites, Gen. xxvi. 34. which, tho' it griev'd Isaac and Rebekah, who would have had him marry with their own Kindred, yet must give the Hittites farther Opportunities of acquainting themselves with the Religion and Worship of the Hebrews; but he marries besides a Daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's Son, Gen. xxviii. 9. which confirmed and strengthen'd the Alliance between the true Believers. Esau was the Father of the Edomites, and of a numerous Offspring of Dukes and Kings, Gen. xxxvi. 9, 31. And according to the Custom and Design of the Book of Genesis, the Generations descended from Esau had not been so particularly set down, unlefs they had retained the Knowledge and Worship of the True God. This was Moses's Message to the King of Edom: Thus faith thy Brother Israel, Thou knowest all the Travels that hath befallen us, how
our Fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians vexed us and our Fathers, and when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our Voice, Numb. xx. 14. The Edomites, as well as the Moabites and Ammonites, were put into Possession of their Country, by the same Divine Power by which the Israelites became possesse of the Land of Canaan, and the Children of Israel were not to meddle with them, Deut. ii. 5.

Jacob is sent to Padan-Aram, to take to Wife one of the Daughters of Laban, and with him he abode twenty Years, Gen. xxxi. 38. And all which he took in hand prospered so, that there was the visible Power and Blessing of God in it, as Laban confessed, Gen. xxx. 27. Isaac was not to leave the Land of Canaan, but was forbid to remove into Egypt, when there was a Famine in the Land, Gen. xxvi. 2. And he was not upon any Account to return into Chaldaea, or to go out of Canaan, Gen. xxiv. 6, 8. But Jacob went out of it, when there were enough of Abraham’s House besides to keep up a Sense of the true Religion among the Canaanites.

Afterwards God manifested himself to the Egyptians, by a various and wonderful Providence; for the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty Years, (Exod. xii. 40.) till at last, by Signs and Wonders, and dreadful Judgments: By Judgments upon their First-born and upon their Gods, Numb. xxxiii. 4. they were brought out from thence; and the Nations heard the fame of it, and all the Earth was filled with the glory of the Lord, Numb. xiv. 15, 21.

Thus Chaldaea and Egypt, the most famous and flourishing Countries, in those Ages of the World, had the true Religion brought home to them by the Patriarchs, who were sent from Place to Place to sojourn, to be a Pattern and Example to the rest of Mankind. And Men who travelled so far, and conversed
versed with so many Nations, and were so zealous for God's Honour, and had such frequent Revelations, and the immediate Direction of God himself, in most of the Actions of their Lives, and who were so Great and Powerful, and so Numerous, must needs mightily propagate Religion where-ever they came, and leave the Idolaters without Excuse; and it cannot be doubted but that they had great Success in all Places; for even out of Ægypt, where they endured the greatest Hardships, and were in such Contempt and Hatred, yet a mixed multitude went up also with them, besides the native Israelites, Exod. xii. 38 p.

And as Chaldea and Ægypt were famous for Learning and Commerce, and proper Places, by their Situation, from whence the Notions of Religion might be propagated both towards the East and the West, to other Parts of the World; so I must again observe, that God's Mercy was particularly manifested towards the Canaanites before their Destruction: The Example of Melchizedek, who reigned among them, and the sojourning of Abraham, and Lot, and Isaac, and Jacob, not to mention Ishmael and Esau, with their numerous Families, afforded them continual Invitations, and Admonitions for their Instruction and Amendment; especially the Judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the miraculous Deliverance of Lot, was enough to strike an Awe and Terrors into the most Obdurate. But when they would not make any due Use of these Mercies, when they persisted still in their Impieties, and proceeded in them till they had filled up the Measure of their Iniquities; God made them an Example to others, after they would take no Warning themselves; yet still executing his judgments upon them by little and little, he gave them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they

p Et etiam Peregrini multi, ex quibus ducentae quadraginta Myriades ascenderunt cum illis, Targ. Jonath. in Exod. xii. 38.
were a naughty generation, and that their malice was bred in them, and that their Cognition would never be changed, Wisd. xii. 10.

How much the true Religion prevail'd by these Dispensations of Providence, among other Nations besides the Hebrews, we have an illustrious Instance in Job and his Friends, who were Princes in their several Dominions. They had Knowledge of the Fall of the Angels, Job iv. 18. and of the Original Corruption of Man, which is express'd with this Emphasis, that he cannot be clean, or righteous, who is born of a woman; because by Eve's Transgression, Sin came into the World, Job xiv. i. xv. i4. and xxv. 4. Adam is mentioned chap. xxxi. 33. The Resurrection is describ'd chap. xiv. i2. And it appears that Revelations were vouchsafed to these Nations, chap. xxxiii. i5. Job is mention'd as a Prophet, Jam. v. io, ii. It appears, that the Fundamentals of Religion were known Doctrines amongst them, and are therefore mention'd both by Job himself, and by his Friends, in as plain Terms as may be, and as fully as can be expected in a Book which is Poetical, the Nature whereof requires that known things should be alluded to, but not so particularly related as in History. And there is no doubt but the Propagation of Religion, in other Parts of the World, would be as evident, if the Scriptures had not occasionally only; and in the course of other things, but of set purpose treated of this Matter; as we may gather from the Footsteps to be found in Heathen Authors, of what the Scriptures deliver to us, and from the several Allusions and Representations in the Rites and Ceremonies of their Religions, expressing, tho' obscurely and confusedly, the chief Points of the Scripture-story, as has been shewn by divers learned Men.

It must be remember'd, that the Patriarchs built Altars wherever they came, to which they, with their numerous Followers reforted to offer Sacrifice and
and call upon the Name of the Lord, Gen. viii. 10. xii. 7, 8. xiii. 4, 18. xxvi. 25. xxxiii. 20. xxxv. 7. which publick and solemn Worship rendred their Piety very observable and exemplary. And it may with great Probability be concluded, that not only the Priest, but the Place and Time for Divine Worship were appropriated and stated from the beginning, inasmuch as Cain and Abel brought their Offerings, at the same time, at the end of days to the same Place, to Adam, to be presented by him to the Lord in Sacrifice. For so some of the ancient Jewish Expositors explain this Passage concerning Cain and Abel.

2. In succeeding Ages, after the giving the Law, when the Jews, by their Laws concerning Religion and Government, may seem to have been wholly separated from the rest of the World, and the Divine Revelations confin’d to one Nation, there still were sufficient Means and frequent Opportunities for all Nations to come to the Knowledge of the Truth. And here I shall shew, 1. That the Law of Moses did particularly provide for the Instruction of other Nations in the Revel’d Religion, and that the Scriptures give frequent Commandment and Encouragement concerning it. 2. That the Providence of God did so order and dispose of the Jews in their Affairs, as to offer other Nations frequent Opportunities of becoming instructed in the true Religion, and that Multitudes of Proselytes were made of all Nations.

1. The Law of Moses did particularly provide for the Instruction of other Nations in the Revel’d Religion, and the Scriptures give frequent Commandment and Encouragement concerning it. The Strangers or Proselytes, amongst the Jews, were of two sorts; for either they were such as became Circumcised, and obliged themselves to the Observation of the whole Law of Moses, who were styled Proselytes of Righteousness, or of the Covenant; or they were such
such as believed in the True God, and professed only to observe the Precepts given to Noah, which comprised the Substance of the Ten Commandments; and these were called Prophets of the Gates, because they were permitted to live amongst them, within their Gates; these are the Strangers in their Gates, mentioned Deut. xiv. 21. who might eat of such Things as the Israelites themselves were forbidden to eat of.

If any would be Circumcised, and undertake the Observation of the whole Law, they had full Liberty, and the greatest Encouragement to do it. At the first Institution of Circumcision, not only Abraham and his Seed, but his whole Family, and all that were bought with money of any Stranger, were to be circumcised, Gen. xvii. 12, 27. And at the Institution of the Passover, the Stranger is commanded to observe it, as well as the Natural Israelite, Exod. xii. 19. God made no Distinction in the Institution of both these Sacraments, between the Jews, and those other Nations that dwelt amongst them, and were willing to conform themselves to the Observation of the Law; but first to Abraham, when he appointed Circumcision, and then to Moses, when the Passover was instituted, particular Order is given concerning Strangers or Prophets, who would betake themselves to them, one law shall be to him that is home-born, and to the stranger that sojourneth among you, Exod. xii. 49. Deut. xxix. 11. And as the receiving the Seal of Circumcision was an Admission into Covenant with God, and implied an Obligation to observe the whole Law, and a Right to the Privileges of it, which was confirmed and renewed by their partaking of the Passover; so it is to be observed, not only that God did in general admit Strangers and Aliens to the same Worship with the Jews, but that throughout their whole Law frequent Mention is made of them, and Care taken for their Reception and Behaviour: For though what is but once said in Scripture, is a sufficient Proof of the Will and Pleasure...
Pleasure of God in any Matter; yet when a Thing is often mentioned, and every where inculcated, it is an Evidence to us, that God would have the more Notice taken of it, and has laid the strictest Obligation upon all to observe it. But we find express Mention made of the Stranger, at the Appointment of the Yearly Feast of Atonement, Lev. xvi. 29. The Stranger was obliged to bring his Sacrifice to the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and in the Prohibitions of eating Blood, he is particularly forbidden it, chap. xvii. 8, 9, 12, 15. All the Laws relating to Marriage, and concerning unlawful Lust, are equally enjoined the Stranger and the Israelite, chap. xviii. 26. He was to be stoned, if he gave any of his Seed unto Moloch, chap. xx. 2. And he was obliged to all the same Laws concerning Sacrifices, chap. xxii. 18. And was to be stoned for Blasphemy; and for Murther, Hurt, or Damage, the Law made no Difference between Strangers, and Native Israelites. Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the Stranger, as for one of your own country; for I am the Lord your God, chap. xxiv. 16, 22. The Sabbath was appointed to the Stranger within their Gates, Exod. xx. 10. and xxiii. 12. Lev. xxv. 6. Deut. v. 14. And the FEasts of Pentecost, of Tabernacles, and of Atonement, as well as the Passover, were enjoined him, Deut. xvi. 11, 14. Lev. xvi. 29. The Feast of Tabernacles is restrained to the Israelites born, Lev. xxiii. 42. only as to their dwelling in booths seven days. The Stranger was to hear the Law read in the Solemnity of the Year of Release, chap. xxxi. 12. And the Covenant is expressly made with the Stranger, chap. xxix. 12. Josb. viii. 33, 35.

And as the Strangers or Proselytes were thus joined, in the very Design and Institution of the Law, with the Native Israelites themselves, as to all the Acts and Privileges of Religious Worship, when once they had received Circumcision, though they were not obliged
to be circumcised, but were left to their Liberty, under no Obligation, but to worship the True God, and observe the Precepts of Noah; so God had a particular regard to them in their civil Statutes and Ordinances, to free them from Oppression, and every thing that might give Strangers any Discouragement from living amongst the Israelites, and becoming Partakers of their Religion with them: Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Ægypt, Exod. xxii. 21. Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Ægypt, chap. xxiii. 9. It seems, one Reason of their being so long detained in Ægypt, was to teach them Humanity and Compassion to Strangers: Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates, Deut. xxiv. 41. And care is taken of the Stranger, that he be not brought into want, or suffered to perish in his Distress; for the Gleanings of the Harvest and of the Vintage were his portion: Thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord, Lev. xix. 10. and xxiii. 22. All manner of Kindness and Affection is in most express and ample Terms commanded towards all Strangers: And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him: But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born amongst you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Ægypt, I am the Lord your God, Lev. xix. 33, 34. And Moses, repeating the peculiar Favours which God had bestowed upon the Children of Israel, put them in mind, that God loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Ægypt, Deut. x. 18, 19. The Widow, the Stranger, and the Fatherless, are usually mention'd together in Scripture, as being jointly the Care of God's more peculiar Providence, and he recommends them
to the Charity of his People. And to oppress the Stranger is reckoned the highest Aggravation of Wick
edness: They slay the widow and the stranger, and murther the fatherless; yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it, Psal. xciv. 6, 7. The People of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully, Ezek. xxii. 29. And to the same purpose, Psal. cxlvi. 9. Jer. vii. 6. and xxii. 3. Zech. vii. 10. Mal. iii. 5. Particular Provision was made in the Law, for the Dwellings of Profelytes, Lev. xxv. 29. And if a man fell a dwelling-house in a walled City, then he may redeem it within a whole year, after it is sold, within a full year may he redeem it. And, if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generations, it shall not go out in the jubilee. For which Law, Philo Judæus affigns this Reason, That the Profelytes might not be destitute of Houses: For the Cities (says he) when the Land was divided by Lot, were not divided among the Tribes, but were built afterwards; the first Habitations being in Villages: And therefore, by this Law, Houses in Cities were secured to the Profelytes dwelling in the Land. What he says of the Cities, must be understood only of the greatest part of them; for it is certain, that the Israelites entered upon the Possession of Cities and Houses already built, Deut. vi. 10. Josh. xxiv. 13.

Though their Bond-men and Bond-women were not to be of the Native Israelites, but of the Heathen, that were round about them, and of the Strangers that dwelt amongst them, Lev. xxv. 44. yet an Israelite might sell himself to a Stranger, and become his Servant: But he might be redeemed again, either by himself, or by his near Kinsman, and was to be released at the Year of Jubilee, v 47. The Cities of Refuge were
were provided for the Stranger and the Sojourner, Numb. xxxv. 15. Jofb. xx. 9. The Judges were particularly commanded to execute righteous and impartial Judgment to the Stranger, Deut. i. 16. A Caution is given, that neither the Edomites nor the Ægyptians were to be abhorred by them, but their Children were to be received into the Congregation of the Lord, in the Third Generation; that is, after an Edomite or Ægyptian had lived amongst them as a Prophylete of the Gates, their Children of the Third Generation might be capable of Circumcision, and be admitted to the Observation of the whole Law, chap. xxiii. 7. Ruth was a Moabitess: And though the Ammonite and Moabite were for ever, that is, by a perpetual Decree, excluded, even to the Tenth Generation, from the Congregation of the Lord, by reason of their Inhumanity to the Israelites, at their coming out of Ægypt, v. 3. yet neither were they of the preceding Generations debarred from becoming Prophyletes of the Gates, and undertaking the Observation of the Precepts of Noah.

A Promise is made, that the Strangers shall rejoice in the good Things of the Land, chap. xxvi. 11. And the Israelites are threatened, that upon their Disobedience, the Stranger should be more prosperous than they, chap. xxviii. 43, 44. King Solomon, at the Dedication of the Temple, makes such particular Mention of the Stranger, in his Prayer, as shews both the Design of building it, and of all the Jewish Worship, to be such as that other Nations might share in it, and withal, he foretells what the Event should be: Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country, for thy name's sake: (for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched-out arm) when he shall come and pray towards this house: Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy
thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name, 1 Kings viii. 41, 42, 43. 2. Chron. vi. 33. This was the house of Prayer for all people, Isa. lvi. 7. Mar. xi. 17. And the Prophets, in their Prophecies concerning the Return of the Jews out of their Captivity in Babylon, and in their Predictions of the Messias, did not omit to insert peculiar Expressions of God's Love and Favour to Strangers and Proselytes, to shew that the Promises did extend to them, as well as to the Native Jews themselves, Isa. lvi. 3. Ezek. xlvii. 22, 23.

From all which, it is evident, that Strangers were equally capable of the Privileges and Advantages in the Jewish Worship, as the Jews themselves were; and that they were debared of very little in their Civil Rights; and all Encouragement imaginable was given to Strangers to come and dwell amongst the Jews. The Law joins them together with the Natural Israelite, both in the Curses it denounces, and in the Blessings it promises; it severely threatens all that should oppress or defraud them; it commands the same Charity towards them, as towards the Fatherless and Widow, the greatest Objects of Human Compassion, and of the merciful Care and Providence of God: And the Prophets, with the utmost Severity, rebuke the Jews, for any Oppression or Abuse of them. The Proselytes were not excluded from their Sacrifices, their Prayers and Sacraments; and if they refused to take upon them the Observation of the whole Law; yet they had free Leave and great Encouragement to live amongst them, believing only in the True God, and obeying those Precepts which were given to all the Race of Mankind after the Flood. They might share in all the Rites of their Religious Worship, and were invited to do it; but if they would not submit to this, yet they were not therefore rejected, but might partake of their Civil Privileges, and live under the Vol. I.
Protection of their Government: And it is observable, that where the same Laws are repeated in several Places of Scripture, the Stranger is nowhere omitted; but what relates to him, is constantly repeated with the rest, as a necessary and essential Part of the Law. So that never any Government had so particular regard for Strangers, or was so peculiarly contrived for their Encouragement to live under it. Other Governments, as those of Sparta and China, have been so jealous of Foreigners, that, by their Original Constitution, they have forbid any Dealings with them, and would not suffer them to abide in their Cities. And the Romans had some Laws to the same effect; which Tully indeed says was an inhuman thing, and it was the Cause of the Bellum Sociale, or the War raised against the Romans by the several States of Italy. The Freedom and Privilege of a Citizen of Rome, was purchased at a great Price, Acts xxii. 28. Of this Dio, as well as St. Luke, informs us, speaking of the Times of Claudius; and in their Leagues with divers Nations, the Romans inserted this express Condition, That none of them should be made Free of the City. And it appears from Plutarch, that the Freedom of the City of Rome was not obtained in Cicero's Time, but by great Favour, and with much Difficulty. "Foreigners were sometimes expelled. And Augustus left it in charge to Tiberius and the Senate, Not to be too easy in granting the Freedom of the City. "Pliny, as a Reward to his Physician Harpocras, by whom he had been cured of a dangerous Illness, besought Trajan to grant him the Freedom of Rome; To which the Emperor consented. But Harpocras, being an Egyptian, it was necessary, that he should be first Free of Alexandria: which was
also granted, but with this Declaration, That the Emperor had resolved, according to the Custom of former Princes, but seldom to bestow the Freedom of that City. At last, by a Constitution of Caracalla, Freedom was granted to all within the Roman Empire, The Greeks were backward, particularly the Athenians, in granting the Freedom of their City, Marriages with Strangers were forbidden by the Athenians; and they had a Tax call'd Μελωνιων, to be paid yearly by all Foreigners, both Men and Women; and they were so severe in exacting it, that those who were unable to pay it, were sold or imprison'd. The Thebans, as well as the Athenians, rarely granted to Strangers the Privileges of Citizens, but sometimes expell'd all Foreigners. The Corinthians thought it a proper Complement to make to Alexander the Great, after he had conquer'd the East, to present him with the Freedom of their City; and that he might be sensible of the high Respect shewn him in it, they acquainted him, that none but himself and Hercules had ever been made Free of Corinth. Plutarch relates this Complement to have been made Alexander by the People of Megara. The Albani made none Free of their City, but the Greeks and Latins: And it seems to have been the general Custom and Practice of Cities, to be very cautious and sparing in admitting Strangers to incorporate with them. But the Jewish Government, on the contrary, was so adapted and contrived for the Reception of Foreign Nations, that if they would but comply with their Laws, they made little or no Distinction between the Natives and Strangers; and the owning the True God, and professing to obey and serve him, entitled them not only to all

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b Dion. Halic. l. 2. c Sen. de Benef. l. 1. c. 13.
d Dion. Halic. l. 3.
the Rights of Humanity and Kindness, but to a more peculiar Care and Providence of God himself.

If the Jews did not always shew so much Humanity to Strangers as their Law required, this is to be ascribed wholly to their own Fault; and 'tis not the only Law which they were too prone to disobey. e Maimonides and some other Rabbins have affirmed, that Proselytes of the Gates were permitted to live in the Land at no other Time but in the Year of Jubilee; and that Proselytes of Righteousness only were to be received, as perpetual Inhabitants. But this is contrary to the Tenour of the Law, and particularly to Deut. xiv. 21. where Proselytes, or the Strangers dwelling within the Gates, are supposed to be constant Inhabitants, and distinguished both from Proselytes who had obliged themselves to the Observation of the Ceremonial Law, and from Aliens. Indeed, when the Jews became subject to the Romans, and by that Means, had no Power to constrain the Proselytes of the Gates to observe what they had f undertaken, it was determined, that they should hold no Conversation with them; yet, in the corruptest State of the Jewish Church, the Gentiles had a Court to worship in at the Temple: And the Jews always taught, That it was their Duty to relieve the Heathen with their Alms, and that it was lawful to converse with the Gentiles, if they did not eat with them, nor go into their Houses. And this was the Charge brought against St. Peter, Thou wentest in to Men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them, Acts xi. 3. But what Effect this abundant Provision of the Law, for the Conversion of other Nations, had, falls under the next Head. It is more proper to consider, in this Place, an Objection which comes in our Way; That the Israelites were to make no Marriages or Covenants with the

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e Maim. de Idolol. c. 10. § 7.  
f Vid. Hammond. ad Matt. xxii. 15. & Selden. de Jure Nat. & Gent. I. 2. c. 5.  
§ Dr. Lightfoot on Acts x. 28. and Hebrew and Talmud. Exercit. on Matt. vi. 2.
of the Christian Religion.

Seven Nations of the Land of Canaan, nor to shew them any Mercy, but utterly to destroy them, or drive them out, Exod. xxiii. 31. Deut. vii. 2.

To which I answer, That this was a peculiar and excepted Case, and therefore supposes that they were not thus to deal with any others, except the Nations there expressly named; but they might enter into Marriages and Covenants with all other Nations. And besides what has been already observed, of the great Mercy which God vouchsafed to these Nations, in sending the Patriarchs to sojourn amongst them; and that wonderful Judgement upon Sodom and Gomorrah, to bring them to Repentance, and prevent that Destruction which was at last brought upon them: After so long and great Provocations, these Nations were not unavoidably to be extirpated; but the Israelites were, in the first Place to proffer Peace to them; and if they refused to accept of Peace, then they were to proceed against them in the utmost Extremity; which appears from Deut. xx. 10, &c. For after a general Command to offer Terms of Peace to the Cities which they should go to fight against; and if they refused it, to smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword, v. 13. it is added, v. 15. Thus shalt thou do to all the cities that are very far from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them, &c. where it is evident, that what concerns their making Proposals of Peace, was to be understood in general of all Nations with whom they should at any Time have War. But then in their dealings with them upon a Victory, after their Refusal of the Peace offered, they were to distinguish between the Canaanites and other Nations: For the Canaanites

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h Quod sì pacem abnuerent in Bellis quidem voluntariis, quæ Israelites fuscipiebant adversus reliquas Nationes, omnes gladio perierentur,
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naanites were to be utterly destroyed, if they should reject Terms of Peace; but all, except the Males, were to be spared of other Nations, though they were overcome, after they had refused to make Peace with them: And the Terms of Peace to be proposed, were, That they should become Tributaries, and Profelytes, so far as to own and Worship the True God, and then the Reason for their Extirpation ceased; which was, That these Idolatrous Nations might not teach the Children of Israel to do after all their abominations, which they had done unto their Gods, Deut. xx. 18.

When the Men of Israel tell the Gibeonites, Peradventure ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you? Josh. ix. 7. This is to be understood of a League with them upon equal Terms, not of a Peace, whereby they might become Tributaries, Deut. xx. 11. And therefore the Gibeonites immediately answered and said to Joshua, We are thy Servants, Josh. ix. 8. that is, Do with us as you please, at least grant us our Lives, though not upon any other Terms of a League, yet on Conditions of Servitude: and we find the Peace and the League distinguished, Josh. ix. 15. But this fraudulent Way of getting into a League with the Israelites, if it had not been for the Oath, which secured their Lives to them, had forfeited that Right which otherwise they might have had to their Lives, by a Peace fairly obtained; and they lost all other Advantages of the League, but only the securing their Lives. In the Jerusalem Gemara it is written, that Joshua made Three Proposals to the Canaanites, viz. That they might either leave the Country, or be admitted into a League upon Conditions of Peace, or prepare themselves for Battle; and that the Girgasites being terrify'd by the mighty Works, which God had

\[\text{membantur exceptis mulieribus & parvulis: at in iis quae gerebantur cum septem Nationibus, etiam bi occidebantur. Menass. Ben. Isr. Cinciliat. in Deut. Qu. 8.} \]

Selden, de Jure Natur. & Gen. l. 6. c. 13.
wrought for the Children of Israel, fled into Africa, the Gibeonites making a League with them, staid in the Land, and the thirty one Kings (Josh. xii. 24.) who would neither fly, nor accept of Terms of Peace, were slain in Battle. *Maimonides says, that Embassadors had been sent to the Gibeonites, as well as to the rest of those Nations, and that they had rejected the Proposals of Peace, and upon that Account should have been destroy’d; but hearing afterwards of the wonderful Success of the Arms of the Israelites, and of that Law by which they were devoted to Destruction, because they had not accepted of a Peace upon the Terms propos’d; they contrived to save themselves by pretending, that they liv’d at a great distance, and were not of the Number of those Nations, who had had Tenders of Peace made to them. But that the Canaanites, if they had submitted, and own’d the God of Israel, were not to have been destroy’d, but to have been received to Mercy, is evident from Josh. xi. 19, 20. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon; all other they took in Battle: For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in Battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses. Which necessarily supposeth, that if God, in his just Judgment upon them, for their heinous Provocations, had not harden’d their Hearts, but they had submitted themselves, and sought Peace of the Children of Israel, they ought to have had favour shewn them. And we read, not only that Rahab and her Father’s House was spared, Josh. ii. 13, 14. and a Man, with his Family, upon the like account, Judg. i. 25. But whoever of these Nations did escape, their Posterity was not to be proceeded against with Severity; the Law which commanded their utter De-

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fruption extending no farther, as Grotius concludes, than to that Generation. Their Children, that were left after them in the Land, whom the Children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a Tribute of Bond-service unto this day, 1 Kings ix. 21. It doth therefore sufficiently appear, that the Canaanites themselves, after all their Provocations against both the Mercy and Justice of God, were not excluded from all the Benefits of Strangers and Proselytes among the Jews; and that Men of all other Nations were encouraged and invited to become Partakers of the Privileges of the Law of Moses, or to acquaint themselves at least with the Service and Worship of the True God, is notorious, and as evident as any Thing in the Law and the Prophets. But after the Canaanites had filled up the Measure of their Iniquities, God manifested his Almighty Power and Justice upon them; and he was pleased to do it by the Sword of the Children of Israel, rather than by Pestilence, or any other Judgment, both to raise the greater Abhorrence of Idolatry in his own People, and in the Neighbouring Nations; and because those rude and warlike Nations could observe the Power of God no where so much as in the Success of War. They chiefly implored their own Gods for Success in their Wars; and when they were overcome by any People, they concluded that the Gods of that Nation were too hard for their own Gods, 1 Kings xx. 23. 2 Kings. viii. 34. Whereas if they had been destroyed by Famine or Pestilence, they would have ascribed these Judgments no more to the God of Israel, than to any of the Heathen Gods. But God got him honour upon these Nations, as he did upon Pharaoh and upon all his host, when Jethro said, Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt

1 Grot. ad Matt. v. 43.
proudly, he was above them, Exod. xviii. 11. from whence he is so often stiled the Lord of Hosts, in the Old Testament.

2. The Providence of God did so order and dispose of the Jews, in all their Affairs, as to afford other Nations frequent Opportunities of becoming instructed in the true Religion, and Multitudes of Proselytes were made out of all Nations. Moses dwelt in Midian forty Years, Acts vii. 30. and there married an Ethiopian Woman, Exod. ii. 15. Numb. xii. 1. His Wife's Father, Jethro the Priest of Midian, and his Family, became converted; and n after he had met Moses in the Wilderness, he returned to make Proselytes in his own Country. And the Deliverance of the Children of Israel out of Egypt, magnified the Power of God in all Countries where the Report of a Thing so wonderful and notorious came. The miraculous Victories which the Israelites gained over the Canaanites, where-ever they came, struck a mighty Terror into all those Nations; as we see by the Fear of Balak, Num. xxii. and from the Speech of Rahab, Josh. ii. 9. and of the Gibeonites, Josh. ix. 9, 10. who were glad to make use of any Pretence, as an Expedient to save themselves. Rahab, with her Family and Kindred, and the Gibeonites, were early Accessions to the Israelites; and Rahab was married to a Man of Israel; and the Babylonian Gemara n reckons up Eight Prophets; who were likewise Priests, descended from her: This is certain, that our Saviour himself was pleased to derive his Genealogy from her. The various Successes of the Israelites in the Land of Canaan, their Victories and their Overthrows, and the miraculous Power of God visibly appearing either in their Defeat and Punishment, or in their Conquest or Deliverance, must needs raise a mighty Fame and Admiration of the God of Israel in all those Countries;
for they proclaim’d a Religious War upon these Nations; they destroy’d their Images and Groves and Altars wherever they came; and the People plainly perceiv’d that their Gods could not help them. The taking of Jericho, not by Storm, but only by the mere Sound and Alarm of War, the Lengthening of the Day to favour their Conquests, and the Destruction of so many Kings by Moses and Joshua, were undeniable Evidences of a Divine Power, and must awaken Men to make Enquiry into that Religion which could inspire such Courage, and work such Wonders. And these Nations among whom the Patriarchs had sojourn’d, and so many Wonders and Judgments had been wrought, were dispers’d in Colonies over all Parts of the World, (as Bochart has proved at large, in a most learned and elaborate Work;) some of them (if we may believe Procopius) erecting a Pillar in Africa, as a Monument of Joshua’s Victories, with an Inscription, declaring that they were driven out of their own Country by him. St. Jerom says the Punic Tongue was derived from the Hebrew. And St. Augustin says, That, in his Time, the Country People about Hippo, call’d themselves Canaanites; and they retain’d their ancient Language, which was little different from the Hebrew, not only till the Days of Plautus, but even to St. Augustin’s Time, as Salmacius, with a Wonder, observ’d. And it is probably suppos’d, that the Tyndaridae, and others styled Anaces by the Lacedemonians and Athenians, were descended from the Anakims, who escaped out of Palestine from Joshua.

After the Death of Joshua, the Israelites were in subjection to the King of Mesopotamia eight Years; to the King of Moab eighteen Years, Judg. iii. 8, 14. to Jabin King of Canaan twenty Years, chap. iv. 3. to the Midianites seven Years, chap. vi. 1. to the Philis-

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‡ Walt. Proleg. 3. \* Vofl. de Idol. l. 3. c. 13.
of the Christian Religion.

And still it was because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord, that they were given up into the Hand of their Enemies: and upon their Repentance, a Deliverance was wrought for them, Deut. xxx. 1. 1 Sam. xii. 10. Bar. iii. 7. And when they were so often and for so long a time subdued by their Enemies round about them, for their Idolatries, and other Transgressions; and then again, upon their Repentance, were rescued from their Oppressions by Gideon, and Jeptha, and Sampson, all rais'd up for that purpose; this must give great Occasion and Opportunity to all the bordering Nations to know and consider that Religion, the Observation or Neglect whereof had such visible Effects upon its Professors: for under their Affliction, and in the time of their Repentance, the Israelites declared the Cause of their Misery, and made known the Power of their own God, and the Vanity and Sinfulness of Idolatry: And therefore their being so often and so long time under the Oppression of their several Enemies, was a merciful Providence to the Nations who had them in Subjection, as well as for the Punishment and Amendment of the Israelites themselves. What good Use was made of these Methods of the Divine Providence doth not appear to us, but, in all probability, it had a good Effect upon very many; as we find it had in one remarkable Instance of a little Maid, who being taken Captive, was the Occasion of the Cure of Naaman's Leprosie, and of his Conversion to the Worship of the True God, who before was known to him by his Name Jebovah, 2 Kings v. 11. The Prophet Elisha was well known by the Syrians to be a Prophet, and Ben-badad sent to enquire of the Lord; by him, chap. viii. 8. Rabshakeh speaks in the Jews Language, and pretends a Commission from the Lord, that is, from Jebovah, the God of the Jews, when he came against Jerusalem, Isa. xxxvi. 10, 11. God himself appeals to the Knowledge of Sennacherib, King of Assyria;
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Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times, that I have formed it, Isa. xxxvii. 26. And Rabbi Shemaiah and Rabbi Abtalion are said to have been Proselytes of Righteousness, of the Posterity of Sennacherib. The Prophet Obadiah is probably thought to have been a Proselyte of Idumaea. Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt, alleges God's Command, when he came to fight against Carchemish, 2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22.

But our present Enquiry is not so much what the Effect was, as what Means were afforded of Salvation: For though it be requisite that the True Revealed Religion should be published to the World; yet it is not necessary in order to prove the Truth of a Religion, to shew that obstinate Men have taken notice of it, so far as to consider and believe it; because it is not necessary that God should force his Laws upon Men, but only that he should discover them, and afford Men sufficient Means to know them, and become the better for them.

To proceed then: The Philistines were in a wonderful Consternation, when they understood that the Ark was brought into the Camp, 1 Sam. iv. 7, 8. And when it was taken by them, it was more terrible to them, than the Enemy, if he had conquered them, could have been. They were tormented with Diseases and Plagues, wheresoever the Ark was carried; and their God was so little able to help them, that he fell down before it, and was broken in Pieces; whereof they retained a Memorial in the Worship of him ever after, in not treading upon the Threshold of Dagon, in Ashdod, because he had lost the Palms of his Hands, by falling upon it, 1 Sam. v. 4, 5. And the Manner of sending back the Ark, with the Trespass-Offering prescribed by their Priests and Diviners, at

the Demand of the Lords of the Philistines was a manifest Attestation to the Power of the God of Israel:

Wherefore then (said they) do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully among them, did he not let the People go, and they departed, 1 Sam. vi. 6. The Philistines, at last, received a miraculous Overthrow by Thunder, 1 Sam. vii. 10. And these were so remarkable Judgments, that they must be left without all Excuse, who did not forswear their Idolatries, and turn to the Living God, who had thus manifested himself amongst them.

The Urim and Thummim was consulted upon any great Undertaking, whereby God returned his Answer, and oftentimes, before the Battle, gave Assurance of Victory. \(^{w}\) Josephus says, the Answer was returned, by the shining of the Stones in the High-Priest's Breast-Plate, in such a Manner, as that it was visible to all the People standing by; and that many of the Heathen, who had been Witnesses to it, called it the Oracle.

The miraculous Victories of Saul, and Jonathan, and David, and David's Stay with Achish King of the Philistines at Gath, and the Favour and Confidence which he gained with that King, gave the Canaanites still repeated Opportunities and Motives to Conversion and Repentance; and we may observe Achish, in Discourse with David, mentioning the Name of the Lord, or Jehovah, and swearing by his Name, 1 Sam. xxix. 6. Which shews the infinite Mercy and Compassion of God towards this People devoted to Destruction, in that he would not take them away suddenly, but by little and little, giving them Space for Repentance; and turning that, which might seem

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\(^{u}\) Judg. i. 1. and xx. 18, 23, 26. 1 Sam. xviii. 6. and xxiii. 9. and xxx. 7, 8. 

\(^{w}\) Joseph. Antiq. l. 3. c. 9.
to rash Judges a hard Fate, into a means of Salvation both to themselves and others.

David extended his Conquest far and near, and was renowned throughout all those Countries: And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all Nations, 1 Chron. xiv. 17. And when God had delivered him out of the Hand of all his Enemies, he makes this Resolution, Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and will sing Praises unto thy Name, 2 Sam. xxii. 50. Psal. xviii. 49. Declare his glory among the Heathen, his wonders among all people. Say among the Heathen, that the Lord is King, Psal. xcvi. 3, 10. And when the Ark was brought with great and solemn Joy, from the House of Obed-Edom, the Psalm of Thanksgiving on that Occasion has the same Expressions; Declare his glory among the Heathen, his marvellous Works among all Nations. Let the Heavens be glad, and let the Earth rejoice, and let Men say among the Nations, the Lord reigneth, 1 Chron. xvi. 24, 31. He knew this to be the Design of God, in the Dispensations of his Providence; and accordingly he made this Use of it, with so good effect, that in the beginning of Solomon's Reign, the Strangers or Professors in the Land were found to be an hundred and fifty thousand, and three thousand and six hundred, 2 Chron. ii. 17. who were all Men fit to be employed in the building of the Temple; and the rest must be supposed very much to exceed that number, reckoning both Sexes, of all Ages.

In Solomon's Reign, the Kingdom of Israel became yet more famous and flourishing; Hiram King of Tyre held great Correspondence with him: And Kimchi, and after him Dr. Lightfoot understands by 2 Chron.

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x ῶνομίζω, ἀνυγγύε — παράς τος αἰδίας τὰς προσελ-

ytes, Numeravit—omnes viros proselytos.

y Lightfoot Chorograph. Decad. on St. Mark, c. 6. § 2. p. 311.

viii. 2.
viii. 2. that Hiram gave Cities to Solomon in his own Land, who placed Israelites in them; and he, in like manner, gave Cities to Hiram in Galilee, 1 Kings ix. 11. in Confirmation of the League between them. The Letters which paffed between Solomon and Hiram were extant in the time of Josephus: and from his time, down to Theophilus Antiochenus. Hiram blessed the Lord God of Israel, that made Heaven and Earth, 2 Chron. ii. 12. 1 Kings v. 7. which fhews, that he had a true Notion and Sense of Religion. And Tyre was a Place of great Trade and Commerce, Ezek. xxvii. from whence the Jews were afterwards fold to the Gracians, Joel iii. 6. There was no place of greater Traffick, nor that sent out more Colonies, or greater, or into more distant Parts of the World; and therefore none could be more proper to establish a Correspondence with, from whence Religion might be better propagated. The Queen of Sheba came to fee the Glory of Solomon's Kingdom, 1 Kings ix. 10. and blefeth the Lord his God, chap. x. 9. who, according to a Josephus, was Queen both of Egypt and Ethiopia. His Wisdom was every-where magnified: And there came of all the people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom, chap. iv. 34. All the earth fought to Solomon, to hear his Wisdom, which God had put in his heart, chap. x. 24. His Dominions were exceeding great: He reigned over all the kings from the River (Euphrates) even unto the land of the Philiftines, and to the border of Egypt, 2 Chron. ix. 26. The Trade and Correspondence of the Israelites with foreign Nations was mightily advanced in his time; their Trade extended as far as Tarshish and Ophir. Tarshish is translated Carthage, by the Septuagint, Isa. xxiii. 6. but is supposed to be Tartessus, in Spain, though St. Jerom b thought it be in the

2 Theoph. ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 254. a Joseph. Antiq. l. 8. c. 2.

b Hier. in Jon. c. 1. initio.

Indies.
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Indies. And Opbir was, as many learned Men think, in the Indies, beyond the River Ganges, in Pegu, or at least, Solomon's Merchants did traffick with the Indians that came from those Parts. Others have imagined Opbir to be Zephala, or Cephala, in Africa, towards the Cape of Good Hope: Some think it to be Ceylon, or Sumatra; some are of Opinion that it was in America; all are agreed that it must have been in some very distant Part of the World; and where-ever it were, the Traffick and Dealings which the Israelites had there, was a great Opportunity to the Heathen to become instructed in the True Religion.

The Traffick and Voyages by Sea, and Expeditions by Land, in Solomon's Reign, rendered the People of Israel highly renowned, and caused their Laws and Customs and Religion to be much observed and enquired into; and even the Marriages of Solomon with Pharaoh's Daughter and other Strangers, unquestionless, through the Mercy of God, might prove an happy Occasion of divulging the true Religion, and regaining many from Idolatry, in Aegypt, and other Parts of the World: For all his Wives were made Proselytes before he married them (as Sampson's likewise had been) though afterwards they not only fell away to their former Idolatries, but seduced Solomon himself into them.

The Gentiles were so forward to become Proselytes, in the Reigns of David and Solomon, that their Sincerity became suspected; and the Jews tell us, that the Sanhedrim would admit no Proselytes, in the Days of David, lest they should be induced to it by Fear; nor in the Days of Solomon, lest the Glory of his Kingdom should have been the Motive to them to profess the Religion of the Israelites. Nevertheless, great Numbers were received privately by Baptism, the Sanhedrim neither rejecting nor admitting them.

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\[c\] Maimonid. de Proselyt. § 15, 16. \[d\] Maimonid. ib.
It is the Observation of Theodoret, and of St. Jeron, upon Ezek. v. 5. that God placed Jerusalem, the Seat of the Jewish Government, in the midst of the Nations, that it might be a Direction to the Heathen in Matters of Religion; from whence, as from the Centre, Light might be communicated to the farther Parts of the Earth. But the Divisions and Calamities of the People of Israel, the Destruction of their City, and Dispersion of their whole Nation, contributed as much to the Propagation of Religion, as their greatest Prosperity could do.

The Division of the Ten Tribes, after the Death of Solomon, and the Erection of the Kingdom of Israel, distinct from that of Judah, with the many Leagues and Wars which these two mighty Kingdoms had with the Kings of Egypt, and Syria, and Babylon, and with other Nations, could not but exceedingly conduces to the divulging the True Religion in the World, and give Opportunity to the Prophets to declare their Prophecies, and work their Miracles among the Heathen, as we find they did in many Instances. One of the greatest Cities of the World was converted by Jonah's Preaching. Upon the Fasting and Prayer of Jehoshaphat, a very numerous Army of Moabites, and Ammonites, and other Nations, according to the Prediction of Jehaziel, destroyed one another: And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel, 2 Chron. xx. 29. Hezekiah being distressed by Sennacherib, prayed to God for Deliverance out of his Hand; that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only: And his Prayer was answered, not only in the Deliverance, but in the manner of it; which was so wonderful, that all must know, and be astonished at it; for that very Night the Angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand, 2 Kings xix. 19, 35. Which was the fulfilling...
of the Prophecy of Isaiah, deliver'd to Hezekiah, in a Message to him from God, in Answer to his Prayer: And Sennacherib returned to Nineveh and there fell by the Sword, as the same Prophet had foretold, and never came before Jerusalem, v 7, 33, 37. And afterwards Ambassadors came from the King of Babylon to enquire of the Wonder, or Miracle, that was wrought in the recovery of Hezekiah from his Sickness, 1 Chron. xxxii. 31. And at last, the Captivity of the Jews for seventy Years in Babylon, made their Religion almost as well known there, as in Jerusalem it self. Jeremiah had foretold the Captivity of the Jews, and the Conquest of all the adjacent Countries, so long and so plainly, before-hand, that all the neighbouring Nations must be sensible of it, as Nebuchadnezzar himself also was; for which reason, he gave a strict Charge concerning Jeremiah, to Nebuzaradan the Captain of the Guard, who declares the reason of their Captivity to be, their Sins against the Lord, or Jehovah, Jer.xl. 3. And, as the Jews say, he became a Proselyte. Their Enemies were sensible of the Cause of their Destruction: Their adversaries said, we offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of Justice, even the Lord the hope of their Fathers, Jer. l. 7. God professes, that he had a regard to the Honour of his Name among the Heathen, in his Mercies vouchsafed to the Children of Israel, or else he had utterly consumed them, Ezek. xx. 9. xxxvi. 22, 23, 36. And the Judgments upon the several Nations prophesied against, were to this End, that they might know him to be the Lord, Ezek. xxv. 7, 17. xxvi. 6. xxviii. 22, 23, 24. xxix. 6. xxxv. 9. xxxvi. 23. xxxvii. 28. I am a great King, said the Lord of hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen, Mal. i. 14. The Jews, in their Captivity, are commanded to make an open Declaration against the Heathen Gods; and because they understood not the Chaldee Tongue, the Prophet Jeremiah supplies them with so much of the Language as
as might serve them for that purpose: *Thus shall ye say unto them,* Jer. x. 11. That is, *Ye shall speak to them in their own Language, and in the Words, which I now set down to you, to bid defiance to their false Gods.* Thus did he fulfill his Commission and Character, who was sanctified and ordained a Prophet unto the nations, Jer. i. 5. And *Jeremiah* was put to Death in Egypt, and Ezekiel in Babylon, for appearing against the Idolatry of those Places.

During the Captivity, *Jeboiaclim* was reconciled to the King of Babylon, and in great favour with him: *His Throne was set above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon,* 2 Kings xxv. 28. The *Jews* were commanded to take Wives for them, and for their Sons, that they might be *increased there, and not diminished,* (Jer. xxix. 6.) And they were not only considerable for their Number, but were in great Esteem, and in Places of great Honour and Trust; and their Religion was *extolled* and recommended by publick Edicts to all under that vast Empire. The Almighty Power of God was manifested by *Miracles,* and by the *Interpretation of Dreams and Prophecies,* and his Majesty and Honour was acknowledged and proclaimed in the most publick and solemn Manner, throughout all the Babylonian Empire, at the Command of Princes, who were Idolaters, and were forced to it by the mere Convictions of their own Consciences, wrought in them by the irresistible Power of God, Dan. chap. ii, iii, iv, v, vi.

*Daniel* had acquainted *Cyrus* (as *Josephus* says) with the Prophecy of *Isaiah,* in which he was so long before mention'd by Name: However, the Lord stirred up the Spirit of *Cyrus,* by this or some other means, to

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accomplish the Prophecy which had been delivered both by Isaiah and Jeremiah, concerning the Restoration of the Jews, after a Captivity of Seventy Years: And Cyrus sent forth his Proclamation, declaring that he had received his Kingdom from God, with a Charge to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23. And this Decree of Cyrus was reinforced by Darius and Artaxerxes, Ezra vi, vii. Now so many several Decrees put forth in Favour of the Religion of the Jews, and the miraculous Power and Wisdom which gave Occasion to them, and the Advancement of Daniel and others, and the long Life and Continuance of Daniel in that Power and Esteem, must leave all the Eastern Part of the World without any Excuse, who were not converted to the Knowledge and Worship of the True God. The Advancement of Esther and Mordecai under Ahasuerus, and of Nehemiah under Artaxerxes, gave the Jews great Authority, and great Opportunities of propagating their Religion from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces; for this was the Extent of the Dominions of Ahasuerus, Esth. i. 1. And the Jews were dispersed in all the Provinces of the Kingdom of Babylon. chap. iii. 8. And they wanted no Care nor Diligence to improve every Opportunity; as we learn from the Books of Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. And the very Names of such Persons are enough to convince us, that that part of the World could want no Means of Conversion: Confect him before the Gentiles, ye Children of Israel; for he hath scattered us among them: There declare his greatness, and extol him before all the living: For he is our Lord, and he is the God our Father for ever. In the land of my captivity do I praise him, and declare his might and majesty to a sinful nation, Tob. xiii. 3, 4, 6. This was the Practice of pious Men among the Ten Tribes, of whom some were likewise in great Place and Authority, chap. i. 13, 21, 22.
And as the Ten Tribes were first carried away Captive; so, upon the Restoration of the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin, all but a few, in Comparison of the other Tribes, remained in the Places of their Captivity; and many of those Two Tribes also chose rather to continue in the Territories of Babylon, than forsake the Possessions which they enjoyed there: It is supposed, that not much more than half of them returned: And there were afterwards three celebrated Universities of the Jews in the Province of Babylon, Nebardea, Pombeditha, and Soria, besides several other Places famous for Learning. The Jews relate, that the Ten Tribes were carried away not only into Media and Persia, but into the Northern Countries beyond the Bosphorus; and Ortelius finds them in Tartary. The Odomantes, a People of Thrace, were Circumcised; and the Scholia of Aristophanes says, that they were reported to be Jews. In Process of Time they went as far as China.

The Restoration of the Jews by Cyrus, who had been so long before appointed and named by God himself for that Work, was ordained for this End that they might know, from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is no God besides him, Isa. xlv. 6. The Conquests of Cyrus opened a great Correspondence between the Nations of the World; and his particular Favour to the Jews, made them much taken Notice of by other Nations: And it is observable, that after the Captivity, the Jews were never given to idolatry; and though they were before too much addicted to it, yet this gave Occasion to Prophecies and Miracles to withdraw them from it; and these, with the Judgements of God which befel them for their

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\(^{c}\) Joseph. Antiq. i. 11. c. 1. Mede's Discourse, 20. p. 75.  
\(^{e}\) Hier. in Zech. x.  
\(^{f}\) Aristophan. Acharnenf. Aft. 1. Scen. 4.
Iniquities, gave continual Manifestations to the World of the Truth of their Religion.

When the Ten Tribes were carried from Samaria, and strange Nations were transplanted thither in their room, God would not suffer his Name and Worship to be quite neglected and forgotten amongst them, but they were forced to send for a Priest back again, to teach them the fear of the Lord, 2 King. xvii.

And after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Death of Gedaliah, who was set over them that were left behind in the Land of Judah, all the People that were not before carried to Babylon, fled into Egypt, Jeremiah being forced along with them, who there prophesied against Egypt, and foretold its Destruction by the Babylonians, Jer. xliii. And at last suffered Martyrdom. Their going into Egypt, was indeed contrary to the Word of the Lord by Jeremiah; but the Providence of God so order'd things, that Jeremiah should be carry'd thither with the rest, to testify against their Wickedness and Obstinate, and to denounce God's Judgments upon them, and upon the Egyptians, in whom they placed their Confidence, rather than in the Living God, and then to die in Testimony of the Truth of what he had delivered.

Cyrus and Darius desired the Prayers and Sacrifices of the Jews, in behalf of themselves and their Kingdoms, Alexander the Great, Ptolemaus Philadelphus, Augustus, Tiberius, and Vitellius, sent Victims to be sacrificed at the Temple of Jerusalem, as we learn from Philo and Josephus. The Jews constantly offer'd Sacrifices and Prayers for the Kings and Emperors under whom they lived, and for their Allies and Confederates, 1 Maccab. vii. 33. and xii. 11. And it was expected of them; for the Omission of this, contrary to their known and approved Custom in all former Times, was the thing which hasted their final Destruction by the Romans.
The Course of Alexander’s Victories was so unexpected, so sudden, and every way so wonderful, that it alarm’d the World: And no Man can believe that this was design’d by Providence only to gratify the Ambition and Vanity of a rash Youth, but to open a Way for a Communication between the several parts of the Earth, to the Benefit of Mankind, in the Improvement of all useful Knowledge; and when this Work was done, he was no longer the same Man he had been before, but soon resign’d his Conquests with his Life.

It is observable, that Alexander was exceedingly addicted to + Learning, that he had Philosophers with him, and design’d to introduce the Greek Tongue, by his Conquests, and establish it as the Universal Language. For when he left the Mother and Children of Darius at Susa, he took care to appoint them Instructors in this Tongue. He \( ^{b} \) erected about seventy Cities among the Barbarous Nations, mixing Greeks with the Natives, and \( ^{i} \) order’d thirty thousand Boys to be educated in the Greek Learning: Which had its Effect to succeeding \( ^{k} \) Ages.

\( ^{1} \) Pliny acquaints us, that Alexander was in Judæa. He is said by \( ^{m} \) Josephus, to have gone to the Temple at Jerusalem, and offer’d Sacrifice, and to have been mightily encouraged in his Enterprize against Persia, by the Prophecy of Daniel: He remitted the Tribute of every seventh Year, in which, by their Law, they were obliged not to sow their Ground; \( ^{n} \) which was afterwards remitted to them likewise by the Romans: He granted the Jews, who in great Numbers lifted themselves in his Army, the free Ex-

† Cic. pro Archiá. p. 354. § 6.  
\( ^{e} \) Diodor. Sic. l. 17.  
\( ^{b} \) Plut. de Fortun. Alex. Orat. 1.  
\( ^{i} \) Id. in Vit. Alex.  
\( ^{k} \) Quid fbi volunt in mediis Barbarorum Regionibus Graecæ urbes? 
\( ^{Q} \) Quid inter Indos Persafque Macedonieus fermo? Sen. Confol. ad Héliv.  
\( ^{1} \) Hist. Nat. l. 12. c. 25.  
\( ^{m} \) Joseph. Antiq. l. 11. c. ult.  
\( ^{n} \) Ibid. l. 14. c. 17.  

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ercife of their Religion, and promised to grant the same to the Jews of Babylon and Media; and those of Sanballat's Faction, who followed him into Egypt, he placed in Thebais.

Hecataeus, who lived in Alexander's Time, wrote a Book concerning the Jews, in which he took Notice of their great Zeal for their Law; which he proves by this Instance, That when Alexander repaired the Temple of Belus at Babylon, his Soldiers, who were Jews, could by no Means be brought to help forward that Work; and at last the King excused them. He related, that Hezechias the High-Priest of the Jews, a Venerable Man of about Sixty six Years of Age, of great Prudence and Experience, and withal very eloquent, whom he knew and had conversed with, was one, amongst others, who followed Ptolemæus Lagi, after the Battle at Gaza, in which he overcame Demetrius Poliorcetes. He mentioned likewise, that Mofollamus a Jew, marching with him, when the rest made a Stand, by reason of a Bird, the Stay or Flight whereof, the Augur said, was to be a Direction to them in their March, shot that Bird in the Sight of them all, and defended what he had done, by Argument. And indeed, the Jews wanted neither Zeal, nor Wit, nor Courage, upon every Occasion, to appear in behalf of their own Religion, against the Superstitions and Idolatries of the Heathen. This Book of Hecataeus was extant in the Time of Josephus, who refers his Reader to it, and remained till Eusebius's Time, who cites a large Passage out of it, in which is related this Action of Mofollamus. And Josephus appeals to the Letters of Alexander the Great, and of Ptolemæus Lagi, and the Kings of Egypt his Successors, in Favour of the Jews.
When Ptolemaeus Lagi took Jerusalem, he transplanted the Jews in great Multitudes into Egypt, putting many of them into his Garrisons, and allowing them equal Privileges with the Macedonians; by which Encouragement, many, besides those whom he transported, voluntarily went to dwell there. And the Captives of that Nation, set at Liberty by Ptolemaeus Philadelphus, were 120000. And besides the signal Favourites and Honours bestowed upon the Jews, by Ptolemaeus Philadelphus (who likewise caused the Holy Scriptures to be translated into the Greek Tongue, which was an exceeding great Furtherance to the Propagation of Religion) Seleucus Nicanor granted them the Freedom of Antioch, and of the Cities which he had founded in Asia, and the Lower Syria; and these Privileges remained to them till Josephus's Time, after all which the Jews had done to deserve to be deprived of them.

Antiochus the Great sent forth his Letters and Edicts, which are to be seen in Josephus, in Favour of the Jews, more especially in what related to their Religious Worship. And Seleucus, Son to this Antiochus, after his Father's Example, out of his own Revenues, bore the Cost belonging to his Sacrifices, 2 Mac. iii. 3. Antiochus Epiphanes himself, at last, under the avenging Hand of God upon him, for all his impious Cruelties, acknowledged himself punished for his Sacrilege and other Mischiefs committed at Jerusalem, 1 Mac. vi. 12, 13. and 2 Mac. ix. 17.

Antiochus Pius, when he besieged Jerusalem, not only granted a Truce for Seven Days, during the Feast of Tabernacles, but sent rich and noble Presents for Sacrifices; and a Peace being concluded upon honourable Conditions, with regard particularly to Religion, Joannes Hyrcanus accompanied Antiochus in

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9 Joseph Antiq. l. 12. c. 1, 2. f Ibid. c. 3. e Ibid. 
his Parthian Expedition; and the Feast of Pentecost falling the Day after the Sabbath, Antiochus stopt his Army those two Days, for the sake of the Jews.

The Lacedæmonians claimed Kindred with the Jews, and are suppos'd to be partly descended from Abraham by Hagar or Kethura, and partly from the Canaanites, who fled for fear of Joshua, and both were partly descend'd from Abraham by Hagar or Kethura, and partly from the Canaanites, who fled for fear of Joshua, and both of them had the Freedom of the City granted to them. A great part of the City beyond the Tiber was inhabited by Jews, and most of them had the Freedom of the City granted to them.

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of the Christian Religion.

The Sufferings and Martyrdoms under the Maccabees, and the Resolution and Constancy which they shew'd upon all Occasions, in defence of their Religion, render'd the Jews renowned over all Nations: And besides, their Conquests were very considerable; and the Advantages which accrued to Religion by reason of them. In the time of Johannes Hyrcanus, all Idumaea embraced the Jewish Religion. Aristobulus having conquer'd great part of Itrura, caused all their Males to be circumcis'd, and to observe the Law of Moses, as Strabo testifies. Under Alexander Jannaeus, the Jews took twelve Cities from the Arabians, and became possess'd of many Cities in Syria Idumaea, and Phœnicia, all which they brought over to the Profession of their own Religion, and demolish'd Pella for refusing to embrace it.

The Temple built by Sanballat, for Manasses, who had marry'd his Daughter, was an occasion of the Samaritans leaving their False Gods. *Josephus, †Epiphanius and ‡Thaophylact clear them from the Imputation of Idolatry; and §that they now are either Idolaters or Sadducees, is a Calumny of the Jews. The Zeal of the Scribes and Pharisees, though they were Hypocrites, did exceedingly conduce to the Propagation of their Religion; for they compassed sea and land to make one Profylete, and so far they were to be commended; but then they made him two-fold more the child of hell than themselves, Mat. xxiii. 15. Yet still they taught the necessary Points of Doctrine, tho' in Hypocrisy, and with the mixtures of Superstition. Our Saviour commands his Disciples to observe and do what they bid them, but not to do after their Works. And it was requir'd of the Fathers of the Sanhedrin, that they

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e Jof. Ant. l. 13. c.17. †Ibid. l. 13. c.19. §Ibid. l. 13. c.23. l. 14. c.2. h See Mr. M'cadi's Discourse i. 2.
* Joseph. 1.9. †Epiphanius. Hær. 9. §2. ‡In Joh. k F. Simon's Suppl. to Leo of Modena. l Lighti. Exercit. on 1 Cor. xiii. 1. p. 783. should
should understand many Languages, that the Sane-
drin might hear nothing by an Interpreter; which qua-
lified the Scribes and Pharisees, who aspired to that
Dignity, to be the better able to make Profelytes.

The Jews were dispersed over all the World, but
chiefly settled themselves in Rome and Alexandria, and
Antioch, the three principal Cities of the Empire; in
all which they had great and peculiar Privileges. In
Alexandria they had Magistrates of their own, and
lived under a peculiar Government by themselves. In
Egypt they had a Temple like that of Jerusalem,
built by Onias, which drew mighty Numbers of the
Jews thither, and continued for the Space of three
hundred and forty three Years, till the Destruction
of Jerusalem by Titus. And after the Building of that
Temple, the Babylonian Talmud says, that the Jews
in Egypt were double the Number of those that came
out from thence under Moses. Never any other Natio-
on had such various Changes and Revolutions, to mix
them with the rest of the World; and never any Peo-
ple were so industrious and zealous, and so successful
in the Propagation of their Religion. They had their
Synagogues at Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessaloni-
ca, and in all the Chief Cities of Greece, Acts xvii.
1, 17. xviii. 7. xix. 8. They had their Profeucha,
and their Synagogues for Divine Worship, and for
Reading and Explaining the Scriptures; which Men
of all Religions were admitted to hear, in all Places
where-ever they dwelt; and in the Synagogues the
Scriptures were read in the Greek Tongue, which
was the most universal Language then in the World.
Some have affirmed, that as much of the Scriptures as
was written in Solomon's Time, was then translated
into the Syriac Tongue; and there is little doubt

of the Christian Religion.

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but that at least part of the Bible was translated into Greek, before the Time of Alexander the Great: But the Version of the Septuagint became soon dispersed into all Hands, which was made at the Command of Ptolemaus Philadelphus; to whom likewise, and his Father, Aristobulus dedicated an Exposition of the Law of Moses. The Jews in their Kalendar appoint a Fast upon the Eighth Day of the Month Tebet, which answers to our Twenty Sixth of December, because the Law was then translated into Greek at the Command of this King, and they add, that there was Darkness all over the World for Three Days upon that account. But this must have been a Contrivance of the Jews since the Propagation of the Gospel, when they found this Translation cited against them, and were urged by Justin Martyr and others with its Authority. The Jews of Alexandria kept a Day of Rejoicing, in Remembrance of this Translation, in Philo's Time, and Josephus speaks with Approbation of the making it. But when the Jews sent Men purposely chosen, into all Countries, to blaspheme Christ and his Religion, and inserted Imprecations upon Christians into their Forms of Prayer; it is no wonder, that they should appoint a Fast in Detestation of a Translation, which proved so happy an Instrument in the Conversion of many to Christianity.

By all these means, vast Multitudes of Proselytes were made to the Jewish Religion in all Parts of the World. What Numbers there were at Rome of this Religion, we know from the Roman Poets and Historians; and we have as good Evidence of the spreading of it in other Places. Not to repeat what has been already related, nor to mention particular Per-

\[10\] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 1. 7. c. ult.
\[11\] Scaliz. Ifagog.
\[12\] Phil. de Vit. Mof. 1. 3.
\[13\] Joseph. Antiq. 1. 12. c. 2.
\[14\] Just. Dial.
fons of the greatest Note and Eminency, nor particular Cities, as Damascus, besides those already mentioned, where it more remarkably prevail'd, it is evident what Numbers of Persons, in all Nations, professed this Religion, from the incredible Treasures which Crassus found in the Temple of Jerusalem, being Ten Thousand Talents, amassed there by the Sums of Gold sent from all Places by the Jews, and such as became Proselytes to their Religion: And for the Truth of this, Josephus cites Strabo's Authority, who says, that the Jews were every where dispers'd, and every where gain'd Men over to their Religion; and that in Alexandria they had their Ethnarchae, or proper Magistrates, by whom they were governed. And another Proof of the Multitudes of Proselytes made to the Jewish Religion, may be had from the great Numbers assembled at their Passovers, and at the Feasts of Pentecost, out of every Nation under Heaven.

Thus mightily prevail'd the Religion of the Hebrews, till their City and Temple, by a Divine Vengeance, as Josephus often confesses, was destroy'd; and the Law itself, with the Utensils of the Temple, was carried among the Spoil in Titus's Triumph. And when the Jewish Religion had its full Period and Accomplishment, the Christian Religion, which succeeded in the room of it, and was prefigur'd by it, soon spread itself into all Corners of the Earth, and is at this Day preach'd among all Nations.

But before I proceed to consider the Propagation of the Christian Religion, it may be requisite, I. To produce some Testimonies of the Heathen, concerning the Jews and their Religion. II. To shew, That there have been always remaining divers Memorials

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\textsuperscript{x} Joseph. de Bell. Jud. I. 2. c. 25.  
\textsuperscript{z} Joseph. de Bell. Jud. I. 7. c. 17.  
\textsuperscript{a} Ibid. c. 24. pag. 979.
of the True Religion among the Heathen. III. To consider the Authority of the Sibyline Oracles.

I. As to the Testimony of Heathen Authors, it were no more an Objection against what has been alleged, though they had taken no Notice of the History of the Jews, than it can be supposed to be an Objection against the Truth of the taking of Troy, or the building of Rome, that the Scriptures make no mention of either of them: Nor than it can invalidate the concurrent Testimony of Historians, concerning the Antiquity and Fame of Tyre, that Homer makes no mention of it, tho' he often takes occasion to extol its Neighbour City Sidon. The Greek Historians were so ignorant of Foreign Affairs, as Josephus has observed, that Ephorus, one of the best of them, thought Spain to be but one City; and neither Herodotus nor Thucydides, nor any Historian of their Times, made any mention of the Romans. The Roman Authors are but of a very late Date, in comparison: And the Greeks, besides their Ignorance in Antiquity, and in the Affairs of other Nations, are known to have been a vain People, who despised all besides themselves, accounting them Barbarians, and taking little notice of Rome itself before they fell under its Power. Nothing more memorable ever befell the Romans than the taking of their Cities by the Gauls: this happened, says Plutarch, if we may credit their Chronology, which is so confused in things of much later Date, a little after the Year CCCLX, from the building of Rome. He thinks an obscure Report of this went as far as Greece; for which he cites Heracleides Ponticus, an Author of no Credit, as he confesses; and Aristotle, who said that Lucretius preferred

b Strabo lib. 16. "Omnis ut uide viximtar nec tueb.
e Plutarc. in Camil.
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the City; tho' the Prenomen of Camillus was Marcus, and not Lucius: Which is an evident Argument how little the ancient Greeks knew of Rome. Pliny observes, that Theophrastus was the first that wrote any Thing, with Exactness of the Romans, and that Theopompus, before whom no Author had mentioned them, only said, that the City was taken by the Gauls; and Clitarchus, who next took any Notice of it, said only, that an Embasy was sent from thence to Alexander; but Arrian proves that none was sent. The Affairs both of the Romans and Carthaginians, before the second Punic War, were but little known to the Greeks: For which Reason Polybius found it requisite in his Two first Books, to give an Account of the preceding State of Rome, before he entered upon the History of that War.

Yet many of the Heathen Writers, as Josephus shews, have made famous Mention of the Jews; though others have given a wrong and malicious Account of them, whom he proves to contradict one another, and sometimes themselves. Some, again, have omitted the Mention of the Jews, though they had never so much Occasion for it: Of which he gives a remarkable Instance in one Hieronymus, who though he were Governor of Syria, and wrote a Book of the Successors of Alexander, and lived at the same Time with Hecateus, both being contemporary with Alexander; yet never vouchsafed to speak of the Jews, of whom Hecateus wrote a particular Book. The general Silence in relation to the Jews, in the Histories of Alexander's Life which are now extant, could proceed from nothing but Envy and Ill-will; since it is incredible, that a People so very considerable as the Jews, should be the only Nation, whom he over-looked, without requiring the least Submission from them. But Pliny

f Plin. Hist. l. 3. c. 9.  
8 Arrian. de Expedit: Alex. l. viii. c. 15.  
 Polyb. l. 1. init.
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to whom we owe divers Things, omitted by the proper Historians, informs us of Alexander's being in Judæa. Demetrius Phalarœus wrote an Historical Account of the Kings of the Jews. The Works of Hecateus, of Demetrius, and of many other Greek Authors, are now lost, which were written concerning the Jews, the Fragments whereof are still to be seen in Josephus, Clem. Alexandrinus, Eusebius and others. Of those whose Works remain, Herodotus, relating the Victory of Pharaoh Necho, in the Battle at Megiddo, calls Jerusalem, Cadytis; by a small Variation, as Dr. Lightfoot has observed, for Kedosba, that is, the Holy City, the usual Denomination of that City. Herodotus likewise saying, that Circumcision was used by the Syrians in Palestine, must mean the Jews: for all others there were uncircumcised: Tho' when he says, that they acknowledged themselves to have received it from the Egyptians, this shews, how much he was misinformed concerning them, and how justly the Ignorance of Herodotus in Things relating to the Egyptians, is by Scaliger ascribed to the Partiality of the Egyptian Priests, from whom he had his Informations: For they concealed all that was disgraceful, and told him nothing, but that which was for the Glory of their own Nation. And this Observation may well be applied to other Instances, besides that, which gave Scaliger the Occasion to make it; and to other Historians, besides Herodotus. It is probable, that Circumcision was introduced by Joseph into Ægypt. The Colchis are thought to have received it from the Ten Tribes dispersed throughout those Countries, and the Æthiopians from the Posterity of Abraham by

\[^4\] Herod. l. 2. c. 104.  
\[^5\] Joseph. contra Ap. l. 1.  
\[^6\] Scalig. Not. in Græc. Fragm. p. 11.  
\[^7\] Grot. Ep. 327.
Ketura. All the Nations, of whom we have any Account that they observ'd Circumcision, were either in the Neighbourhood of Palæstine, or had some Affinity or Communication with the Hebrews. Strabo mentions Moses and the ancient Jews with Commendation: He says, that many, in honour to the Divine Majefty, went out of Egypt with Moses, rejecting the Worship of the Egyptians and other Nations, inasmuch as Moses instructed them, that God was not to be worshipped by any Image, and that he would reveal himself only to the Pure and Virtuous. He observes, that Moses had great Success in the establishment of his Government, and the Reception of his Laws among the neighbouring Nations, and that his Successors, for some Ages, pursu'd the same Methods, being Just, and truly Religious. Which Words, Isaac Casaubon remarks, deserve to be written in Letters of Gold. Diodorus Siculus names Moses among the chief Law-givers of ancient Times. Cadmus Milesius and Acusilaus Argivos, the two ancientst Greek Historians, lived but a while before the Persian Expedition into Greece. We have but four Greek Historians remaining, who wrote before the Reign of Julius Caesar; and in the first of them, Herodotus, we find Passages relating to the Jews; but Thucydides and Xenophon confining themselves to particular Histories, could have no occasion to take notice of them: And Polybius's History is most of it loft, who,

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* Multarum ex quadam parte Gentium, & maximè quaæ Judææ Palæstinaeæ confines sunt, usque bodie populi circumciduntur, & præcipuè Aegyptii & Idumæi, Ammonitæ & Moabitàe, & omnis Regio Sarraecenorum, quaæ habitat in solitudine—cum præter Aegyp-tios, Idumæos, Ammonitas, & Moabitas, Hīsmælitas in solitudine commorantes, quorum plurumque pars circumcifia est; omnes aliae Natio-nes in toto orbe incircumcifia sint carne. Hieron. in Hierem.i.x. 25.
* Strab.l. 16  
* Comment. in Strab. ib.  
* Diod. Sic.l. 1.
in his Sixteenth Book, not only mention'd the Jews, but said of Jerusalem, that much was to be spoken of it, especially by reason of the Fame of the Temple, which he deferred to another opportunity. But we see, the next general Historians, Diodorus Siculus, and Strabo the Geographer, mention them with Honour.

Trogus Pompeius seems to have been one of the first learned Romans that ever undertook to write a Latin History; for the ancient Histories written by Romans even of Consular Dignity, concerning Roman Affairs, were in the Greek Tongue: Trogus was the first, at least, that attempted an Universal History in the Roman Language, and he lived but in Augustus's time. He says so much Truth of the Jews, that his Mistakes are the more excusable; since from an Epitome only of so great a Work, it cannot be known from whence they might proceed. From his Mistakes we may conclude, that he had not his Informations from the Jews, and therefore did not write partially in favour of them. He attributes their prosperous and flourishing State to a Mixture of Justice with Religion in their Government. He gives a very high Character of Joseph, saying, that being through Envy sold by his Brethren to foreign Merchants, who carried him into Ægypt, he soon became very dear to the King; that he was the first that understood the Interpretation of Dreams, that he foretold a Famine many Years before it happened, and preserved Ægypt, by advising the King to provide Stores of Corn against the time of Famine; and that there had been so much Experience of the Truth of his Answers, that they seem'd to be given rather by a God than by a Man. * Pliny says, Jerusalem was the most famous City; not

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H 2 only
only of Judæa, but of the whole East. *Tacitus himself gives this Testimony of the Jews, That they worshipped the Supreme, Eternal, Immutable Being.

b Dion Cassius speaking to the same Purpose, says, that many had written of the God of the Jews, and of the Worship which they paid him. But above all, Varro, c the learnedest of the Romans, much approved their Way of Worship, as being free from that Idolatry which he could not but dislike in the Heathen Religion. And it is generally agreed by all, that the Religion of the Jews was received all over the World; and, as d Seneca expressed it, Viæ victoribus leges dederunt.

II. There have been always remaining divers Memorials and Remembrances of the True Religion amongst the Heathen. The Flood of Noah and the Ark e were generally taken notice of by Heathen Historians; and the Account of the Flood of Deucalion was f plainly transcribed from that of Noah. *Jove is a plain Depravation of the Word Jehovah; and Diodorus Siculus said, g that Moses professed, that he received his Laws from the God Íáw, which is another Variation from it, or from Jah, which is a Word often used in the Old Testament. But both the Fathers and the Modern Criticks generally derive Íao from the h Tetragrammaton. And this proves the Antiquity of the Heathen Tradition concerning the True God; since the Jews of latter Times would not speak the Name themselves, much less communicate it to others. Apollo Clarius being consulted to know who the God Íao was; answered, That he is the Supreme God of All, (as i Macrobius informs us from Cornelius Labeo:)

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a Tacit. Hist. l. 15.  
b Dio. l. 37.  
c S. Aug. Civ. Dei, l. 4. c. 31.  
d Ibid. l. 6. c. 11.  

c. 4. Euseb. Prep. l. 9. c. 12.  
Vid. Volf. de Idololatr. l. 1. c. 32.  
l. 2. c. 18. Walton. Prolegom. 8. § 19.  
c. 18. Fuller. Miscell. l. 2. c. 6.  

e Joseph Antiq. l. 1.  
f Lucian. de Dea Syr. & Mercurius, Jovis,  
g Diod. Sic. l. 1.  
i Macrobi. Saturn. l. 1.  

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which both shews, that the Heathen had Knowledge of the God Jehovah, and that the Oracles themselves were sometimes forced to confess Him to be the Supreme God, tho' obscurely, and under some Disguise, to amuse those to whom their Answers were returned; as here, Apollo would have him believed to be Bacchus. So Plutarch and others thought him. But Tacitus rejected this Opinion, which was occasioned by the Observation of the Feast of Tabernacles, and of Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement in Autumn, and by some other Rites; and their Sabbaths, were supposed to be in Honour of Bacchus, who was called likewise Sabbath. The Tetragrammaton, or Jehovah, is likewise supposed to be meant by the Tetraëlys of Pythagoras; and ἐλεήμων, a Word used in Songs and Acclamations, has a plain Allusion to Alleluia, especially with the Addition of is as ἐλεήμων ἰς. The Septuagint retain the Hebrew Word ἔλεήμων, Songs or Hymns, Judg. ix. 27. Jubilare, Festus says, was a Rustick Word signifying to cry out, but the Tusci or Tyrreni, were descended from the Tyrians, who were Neighbours and Allies to the Jews. Grætius 1 and others are of Opinion, that the Egyptians imitated the Urim and Thummim.

From a learned and large Account of Mr. Selden's upon that Subject, it appears, that there was a general Observation among the Heathen, of one Day in seven; tho' Length of Time and Corruption of Manners had greatly obscured or quite blotted out the Remembrance of the Original Institution; or Supersti-

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m Seld. de Jur. Nat. & Gent. l. 3. c. 15.
tion had by degrees assigned other Reasons for it: And this is sufficient to reconcile Josephus and other Authors with what he brings, which seems to imply the contrary. He likewise holds it probable, that the ancient and most known Example of Abraham gave occasion to the Payment of Tythes by the Greeks, and Romans and Carthaginians, as well as by the Phænicians and Arabians. And as to the last, he produces an Instance, which shews, that they must have had this Custom from the Hebrews: For in Arabia Felix, all Merchants were obliged to carry their Frankincense to Sabota the Capital City, and there to offer the Tythe of it to their God Sabis; and they were permitted to sell none till this was done, Sabis, as he observes, was a Corruption from Zaboth, an usual Attribute of the True God. It has been proved by several, and is generally agreed by learned Men, that many of the Rites among the Egyptians and other Nations were the same with those appointed by the Law of Moses, or very like them. But some would have it, that Moses took these Rites from those Nations, without any Proof, or possibility of Proof, that I can perceive. For how should it be proved, when we have no Writings or Memorials of these Nations so ancient as those of Moses by many Ages? And we read in the Scriptures, that several Laws were enjoin’d the Jews, because they were contrary to the Idolatrous Practices of the Heathens, but never find the least Intimation that any were given them in Imitation of the Gentile Worship; and it is unreasonable to imagine that they should have Laws appointed in contradiction to the Idolatrous Worshippers, and others at the same time in compliance with them, when they were by a miraculous Providence separated and distinguished from the Idolatrous Nations, and kept forty Years in the Wilderness, to hinder them from all Communica-

tion with them, and to cure them of the Proneness which they had to imitate them. If it be supposed, that the Jews, who were hated and despised, by other Nations, would be very unlikely to be imitated by them: It may be observed, that they were not always thus despised, nor among all Nations, but lived in good Esteem and Friendship with the Egyptians, till a King arose, who knew not Joseph: They generally were better esteem'd till the latter Ages of their Government; and then, the Reason of their being ill thought of, was, because they were singular in the principal Points of Worship, and resolute and zealous in the Observation of it, and would make no Compliances with the Heathen World; for they preserv'd themselves free from all Idolatry after their Captivity in Babylon. But however hated and contempt they might be; yet the same Authors who acquaint us with it, express their own sense, rather than the sense of the rest of Mankind; for at the same time they tell us, that they gained everywhere Proselytes. The Greeks were likewise ever despised by the Romans, but ever imitated; and we have now an Example of a neighbour-Nation, which is generally both imitated and spoken against. There can be no other reasonable Account given of the Agreement of so many other Nations with the Jews, in their Rites and Customs; but that these Nations, in the times of Solomon, or some time after, during the flourishing Estate of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel, or perhaps after the Captivity, and since the Dispersion of the Hebrews, had conformed themselves to them. 

P Numenius the Pythagorean wrote, that Jannes (whom Pliny calls Jamnes) and Jambres, the chief of the Magicians of Egypt, by their Sorceries, withstood Moses the Leader of the Jews, a Man most powerful in his Prayers to God.

q Plin. Hist. l. 30. c. 1.
A Tradition, of the Manner of the Passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, was retained among the People of Heliopolis, related by Artapanus. Miracles were sometimes wrought among the Heathen, by the Invocation of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and these and other Hebrew Names, as Zebaoth and Adonai, were commonly used by the Gentiles, in their Incantations and Exorcisms, which they retained by Tradition, though they knew not the Meaning nor Original of them. The Names of Seraphim and Cherubin, of Michael and Gabriel, were also used to the like Purposes, as Pселlus says in his Expositions of Zoroaster's Oracles. * Pliny says, the Words used on such Occasions were foreign and ineffable, and the same Character he gives of the Punick Tongue, which differed but little from the Hebrew. And Porphyry himself produced several Oracles ascribing the true Wisdom and Knowledge of Religion to the Hebrews. On the Gold Coast of Guiney there is a kind of Tryal by a bitter Water, like the Tryal of Jealousy enjoined by the Law of Moses, Numb. v. 17. and seems to be a Remainder of it. And in the adjacent Countries, they circumcise their Children, and rest one Day in Seven; tho' without any Sense of God, or his Worship. In the Kingdom of Kachemire are several Marks of Judaism. One who relating that Circumcision, the Water of Jealousy, and other Rites, are in Use with the Inhabitants of the Gold Coast of Guiney, says that several Europeans affirm, that the Negroes still retain many Laws and Customs which favour of Judaism, and acknowledges

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† Orig. contra Cels. I. 1. & 4. Vid. Grot. ad Matth. xii. 27.
§ Plin. Hist. l. 5. Procm. lib. 28. c. 2.
a Bern. Memoir. Tom. 4.
b Boljan. Lett. 10, 12, 18.

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of the Christian Religion.

that there are divers other Usages among them, which seem the same in Effect, as well as in Name, with such as occur in the Old Testament; declares himself notwithstanding to be rather persuaded, that they had all these from the Mahometans: When at the same time he takes Notice, among the rest, of their marrying the deceased Brother's Wife: But where is this enjoined by the Law of Mahomet? Those who first travelled into China, found Hebrews there, who called themselves Israelites, but knew not the Name of Jews; they were dispersed in divers Provinces, and read the Pentateuch in the Hebrew Tongue, in their Synagogues, without Points. The People of Bengal retained the Name of Adam; and in Madagascar they had the Names of Adam, Eve, and Noah. So that there is no Nation but has still had some Memorials of Revealed Religion. The Observation of New Moons, Years of Jubilee, and Circumcision, was found among the Americans, and an infinite number of Ceremonies and Customs (says Acosta) which resembled the ancient Law of Moses. They had likewise a Tradition of Noab's Flood. Hornius acknowledgeth that the Name of Joseph was in Use among the Americans, and that they frequently mentioned the Word Alleluia in their Songs, and used Circumcision; and he shews, that in their several Languages they have many Words from the Phoenician or Hebrew Tongue. * In the Reign of Darius Hyphans about five hundred Years before the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, Zoroaster appeared in the World, in whose Books are contained many Things taken out of the Old Testament; a great Part of the Psalms of David, the History of

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d Voyage de Jean. Struys, Tom. 1.
8 Horn. de Orig. Americ, Pref. & l. 2. c. 10. & l. 4. c. 15.
the Creation and Deluge, the Mention of Adam and Eve, of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. He pretended to reduce Religion to the Purity in which Abraham taught and practised it. The Name of Abraham has for many Ages been in great Veneration among all the Sects of Religion in the East, supposed to have its Rise from the Israelites in their Dispersion after their Captivity. The Book of Zoroaster is still extant, and had by those of his Sect yet remaining in Persia, in the same Veneration as the Bible is with Christians. And it has been shewn by Clem. Alexander, by Eusebius and Theodoret, and by Modern Authors, that the Philosophers had generally some Knowledge of the Religion of the Hebrews (as it was particularly affirm'd by Numenius the Pythagorean,) that the Brachmans also of India, were not unacquainted with it, and that the Laws of the wisest Heathen Nations were taken from the Laws of Moses. All which would have appear'd in many more and plainer Instances, if the Greeks had been more ingenuous and sincere; if it had not been their Custom to derive the Names of Places from some Hero of their own Invention; if they had not i set up false Inscriptions; if Plagiarism had not been a common thing among them; and if in their Histories they had not changed the Names of Persons and Places to conceal their Thefts.

III. The Oracles ascribed to the Sibyls are so plain and so particular, that if they should be admitted for genuine, not only the Revelations made to the Jews, but all the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, must be fully discover'd to the Heathen: But their Plainness has been the Cause why their Authority has been

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much question'd; which yet ought not wholly to be rejected, since the Sibylline Oracles were preserved in the Capitol, till the Reign of Honorius, when they were burnt by Stilico: and it is not to be imagined, that Justin Martyr, and other Christians, would cite Oracles which were in the possession of those against whom they cited them, unless they had been able to make good their Authority. This is a Subject which has exercised the Pens of many learned Men. I shall here set down what appears to me most probable upon the Question, as briefly as I can.

1. It is evident from Virgil, that in the Verses of the Sibyl of Cuma, the Birth of some Great Person was foretold; and from Tully, that this Person was to be a King: though both in Tully and Virgil the Prophecy be misapply'd to a wrong Person. The fourth Eclogue of Virgil contains the Sense of the Sibyl; and however it were design'd by him, is in most things much more applicable to our Saviour, than to the Person whom he describes.

In Catiline's Conspiracy, Lentulus flatter'd himself with the hopes of being a King, from the Sibylline Oracles. And from the same Oracles, as well as from the Scriptures, it is probable the Expectation of a King, who should arise out of Judea, which both Suetonius and Tacitus mention, was spread throughout the East.

What Tully says [lib. 2. de Divin.] in disparagement of this Oracle, is not much considerable in the case; because that whole Book is written with a design to disparage all Divination in general: For being an Academic, as he professes throughout his Books of Philosophy, he acknowledg'd no more of any part of their Religion, than was just necessary to comply with the Laws, as he owns himself in divers places. However, from him it appears that a Sibylline Orac-
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cle was alleged to the Purpose there mentioned; and that being in Favour of Cæsar, and of Monarchy, if there had been no other, was Cause enough for Tully to reject it, and turn it to Ridicule; who, "when this Oracle was applied to Ptolemy King of Ægypt, had another Opinion of it.

2. Though the Verses of the Sibyl of Cuma were burnt with the Capitol, A. U. C. dclxxi. yet Virgil expressly naming Cuma, this Sibyl's Verses must be still remaining, or supposed to be so; unless what he writes became some Way or other known before the burning of the Capitol, and was delivered afterwards down by Tradition. Tully quotes Sibylla Erythræa, [lib. i. de Divin.] and if he mean the same Sibyl in the 2d Book, Martianus Capella says, "that Sibylla Erythræa and Cumana were the same. And in the Search which was made for the Sibylline Oracles in Italy, and in all other Places where there was any Probability of finding any Remains of them, after the Burning of the Capitol, it is likely her Verses might be recovered. For Valerius Maximus says, that M. Tullius (as he calls him, not Attilius) was put to Death by Tarquinius, for suffering Petronius Sabinus to transcribe the Sibyl's Verses; and whether they were dispersed in divers Copies before it were discovered, so as not to be suppressed, it is not known. Augustus caused a diligent Search to be made for the Sibylline Verses, in all Places where they were supposed to be preserved, and those which were judged to be genuine, he ordered to be kept with great Care. This was about eleven Years before the Birth of Christ; and from hence Virgil seems to have contrived his Poem. But if they were the Verses of some other Sibyl, which went under the Name of the Sibyl of Cuma, after hers were

p Val. Max. l. i.
c. 1.
burnt with the Capitol, it is not much material; however, the Romans certainly thought they had the Oracles of the Cuman Sibyl: For, as Laëntantius says, they allowed the Verses of all the other Sibyls to be copied out and published, though they would not suffer those of Cuma to be read, but by Order of the Senate.

Notwithstanding all this Care, they could not keep them concealed; for we meet them often quoted by Heathen Authors. Indeed, the Oracles in the Capitol were only Copies taken from Originals which were left in those Places, from whence the Romans had their own Copies transcribed; and the Originals might be read, and other Copies taken, how carefully soever the Romans kept their own.

3. It being known that the Sibylline Oracles contained Things which concerned the Kingdom of the Messias, and the Verses themselves being in divers Hands, this gave Occasion to some to make many more Verses, under the Name of the Sibyls, relating the whole History of our Saviour, &c. But if the Sibyls Verses had been all burnt or lost, or if they had been kept so close, that no Body could possibly come to the Knowledge of them, without Leave from the Senate, there could have been no Pretence for any Imposture, nor would the Christians ever have alleged them as genuine. Celsus objects only, 'That many Things were added to the Verses of the Sibyls. Not that they were all Counterfeit, or that the Christians had no Means of coming by the True: Which was an Advantage that an Adversary much less subtle than Celsus would not have omitted, if there had been any Ground for it. Origen replies, That it was a malicious Accusation, and that he was able to bring no Proof of it, by producing ancient Copies more genuine than those which the Christians made Use of. "Blondel argues

Laënt. de falsâ Relig. c. 6. & Epit. c. 5.
Dionys. Halicarn. l. 4. Feneftella apud Laëntant. ibid.
Origen. contra Cels. l. 7. Lib. 1. cap. 18.
very well, that it had been the greatest Raffnefs and Imprudence imaginable, and most destructive of the Design at which they aim'd, the Establishment of Christianity, for the Fathers to cite Books, which the Heathen were sure could never come to their Knowledge, and which those, to whom they cited them, knew to contain no such things as they pretended to produce from them. "When this, says he, is as impudent and fensible, as if some Jew, from "Writings lately forged, full of Criminal Acufations against the Saviour of the World should "maintain to the very Faces of Christians, that he "found them in the New Testament, that the A- "postles were the Authors of them, and that the "Church having always had them in her Custody, "had concealed them." He says, "That this and "much more to the fame purpose, any Man of com- "mon Reason might eafily perceive, and that Justin "Martyr would have observ'd it; if he had consider'd "things with more Calmnefs." But what is there in all the Writings of Justin Martyr, that discovers his Want of Calmnefs, or rather, that does not shew him to have been confiderate, learn'd and prudent? He "is effectually vindicated from the Misfmake, with which he has been charged, concerning the Statue e- "rected at Rome, of Simon Magus: and a probable Account has been given, that not by his, but by some Transcriber's Misfmake, Herod is made contemporary with Ptolemaus Philadelphus. However, every candid Reader must acknowledge, as well that Justin Martyr could not be fo far ignorant of the Age when Herod liv'd, as that it was impossible for fo obvious Incon- veniencies, as Blondel mentions, to escape the Obser- vation of Justin or any of the Fathers, or almoft of any other Man. If Justin Martyr were void of all


* Grabe not. in Apol. 1.
of the Christian Religion.

Sense and Modesty, would the rest have pursued the same Course of Folly, only to make themselves ridiculous and odious by his Example: They were neither impudent nor stupid Men, and that which could proceed from nothing, but a mixture of Impudence and Stupidity, can with no Reason or Justice be charged upon them; and therefore they must be allow'd to have cited the genuine Verses of the Sibyls.

And if the Sibyls had delivered nothing relating to these Matters, why should any one counterfeit Verses in their Name, rather than under the Title of any other Oracle? There must be some Ground and Foundation of Truth, to give any Opportunity or Pretence to the counterfeiting of it: And the Prophecies of the Sibyls concerning Christ, must be the Occasion of all the additional Prophecies which were falsely ascrib'd to them.

4. Isaac Vossius thought that great part of these Oracles were compos'd by the Jews. And indeed, Pausanias says, * one of the Sibyls was by the Jews called Sabba; the same, I suppose, who is mentioned by *Ælian; and by Suidas, said to be descended from Noah, and named Sambetha, called the Chaldaean, and by some the Hebrew; and also the Persian Sibyl; whom † Alexander ab Alexandro calls Sibylla Judæa; though ‡ Josephus citing a Sibyl concerning the Tower of Babel, gives no such Account of her, but rather supposes the contrary. Which Passage is likewise cited by *Theophilus Antiochenus, and is still extant in the Sibylline Books.

But if these were only Heathen Oracles, yet there is reason to believe that the Predictions concerning Christ were very plain, though not so particular as those now set down in the Sibylline Books; both because the Heathen having but few Oracles of this na-

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2 Pausan. in Phocic. p. 328.  
*Ælian. l. 12. c. 35.  
† Alexand. ab Alex. l. 3. c. 16.  
‡ Joseph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 5.  
* Ad Autolyc. lib. 2. Sibyl. lib. 3.
tured, and so many of a quite contrary Nature, it was the more necessary that these should be plain; and because we find, that when God, in his infinite Wisdom, saw it fitting to reveal himself to others, he did it in as plain a Manner, and sometimes in a plainer, than he did to his own People in any one Prophecy.

Thus Balaam's Prophecy is as plain as any Prophecy of that Time at least; and our Saviour discovered himself more plainly to the Woman of Samaria, than he had yet done to any of his Disciples, John iv. 26. Not to mention the Dreams of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, or the Message of Jonah to the Ninevites. And as Balaam, an Inchanter or Sorcerer, delivered a true and famous Prophecy of Christ, and the Devils were forced to confess him to be the Son of God; so it is reasonable to believe, that God might ordain, that these celebrated Prophets, whose Oracles were otherwise the Devil's Instruments to promote his Ends, should foretell our Saviour's Coming: And yet St. Augustine assures us, that the Sibylla Erythrea, or Cumana, had nothing of Idolatry in her Verses; but spoke so much against it, that he believed her to belong to the City of God.

5. The Difference which there is between Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, and the Translation of it into Greek, in Constantine's Oration, is rather an Argument for the Authority of the Sibylline Oracles, than against it. For Constantine was wont to compose his Orations and Epistles in Latin, and they were translated into Greek by some whom he employed in that Service: And the Author of the Translation translated only what was properly Virgil's; but when he came to what was by Virgil borrowed from the Sibyl, he wrote down the Original Greek, nor translating the Variations which Virgil had made from it, to apply the Prophecy to his own Subject.
It is well known, that the Ancients took as great a Liberty as this in their Translations, and it was the more allowable, when there could be no Design or Likelihood of Deceit in the Translation of so famous a Poem as that Eclogue of Virgil. This was but to point out the Alterations which Virgil had made, and to shew how easily these Parts of his Poem might be supplied from the Original Greek: And perhaps this was a known Translation of that Eclogue which had been made with this Design.

It were no difficult Matter, to Answer all the other Objections which are wont to be brought against the Sibylline Oracles, so far as the Notion here proposed is concerned in them. For though the Books which we have now, contain manifest Falsifications and Forgeries; yet there must have been something real, to give a Pretence and Countenance to so many elaborate Forgeries of this Nature, and that was the Sibylline Oracles mentioned in Tully, Sallust, Virgil, &c. We may therefore conclude, that the True Religion received a considerable Promulgation from these Oracles, which served to awaken in the Gentiles an Expectation of a King to be born in Judæa.

As soon as the Gospel appeared in the World, like the Rising Sun, it diffused its Divine Light and Influence into all Parts of the Earth; its Propagation was it self a Miracle, and answerable to that miraculous Power of Languages, and other Means by which it was accomplished. Tertullian acquaints us, that it was soon propagated beyond the Bounds of the Roman Empire; he speaks of the Northern Parts of Britain. One, who was most capable of knowing, St. Clement, his Fellow-labourer, acquaints us, that

\[\text{vol. i.} \]

\[\text{st.}\]
St. Paul went as far as the West, according to the Geography of those Times, extended. Which shews, that he accomplish’d his Intention (Rom. xv. 24, 28.) of going to Spain. And it is probably suppos’d, that he landed in Britain, and made some stay here in his Passage. And we know it receiv’d as early a Propagation in other Places more remote, being preached by St. Bartholomew to the Indians, by St. Thomas to the Parthians, and to the Scythians by St. Andrew. St. Thomas preached likewise to the Indians, and St. Matthew to the Persians. In general we are told, that the Apostles preached to the Persians, Armenians, Parthians, Scythians, Indians, and Britans, to the Indians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians, that they preached not only to all under the Roman Empire, but to the Scythians, the Sarmatians, the Indians, the Ethiopians, the Persians, the Seres, (Chineses) the Hyrcanians, the Bactrians, the Britans, the Cimbri, the Germans, and in short to all Nations. The Eunuch Treasurer to Candace Queen of Ethiopia, being converted and baptized by St. Philip, returned and preached the Gospel there: whereby St. Cyril of Jerusalem observes, that Prophecy of the Psalmist was fulfilled, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God, Psal. lxviii. 31.

In St. Augustin’s time, the Christians were more numerous in all the known Parts of the World, than the Jews and Heathens together. "Theodoret says, that but very few Gentiles, Three or Four, in comparison, continued in their Infidelity, and that they valued themselves upon being singular, and not led away with the Multitude: And we have reason to believe, that the Zeal of the Apostles, and their immediate

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" Euseb. Hist. l. 5. c. 1. & l. 5. c. 10. Socr. l. 1. c. 19.  
" Ambrof. in Psal. xlv.  
" Euseb. Dem. Evang. l. 3. c. 7.  
" Theodoret. Tom. i. in Psal. cxvi.  
" St. Aug. de Utilit. Credendi, c. 7.  
" Theodoret in Psal. lxv. 7.  
Disciples"
Disciples and Followers, had carried the glad Tidings of the Gospel farther, than either Ambition or Avarice it self; 'till of late Years, had made any Discovery; which Tertullian likewise sufficiently intimates. *Le Compte thinks, that St. Thomas in Person, or by his Followers, propagated the Gospel in China, because the Indians had then great Dealings with the Chinese, to whom, he says, almost all India was Tributary. And the Christian Religion, which had anciently been preached throughout the East, received an additional Propagation under Tamerlane, in the beginning of the Fifteenth Century. For that mighty Prince, who conquered the Muscovites, brought China under his Power, and by his Victories over the Turks, established the Greek Emperor in his Dominions, and subdued Ægypt, had with him many Christians skilful in several Arts and Sciences, whom he brought from all Places where he had been with his Armies, or who had been recommended to him. Axalla a Genoese, who had been bred up with him, was a Christian, and in great Favour and Authority under him. The Christians were his best and chiefest Soldiers, upon whom he most relied; he reposed as much Trust and Confidence in them, as in his Natural Subjects, and more than in the most zealous Mahometans. He gave out Orders all over his vast Empire, that Christians should have the free Exercise of their Religion, and that Christ should be honoured and reverenced by all Men; and the Christian Worship was daily performed in his Army. This Emperor had in his Dominions many Countries, where the Inhabitants were all Christians, and he commanded that the Christians should be every where used with as much respect and esteem, as those of the Mahometan Religion. All which is related in

† Hist. of Tamerl. by Sanétyon. c. 2, 7.
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The most authentick Account that has been published of the Life of this great Emperor.

The Cross was found to be in Use among the Chinese, by those who first went from Europe into China; and a Bell was seen there, which had Greek Characters engraven on it: And those who honoured the Cross were in so great Numbers in the Northern Provinces, that they gave Jealousy to the Infidels. The Christians there were called Isai, from the Name Jesus: And from the Chaldee Books which were found upon the Coasts of Malabar, it appears that St. Thomas preached the Gospel in China, and founded many Churches there. The Passages which prove this, may be seen in Trigautius and Semedo, translated out of those Books. Nicolas de Conti's faith of the Chinese, that when they rise in the Morning, they turn their Faces to the East, and with their Hands joined, say, God in Trinity keep us in this Law.

The Gospel was preached in China, by some who came from Judæa, and seem to have been Monks, A. D. dcxxxvi, as it appears by a Marble Table erected A. D. declxxii, and found A. D. mdcxxv. This Monument contains the principal Articles of the Christian Faith, written both in Syriack and in Chinese Characters; the Substance of the Inscription may be seen in Le Compte's Memoirs, and the whole is translated by Semedo. Hornius indeed rejects this Inscription (which was likewise produced by Kircher) as counterfeit; but without any Cause, that I can perceive: For if it were a Fraud, there is no reason to think that we should not find all the Points of Popery inserted in it. Andreas Mullerus, in his Opuscula Orientalia, has set down the Original, with a New Translation and a Paraphrase and Comment.

upon it, wherein he examines what Kircher had observed from this Inscription in Favour of the Romish Doctrines.

Oforius writes, "that the Brachmans believed a Trinity in the Divine Nature, and a God Incarnate to procure the Salvation of Mankind; and that the Church of St. Thomas was esteemed most Holy among the Saracens, and other Nations, for the Report of Miracles wrought there.

The Gentiles of Indostan retain some Notion of the Trinity, and of the Incarnation of the Second Person, though corrupted with fabulous Stories.

The People of Ceylon do firmly believe the Resurrection of the Body. The Talapoins of Siam have their Convents and Chaplets, and there are generally both Monks and Nuns among the Gentiles of the East-Indies. As the Fabulous Deities of other Heathen Nations were framed upon corrupt and absurd Allusions to several Historical Truths in the Old Testament; so the Siamese seem to have contrived their Religion by a profane Mixture of the Mysteries of Christianity with their own impious Fancies: For they report of Thevetat, that he was the Author of a Schism in Religion, and that for his Enmity to his Brother Sommonacodom, he is punished in Hell, by being hung upon a Cross, with Nails pierced through his Hands and Feet, and his Head crowned with Thorns. And this is made a great Objection by their Priests against our Religion, that the Christians are the Disciples of Thevetat. Their God Sommonacodom is said to have been born of a Virgin, and his
Mother's Name in the Book written in the Balie Tongue, which contains the Mysteries of their Religion, is Maha Maria, which signifies the Great Mary: tho' it is as often written Mania or Maria; and these Books do likewise relate, that his Father was King of Ceylon. This Inconsistency shews, that they have mixt the Christian Mysteries with Fables and Traditions of their own.

The Indians in America worshipped a God, who, they said, was One in Three and Three in One. They baptized their Children, and used the Cross in Baptism, having a great Veneration for the Cross, and thinking it a Preservative against Evil Spirits; they believed the Resurrection of the Body; they had Monasteries, Nunneries, Confessors and Sacraments; And the Mexicans, in their ancient Tongue, called their High-Priests Papa's, or Sovereign Bishops, as it appears by their Histories.

It is a remarkable Relation which Lerius gives of the People of Brasíl, That when he had discourse to them concerning Religion, and endeavoured to persuade them to become Christians; one of their ancient Men answered, That he had declared excellent and wonderful Things to them, which put him in mind of what they had often heard from their Fore-fathers; That a long while ago, many Ages before their time, there came a Stranger into their Country, in such a Habit, and with a Beard, as they saw the French wear, (for these Americans have none) who preached to them in the same manner, and to the same effect, as they had now heard him do; but that the People would not hearken to him. Upon which Lerius observes, that Nicephorus writes, That St. Matthew preached the Gospel to Cannibals; and

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\[\text{d} \text{Loutere, ib. c. 24.} \quad \text{e} \text{Joel. Acost. Hitt. l. 5. c. 28.} \\
\text{f} \text{Pet. Mart. Decad. 4. c. 8. & Decad. 8. c. 9.} \\
\text{g} \text{Lerii Navigat. in Bras. c. 16.} \\
\text{h} \text{Acost. l. 5. c. 14, 23, 24, 25.} \\
\text{i} \text{Lerius Navigat. ib.} \]
He thinks it not improbable, that some of the Apostles might pass into America, that the Sound of the Gospel might go into all the Earth. And it is observable, that he found many Words in the Brazilian Language taken out of the Greek Tongue.

Hornius\(^k\) owns, as every Man else must do, that considers it, that there are manifest Tokens of the Rites and Doctrines both of the Jewish and Christian Religion among the Americans, as of Circumcision, Baptism, the Trinity, the Lord's Supper, &c. but then he is for bringing the Jews and Christians thither his own way, and will have the Jews come in company of the Scythians; and the Christian Rites to be brought in with the Turks and Tartars, or from Japan and China: Though he likewise approves and confirms the Relation which Powel and Hackluyt give of a Colony transplanted into America, by Madoc, from Wales.

Several Usages which are observed to be among the Natives, by the Missionaries, both in the East and West-Indies, and to have a near Resemblance to their own Rites, seem to prove that there have formerly been Christian Monks amongst them, rather than that this proceeds (as the Missionaries imagined) from an Ambition that the Devil has to Ape, as they say, what is done in God’s Service; or that we may conclude, as some Protestants have done a little too hastily, that this itself is a sufficient Argument, that the Devil is the Author of such Rites, because they are found amongst his Worshippers. If we consider the vast numbers of Monks, in ancient Times, in the Eastern Parts of the World, who were Men of an active and indefatigable Zeal, it may well be supposed, that some of them might find the way into those Countries which have been but lately discovered to the rest of the World.

\(^k\) Horn, de Orig. Americ. l. 3. c. 2. & l. 4. c. 15.
It is evident from the unanimous Testimony both of Protestants and Papists, that there are manifest Tokens, in all Parts of the World, that the Christian Religion has been preached amongst them. And it must, in common Justice, be confessed, that the latter Missionaries have preached the Gospel among the Indians with great Zeal and Success. A King of Ceylon received Baptism, and was very zealous to bring over his Subjects to the Christian Faith; and one of their most learned Men became a Christian at the same Time; but the King was deposed by his Idolatrous Subjects. Some of the Kings of Congo have been converted: One of whom, Alphonso, destroyed all the Idols, and propagated the Christian Faith with great Zeal: He sent his Sons, Grandsons and Nephews to Portugal to study; Two of them were afterwards Bishops in their own Country. The King of Monomotapa, reigning A. D. mdcxxx1, was a Christian. Bernier computes the Number of Christians in the Kingdom of Bengal, at between Thirty and Forty Thousand. And in Japan, A. D. mdcxii, there were Four hundred Thousand Christians, who were all destroyed by the Persecution raised, through the Covetousness of some Dutch Merchants, and their malicious Plots and Contrivances, to engross the Trade of those Islands to themselves. And indeed, by the Accounts which we have of those Parts, the Lives of the Europeans have been so scandalous, and so contrary to their Religion, that besides the Guilt of the Sins themselves, they have a great deal to answer, for that Hindrance which they have thereby given to the Progress of Christianity among those poor People,

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1 Tavern. Voyages des Indes, l. 3. c. 4.
3 Ofor. de rebus Eman. l. 3, 8, 10.
4 Faria's Portng. Asia. Tom. 1. Part. 1. c. 3.
5 Tavern. ibid. Memoir. Tom. 4.
6 Ibid.
7 Varen. de Relig. in Regno Japon. c. 11.
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who have generally shewn a good Inclination and Forwardness to be instructed; and in Times of Persecution, both from Mahometans and Idolaters, even Children have born all Sorts of Torments with wonderful Courage and Patience.

Several Kings of Japan have been converted. And in China, many of their principal Mandarines, or Governors, have been eminent for their Zeal in the Christian Religion; and though the Chinese are naturally very timorous and cowardly, yet in all Times of Persecution, they have been observed to continue firm and steadfast in the Faith. We are told, that the Mother, the Wife, and the Eldest Son of the Emperor of China, were formerly converted, and that there is lately an Edict published in Favour of the Christian Religion in China, that a Prince of the Blood is become a Christian, and that the Emperor himself has caused a Church to be erected in his Palace, and lodges the Missionaries near his own Person. And in the West-Indies, Cortes wrote to the Emperor, That the People of Mechoacan sent to him for an Account of his Religion, being weary of their own, for its cruel and bloody Rites.

It is observable, That Christianity has been still professed in those Parts of the World where there has been most Learning and Commerce; where they have been most able, and have had most Opportunities to instruct other Nations. To which end, the vast Extent first of the Greek, and Latin, and Syriack, and since of the Persick, and Slavonian, and Arabick Tongues, has been very advantageous; the Scriptures of the New Testament being written in the first, and translated into all the rest. And though, by the Just

\[1\] Maffei Hist. Ind lib. 16.  
\[3\] Jof. Acott. l. 5. c. 22.
and Wise Providence of God, Makometans and Idolaters have been suffered to possess themselves of those Places in Greece, Asia, and Africa, where the Christian Religion formerly most flourished; yet there are still such Remainers of the Christian Religion amongst them, as to give them Opportunity to be converted; and when their Sins shall not hinder, to restore the Gospel to those Countries, as before. For, by Mr. Berewood's Account, * in the Dominions of the Turk in Europe, the Christians make two third parts at least of the Inhabitants; and in Constantinople it self, he reckons above Twenty Christian Churches, and above Thirty in The ssalonica, where the Makometans have (or had) but Three Mosques. * The Greeks have twenty six Churches within the Walls of Constantinople, beside six in Galata, and as many of the Western Christians of the Roman Communion. * Philadelphia, now called Ala-shabir, has no fewer than twelve Christian Churches. * The whole Island of Chio is govern'd by Christians; there are above thirty Latin Churches, and more than five hundred Greek. And in some other Islands of the Archipelago there are none but Christians. Which, by Sir Paul Ricaut's Account of the present State of the Ottoman Empire, has not been without very considerable Effect: For a Sect among the Turks, called Haietti, hold that Christ is Eternal, that he was Incarnate, and that he shall come to judge the World at the Last Day. The Students in the Grand Scignior's Court generally maintain, that Christ is God, and the Redeemer of the World; and this is a common Tenet in Constantinople; the Professors of it are styled Chupmefhabi; or

* Breewood's Enquir. c. 10.
* Ricaut's Hist. of the Ottoman Empire, 1. 2. c. 11, 12.
the good Followers of the Messiah, and some have suffered Martyrdom in maintainance of this Doctrine. And the Turkisb Soldiers, in the Confines of Hungary and Bosnia, read the Gospel in the Slavonian Tongue. *Bernier writes, that in Mogul, though the Missionaries make some Progress among the Gentiles, yet they do not in ten Years make one Christian of a Mahometan: But he says, that the Great Mogul, Jehan Guire, Grandfather of Aureng-Zebe, consented that Two of his Nephews should be Christians; and declares, that the Mahometans have venerable Thoughts of our Religion; that they never speak of Christ, but with great Reverence; that they never pronounce the Word Ayfa, i.e. Jesus, without adding that of Azaret, which signifies Majesty; that they agree with us, that he was miraculously born of a Virgin-Mother, and that he is the Kelum-Allah, and the Rough-Allah, the Word of God; and the Spirit of God. All which is no more than the Alcoran teaches them, nor than the Mahometans of Persia and Morocco profess to believe. bThe Persian Mahometants receive among their sacred Books, the Pentateuch, the Psalms, all the Books of the Prophets, and the Four Evangelists: And the Reading these Books of Scripture, has been the means which God has been pleased to make use of for the Conversion of many Persons of great Eminency. In the Kingdom of Morocco, they receive the Books of Moses, the Psalms, and the four Gospels, and observe the Festival of St. John; ctho' in the Gospels they follow the false Glosses of Sergius and the Alcoran. dSir Thomas Roe observes, that the Great Mogul, Erbar Sba, gave the Missionaries all manner of Encouragement and Assistance, with full Liberty to all sorts of his Subjects to become Christians, even to his own Court and Blood; and that

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*a Memoir. Tom. 3.*  
*b Sanson. Royaume de Perse.*  
*c Relation de l'Empire de Maroc. par Mr. de S. Olon.*  
*d Lett. Octob. 30. 1616,*
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neither Jehan Guire, to whom he was sent Embassador, nor any of all the Sects in his Kingdom, uttered any disrespectful Words of Christ, as they did not forbear to do of Mahomet; which, says he, is a wonderful secret working of God's Truth, and worth observing. It is also observed lately by a learned Author, that the Christians had better Terms from Mahomet himself, than any other of his Tributaries; and that there is no Mahometan Country where the Christian Religion is not esteemed the best, next their own; and the Professors of it accordingly respected by them, before any other Sort of Men that differ from them.

In Africa, besides the Christians living in Egypt, and in the Kingdom of Congo and Angola, the Islands upon the Western Coasts are inhabited by Christians; and the vast Kingdom of Habassia, or Abassinia, supposed to be as big as Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, taken together (according to Mr. Brerewood's Computation) is possessed by Christians. And 'till less than Two hundred Years ago, Nubia, a Country of a great Extent, lying between the Equator and the Northern Tropic, continued, as it's believed, from the Apostles Times, in the Christian Religion. In Asia, he says, most part of the Empire of Russia, the Countries of Circassia and Mengrelia, Georgia, and Mount Libanus, are inhabited only by Christians, besides the Dispersion of them into other Parts, under the Denomination of Nestorians, Jacobites, Marionites, and Armenians, the last of which are a People exceedingly addicted to Traffick, and have great Privileges granted them by the Turks, and other Mahometans; they are found in Multitudes in most Cities of great Trade, and are more dispersed than any other Nation but the Jews. Their Patriarch of Mosul, or Babylon, is said to have had more than a Thousand Bishops under

c Dr. Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.  
e Brerewood's Enquir.  
c. 24.  
8 Otto Frilingensis Chron. 1. 7. c. 31. vid. Morin. de Syr. Nestorianorum Ordinat.
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him, and is therefore styled Catholicus, or Universal Bishop. The Jacobites are reported to be dispers'd into Forty Kingdoms. In the Promontory extending itself into the Indian Sea, are the Chriftians of Saint Thomas: So call'd, because firft converted by him, who is believ'd to lie buried at Maliapour, and they have continued in the Christian Religion from his Time. It must be confess'd, that in Mengreha, and other Countries, the Doctrines of Religion are much corrupted, and their Practice very different from the Profession of Chriftians; but however, they retain the Gospel among them; and it is every Man's own Fault, if he make not a good Use of those Means of Salvation, which God in his Providence has afforded him. Of late, the New Testament, in the Malayan Tongue, which is fo famous throughout the East, and Grotius's excellent Book of the Truth of the Christian Religion, in Arabick, have been Translated and Printed at the Charge of the Honourable Mr. Boyle; and the first dispers'd over all the East-Indies where the Malayan Language is used; and the latter, into all the Countries were Arabick is spoken. He also contributed to the Impreffion of the New Testament and Catechism, which was made by the Turkish Company, in the Language of the Turks. The New Testament was Printed in the Malayan Tongue, by Order of the Dutch East-India Company, in Latin Characters, A. D. 1668. And a Translation of the Four Evangelifts, and the Acts of the Apostles, and the Psalms, into that Tongue, has been Printed by the Dutch, in Malayan Characters, who have likewise appointed a Sermon to be preach'd once a Week at leaft, in their Colonies; and the Church built for this Use in Batavia is call'd the Malayan Church. The New Testament was long ago Printed in the Japanese Tongue. And Grotius's

h William Mainfton's Malayan Grammar, MS.
j Grot. ad Voff. Epift. libro de Satisfact. præf. 

Book
Book of the Christian Religion had been translated into the Greek and Persian Tongues, in his Life-time. The Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, translated into the Malayan Tongue, were reprinted at Mr. Boyle's Charge at Oxford, MDCLXXVII. In America, it is notorious, that the Christians are sufficiently numerous; and have sufficient Opportunities to instruct the Natives, if they were but as careful to improve them to so good an End, rather than in pursuit of their own Gain. The whole Bible translated into the Indian Language, was ordered to be printed, by the Commissioners of the United Colonies in New-England. And at the Charge, and with the Consent of the Corporation in England for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New-England, was printed at Cambridge, A. D. MDCLXIII, and dedicated to King Charles II. by the Commissioners of the United Colonies. The Proceedings and Success of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts, which was incorporated A. D. MDCCI, are to be seen in the Books published by order of that Society.

The Sum of all is this: Before the Flood, Revelations were so frequent, and the Lives of Men so long, that no Man could be ignorant of the Creation, and of the Providence of God in the Government of the World, and the Duties requir'd towards him. And in the first Ages after the Flood, God's Will revealed to Noah, and the Precepts given to him at his coming out of the Ark, must be well known to all the surviving World; and as soon as the Remembrance of them began to decay, and Men to fall into Idolatry, Abraham and the other Patriarchs, were sent into divers Countries, to proclaim God's Commandments, and to testify against the Impiety of Idolaters, wherever they came. For, to publish the Reveald Will of God, and make it generally known in the World, God was pleas'd to chuse to himself a peculiar People, and to send them first out of Mesopotamia into Canaan, and,
and, upon occasion, back again into Mesopotamia; and then several times into Egypt; and from thence, after they had dwelt there some Hundreds of Years, into Canaan again; at what time he appointed them Laws, admirably fitted and contriv'd for the receiving of Strangers and Proselytes. After many signal Victories, and after other Captivities, they were carry'd away Captive to Babylon, and were still deliver'd and restor'd by a wonderful and miraculous Providence, and had vast numbers of Proselytes in all parts of the known World, and many Footsteps and Remainders of the true Religion are found in the remotest Parts of the Earth. And when, by the just Judgment of God upon the Jews, for their Sin in rejecting the Messias, they were rejected by him, from being his People, they were dispers'd throughout the World, for a Testimony to all Nations, that Moses and the Prophets deliver'd no other thing than what God had reveal'd to them; since they continue to maintain and assert those very Books, which plainly foretel all that Ruin and Destruction that has befallen them for their Infidelity and Disobedience; and still remain a distinct Nation, according to an express Prophecy, (Jer. xxxi. 36.) notwithstanding their many Dispersions for so many Ages. They are a standing Evidence, in all Parts of the World, of the Truth of the Christian Religion, bearing that Curfe which their Fore-fathers so many Ages ago imprecated upon themselves and their Posterity, when they caus'd Christ to be crucified. And the Gospel has, by its own Power and Evidence, manifested it self to all People dispers'd over the face of the whole Earth. To which might be added, That the Mahometans owning so much of the Religion Reveal'd both in the Old and New Testament, afford some kind of Testimony to the Truth of it, in those vast Dominions of which they are possess'd. All the most remarkable Dispenfations of Providence, in the several Changes in the World, have had a parti-

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cicular Influence in the Propagation of the True Religion. Cyrus, Alexander the Great, divers of the Roman Emperors, and of latter Times, Tamerlane, and several other Princes, were great Favourers of it; and the worst of Men, and the most unlikely Accidents, have contributed towards the Promotion of it.

If it be objected, That notwithstanding all which has been said, great part of the World are Unbelievers. Let it be considered,

1. That there is no Nation but has great Opportunities of being Converted; and it is evident, from what has been produc'd concerning the Chinese and the Americans themselves, that the Christian Religion had been preach'd among them; tho' the Knowledge of it was lost, through their own Fault, before the late Discoveries of those Parts of the World. And as Christ came into the World in the fulness of time; so, in the fulness of time, that is, at the most fitting Season, he reveal'd himself to the several Nations of it. God, who is infinitely gracious to all, and knows the Hearts and Dispositions of all Men, might defer the Restoring his Gospel to the Chinese, for instance, 'till that very Time when he saw them best prepared for it: And it is remarkable, That the Discovery of the Indies happened about the Time of the Reformation; that those poor People might have the Purity, as well as the Truth of Religion, if Christians had been as little wanting to them in their Charity, as God has been in the Disposals of his Providence. He stays 'till they have filled up the measure of their iniquities, before he punishes a People: And for the same Reasons, of Mercy and Goodness, he waits for the most proper Seasons to impart his Revealed Will to them; and to have it preached to them before, would be only to increase their Condemnation: And it is not only Just, but Merciful, for him to with-hold the Knowledge of his Revealed Will from those who he foresees would reject it, and abuse the Opportunities which should
should be offer'd them, to the Aggravation of their own Guilt and Punishment. Especially if it be observed,

2. That as to particular Persons, we have Reason to believe, that God, who by so wonderful a Providence has taken Care that every Nation under Heaven might have the True Religion preach'd in it, and who has the whole World at his Disposal, and orders all Things with great Regard to the Salvation of Men; we have abundant Cause to think, that he would, by some of the various Methods of his Providence, or even by Miracle, bring such Men to the Knowledge of the Truth, who live according to their present Knowledge, with a sincere and honest Endeavour to improve it. When St. Peter was by Revelation sent to Cornelius, he made this Inference from it, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him, Acts x. 34, 35. From whence, what less can we conclude, than that every Man, in any Part of the World, who is sincerely good and pious in the Practice of his Duty, so far as it is known to him, shall rather, by an express Revelation, have the rest discover'd to him, as in the Instance of Cornelius, which gave Occasion to these Words of St. Peter; than he shall be suffer'd to perish, for want of a true Faith, and sufficient Knowledge of his Duty? And it is Just with God, to punish those Heathens who sin without any Revealed Law, for their Sins against Natural Reason and Conscience, and for neglecting to use and improve their Reason, and to embrace the Opportunities afforded them of becoming Christians. We may likewise be certain, that besides Natural Reason and Conscience, God, in his Goodness, is not wanting to afford such Inward Motions and Convictions of Mind to such of the Heathen as are not wilfully blind and stupified by their Vices, as may prepare them for the Reception of the Gospel, which, by his Providence, he gives them
so many Opportunities of becoming acquainted withal: And if once they do discern the Defects and Faults of their own Religions, which are so grossly against Natural Reason and Conscience, they may make enquiry of Christians, concerning their Religion, as some of the Americans did of Cortes's; and the Christians (some of them at least) however negligent they be in propagating it, would never refuse to instruct them in it. And it must be remembred, that among those who have not received the True Religion, yet many Points are taught and believed, which had their Original from Revelation, as is evident, not only of the Mahometans, but of several Heathen Nations; which Points are so many Steps and Preparatives towards the Reception of the whole Truth, if they be not wanting to themselves in pursuing them in their immediate Tendency and Consequences.

I shall not say, that the Merits of Christ, and the Salvation of the Gospel, do extend to those who die under Invincible Ignorance of it, having in the Integrity of their Hearts, lived according to the best of their Knowledge: I believe rather, that God suffers no Man so qualified and disposed, to remain in invincible Ignorance. But it is sufficient to vindicate God's Justice and Goodness, that all Nations have had such Opportunities of coming to the Knowledge of the Truth; and great Allowances may be made at the Last Day, for the Ignorance and unhappy Circumstances of particular Men. It was well said, That when God hath not thought fit to tell us how he will be pleased to deal with such Persons, it is not fit for us to tell him how he ought to deal with them. But if it be difficult for us now, to think how it will please God to deal with the Heathen; it would be a thousand times more difficult to conceive how the gracious and and merciful God could Govern and Judge the World, if all Mankind were in the state of Heathens, without any Divine Revelation.
What will become of the Heathen, as to their Eternal State, is not the Subject of this Discourse, nor doth it concern us to know; some of them will have more to plead for themselves, in point of Ignorance, than others can have; and they are in the hands of the merciful Creator and Saviour of Mankind, and there we must leave them. But it must be acknowledg'd, that it is much more agreeable to the Goodness and Mercy of God, to reveal his Will, and to give so many Opportunities to the World to be instructed in it, though never so many should neglect the Means of Salvation; than it to is suppose him to take no care to reduce Mankind to the Sense and Practice of Virtue and Religion, but to let them continue in all manner of Idolatry and Wickedness, without giving them any warning against it. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I, Isa. xlv. 19, 22. and xlviii. 16.

Having proved, that the Scriptures want nothing requisite to a Divine Revelation, in regard either of their Antiquity or Promulgation; I proceed to shew, That they have sufficient Evidence, both by Prophecies and Miracles, in proof of their Authority.

This Evidence depends upon Matter of Fact, which concerns either the Prophecies and Miracles themselves, in their several Circumstances, as we find them stand recorded; or the Lives and Personal Qualifications of those by whom they were performed, or by whom they are related in the Scriptures. For if we can be assured both that they are truly related, and that, if the Prophecies and Miracles were such as they are related to have been, they could proceed from none but a Divine Power; we have all the Evidence for the Truth of the Scriptures that can be had for a Revelation.
THAT Moses was a very Great and Wise Man, and a most ancient Law-giver, is related by several of the most eminent Heathen Writers; and I think it has never been denied by any Man. But it is no less evident, that he was likewise a very Good and Pious Man. The first Forty Years of his Life, which were spent in Honour, he passes over in Silence, mentioning nothing of his own Education, nor of his Learning, in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians, tho' this be related by St. Stephen, who also says, that he was exceeding fair, and mighty in words and in deeds, (Acts vii. 20, 22.) or renowned both for the Arts of Peace and the Glory of Arms: His Beauty and his Wisdom are likewise taken Notice of by Trogus Pompeius, as well as by Josephus, who also writes, That Moses obtained a memorable Conquest over the Ethiopians, who had over-run Egypt. And Artapanus mentions him as General of the Egyptian Forces against the Ethiopians, in a War which lasted Ten Years. However, we may be certain, that his Life in Pharaoh's Court was not such, as that he had performed nothing considerable, or which might deserve to be taken Notice of: Yet the first Thing which Moses mentions of himself, is his killing the Egyptian, Exod. ii. 12. an Action, which some have thought blamable, with little Reason indeed; but he took no Care to prevent the Censure, though St. Stephen vindicates him, by observing that he acted by a Divine Commission. For Forty Years more, he says little of him-

\[ \text{References:} \quad \text{a} \ J u l i n . \ 1 . \ 3 6 . \ c . \ 2 . \quad \text{b} \ A n t i q . \ 1 . \ 2 . \ c . \ 5 . \quad \text{c} \ A p u d \ E u f e b . \ P r æ p a r . \ E v a r . \ 1 . \ 9 . \ c . \ 2 7 . \]
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self, but that he dwelt in the Land of Midian, own there married Jethro's Daughter, by whom he had Two Sons. And when God had appeared to him in the Bush, it is said, that afterwards, the Lord met him, and sought to kill him, (Exod. iv. 24.) for having neglected to circumcise one of his Sons. Moses has left such an Account of himself, as might seem Detraction, if another had given it; so much is concealed, and so little told, but what was either really to be blamed, or might be liable to Misconstruction. He frequently declares his own Failings and Infirmities, Exod. iii. 11. and iv. 1, 10, 13. Numb. xi. 10. xx. 12. and xxvii. 14. and never speaks any Thing tending to his own Praise, but upon a just and necessary Occasion, when it might become a prudent and modest Man, especially one Divinely Inspired: For all the Praise of such an one doth not terminate in himself, but is attributed to God, whose Instrument and Servant he is; and in such Cases where God's Honour is concerned, it was a Duty to set forth the Favour and Goodness of God towards him, though some Honour did redound to himself thereby. The greatest Masters of Decency have not thought it always improper for Men to commend themselves, either because they supposed some Occasions might require it, or because it was a more usual Thing in ancient Times, when Mens Lives and Manners were more natural and sincere; and they oftner spoke as they thought both of themselves and others; yet we no where find Men speaking so freely in Disparagement of themselves, as in the Holy Scriptures: Which shews, that Moses, and the rest of the Inspired Writers, little regarded their own Praise or Dispraise, but wrote what God was pleased to appoint; it being a Thing indifferent to them, so God might be honoured, whether they lost or gained in their own Reputation by it. But what we read of Moses, Numb. xii. 3. that he was very meek above all the men which

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were upon the face of the earth, which is the only commendable Character that Moses gives of himself, may be translated, that he was the most afflicted Man, (according to the Marginal Reading;) and if he mentions his own Meekness, he mentions also his great Anger, or heat of Anger, Exod. xi. 8. and his being very wroth, Num. xvi. 15. But if Moses had not had more respect to Truth, than to his own Reputation, he would never have left it upon Record, That he so often declined the Message and Employment which God appointed him to undertake, Exod. iii. 11, 13. and iv. 1, 10, 13, 14. and that God was angry with him upon other occasions, and for that reason would not permit him to enter into the promised Land: He would certainly have ascribed Balaam's Prophecy, and Jethro's Advice, to himself; at least he would never have recorded, That by Jethro's Counsel, he took up a new and better Method for the Administration of Justice: If he had been led by Ambition and Vain-glory, he would have endeavoured by these things, to adorn his own Character; and would never have lessen'd it, by telling his own Infirmities at the same time, when, to the Diminution of himself, he publishes the Excellencies of others. The Wonders of the Magicians of Egypt are not conceal'd by him: and being to give an Account of his own Genealogy from Levi, he first sets down the Families of Reuben and Simeon, the two elder Brothers, left he might seem to arrogate too much to himself, and his own Tribe. Some have observed, that Moses relates his own Birth to have been by a Marriage contrary to the Laws afterwards by himself established: which indeed is doubtful, by reason of the Latitude of Signification in the Word Sister in the Hebrew Language, which is here taken by the Septuagint for his Cousin German, (Exod. vi. 20.) yet it is certain, he was not careful to avoid the being thought to have been born from such a Marriage, as he would have been, if his Laws
Laws had been of his own Contrivance, left his own Regulation, or the Authority of his Laws, or perhaps both, might have suffered by it, Exod. vi. 14, 20. He sets forth the Ingratitude, Idolatry, and perpetual Revolts and Murmurings of his whole Nation, and relates the Failings and Faults of their Ancestors the Patriarchs, and particularly of Levi, from whom he was descended, Gen. xxxiv. 30. and xlix. 6. He spares neither his People, nor his Ancestors, nor himself, in what he relates; and these are all the Characters of a faithful Historian, and a sincere Man, that can be desired.

And as Moses was not ambitious of Praise, so neither was he ambitious of Power and Dominion. For besides that he entered upon such an Undertaking, as no sober Man would have attempted without a Revelation, it appearing otherwise impossible to accomplish it, his whole Conduct shews, that he had no design of advancing his own Interest or Dominion. If he had been never so Ambitious, he needed not have gone into the Wilderness to seek his Preferment, amongst a wandering and stubborn People, when he had been bred up to all the Honours and the Pleasures that Egypt or Pharaoh's Court could afford: but 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 of Egypt, Heb. xi. 24, 25. He undertook to lead the People of Israel, for Forty Years, through a barren Wilderness; where he could promise himself but a very uneasie and inglorious Reign, if that had been his Design; and, by the course of Nature, he could not hope to outlive that Period of Time; and tho' he was preserved, in his old Age, in the full Strength and Vigour of Manhood; yet, upon their Entrance into the Promised Land, he meekly resigned himself to Death, in the very Sight and Borders of Canaan; knowing before-hand that
that he must not be suffered to possess the Land which he had been so many Years, in so great Dangers, leading the People of Israel to enjoy; though he doth not conceal how desirous he was to pass over Jordan, Deut. iii. 23, &c. The History of his Death is like that of his Life, related with a peculiar kind of native Simplicity: He is not said to be taken up into Heaven, as Enoch and Elijah were, and as the Romans feigned of Romulus, but to die; and his Sepulchre was hid, to prevent the Superstitious and Idolatrous Veneration which might have been paid to the Remains of so Great a Person. And tho’ he had Sons, yet they were but private Men, no otherwise known to us, than as they were his Sons; the Government he conferred upon Joshua, one of another Tribe. Moses therefore was the farthest of any Man from vain-glorious, or ambitious and aspiring Designs; and could propose no other Advantage to himself, but the fulfilling the Will of God, delivering his Commandments to the People of Israel, and following his Directions in his Conduct and Government.

Aaron was of a different Temper from Moses, and was envious of him, and both Aaron and Miriam murmured against him. It is so notorious, that there could be no Contrivance between them to deceive the People; that it was the immediate and visible Power of God which kept Aaron as well as the rest in Obedience to Moses. Upon Moses’s Absence, Aaron complied with the People, in making a Golden Calf; and his two eldest Sons offered strange Fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded; for which they were both destroyed by Fire miraculously issuing out from the Presence of the Lord: And Aaron held his peace, knowing that this Punishment was inflicted by God himself, and having nothing to reply to Moses, when he declared to him the Justice of it. And both Aaron and his other two Sons are forbidden, upon Pain of Death, to mourn for them, Lev. x. 1, 2, 3, 6.
At last, by the Commandment of God, Aaron goes up into Mount Hor, to die there, not being permitted to enter into the Land of Promise.

Thus Moses and Aaron were sometimes at Disagreement, Aaron envying Moses: Aaron lost two of his Sons, by a signal Judgment from Heaven; and Moses advanced neither of his; and both Moses and Aaron died by the particular Appointment and Command of God, for their Offences against him, never enjoying, nor, for some time before, expecting to enjoy the Land of Promise, Numb. xx. 12. Deut. i. 37. And therefore, as they could never have performed what they did, but by the Almighty Power of God; so they could have no Motive or Inducement to attempt it, but his Command and Promise of Assistance revealed to them.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Pentateuch.

As the Books entitled to Moses are confessed by all to be of the greatest Antiquity; so we have it confirmed to us by the Authority of Heathen Writers themselves, that the Books which go under his Name, are indeed of his Writing; besides the unanimous Testimony of the whole Jewish Nation, ever since Moses's Time, from the first writing of them: Which is infinitely better Proof of their being Authentic, and entitled to the true Author, than can be pretended for any Books but the Holy Scriptures. Divers Texts of the Pentateuch imply, that it was written by Moses; and the Book of Joshua, as well as other Books of Scripture, import as much; and though some Passages have been thought to imply the contra-
ry, yet this is but a late Opinion, and has been sufficiently confuted by learned Men.

It is observable, whoever wrote these Five Books, that there is no Partiality shewn to any one whomsoever. Noab is said to be overcome with Wine, and exposed to the Mockery of one of his Sons. Lot is described not only to have been drucken, but to have lain with his own Daughters. Abraham himself denies his Wife twice; and Isaac imitates him in it. Jacob gets the Blessing, by Fraud and Subtilty, from his Brother Esau. Joseph’s Brethren fell him into Egypt; and he, when he is there, learns to swear by the Life of Pharaoh. The Faults of Aaron, and of Moses himself, (as I have already observed) are not concealed. On the other side, particular Notice is taken how Melchizedeck blessed Abraham, and received Tythes of him: And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better, Heb. vii. 7. The Advice of Jethro is recorded; and the Prophecies of Balaam himself are punctually set down. It was no Design of the sacred Pen-man to write a Panegyrick upon any Man, but to represent the Failings and Infirmities, as well as the Excellencies of each Person; and to shew by what various Methods the Providence of God brought to pass his gracious Designs; how he turn’d Evil into Good, and made use even of the Infirmities and Sins of Men, to accomplish his purposes.

In the Book of Genesis, we have a short Account of the most memorable and remarkable Things, which had past, to the times of Moses; as the Creation of the World, the Institution of the Sabbath, the Fall of Man, the Promise of the Messiah, and the Custom of offering Sacrifices as Types of his Death: who first committed Murther, and who first brought in Polygamy; the Invention of divers Arts, the Flood, the Confusion of Tongues; the Original of the several Nations of the World, with the Chronology of the whole: all which is comprehended in a little Com-
pafts, but a larger and more particular Account is given of Abraham and his Family: For here the Scene begins to open to the main Design of the Work, the Book of Genesis being as an Introduction to the rest of the Pentateuch, and containing such things as were requisite to be premised. And in the beginning of the History of Abraham, it is noted, that the Canaanite was then in the Land, Gen. xii. 6. even at that very time when Abraham erected an Altar to the Lord, y 7. this being a great Encouragement to the Israelites, to excite them to follow the Example of their Father Abraham, who worshipped the True God, in a publick and solemn manner, in that Land which they were now going to possess, and amongst that People which they were now to drive out, and which, at that time when the Land was promis’d them, were the Inhabitants of it; and God, who had protected Abraham in so signal a manner, would no less assist them.

And if we consider those things particularly, where-in Moses himself is concerned as an Agent, as well as an Historian, there can be no Pretence for any Man to doubt, but that at least the principal Points of the History of Moses are true; that is, that Moses was the Governor or General of the People of Israel, who conducted them out of Egypt; that they travel’d for many Years in the Wilderness; that they fought divers Battels with the several Nations, who oppos’d their journeying into the Land of Canaan; and, that Moses gave them the Laws which we find there recorded. These are the chief Points of the History of Moses, which are, as it were, the Foundation of all the rest; the rest being but as Circumstances to shew the manner of doing it, and the Power by which all this was done. And that these main Points are true, it was never denied by those Heathens themselves who most reproached and vilify’d the Jewish Nation: They acknowledg’d that Moses was the great General and Law-giver
Law-giver of the Israelites; they owned that the Israelites came out of Egypt; they could deny nothing of the History itself, but only gave wrong Accounts, partly out of Ignorance, and partly out of Malice and Design, of the Manner and Means by which this was effected, and the Reasons and Occasions upon which it came to pass. From the Books of Josephus against Apion, in which he gives an Account of what the most ancient Authors of other Nations have delivered concerning the Jews; and from what the latter Heathens, Strabo, Tacitus, Justin, and others, after the Jews became so odious and contemptible in the Eyes of all Nations, have written; it is evident, that the great and fundamental Points, as to the Matters of Fact, are confessed; and the only Dispute is concerning the Manner in which they were brought about, and the Means whereby all was effected.

Now we take the Histories of all other Nations, rather from themselves, than from Foreigners and Strangers to their Affairs, or profess'd Enemies; and it were extreme Partiality to admit the Accounts we have of the Jewish Affairs, from Authors who lived so much too late to have any certain Information of the Things they write about, and who, upon every Occasion, shew such Disaffection to their Name and Nation, and contradict each other, and themselves too, as Josephus shews; it would, I say, be notorious Partiality to follow such Authors, rather than credit the Jewish Records attested and delivered down to us by the unanimous Approbation and Testimony of the whole Nation.

And when I come to consider the Miracles wrought by Moses, I shall prove, that they were of that Nature, and performed in such a Manner, as that they could not be feign'd or counterfeit at first, nor the Account given of them in the Pentateuch falsified afterwards; and therefore these Five Books of Moses must be genuine,
nuine, and of divine Authority, being written by him who had so many ways given Evidence of his divine Commission.

CHAP. V.

Of the Predictions or Prophecies contained in the Books of Moses.

It was foretold by God himself, upon the Fall of our First Parents, That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15. *Maimonides* is observ'd to take particular Notice, that it was the Seed of the Woman, and not of the Man; and the Jews, in their Targums, are observ'd to apply this Text to the Messiah, which was fulfill'd in our Saviour Christ, who was born of a Woman, that was a Virgin, and had no Man to his Father: And therefore this Prediction, express'd thus precisely concerning the Seed of the Woman, could be fulfill'd in no other Person; and no other Person ever gain'd such Victories over the Enemy of Mankind, who had so long tyrannized over the Sons of Men. God reveal'd the precise Time of the Flood to Noah; who thereupon built an Ark, and foretold the Destruction of the World to that wicked Generation, and was a Preacher of Righteousness and Repentance to them, Gen. vi. 3. After the Flood, Noah, by a Prophetick Spirit, foretold the Fate and Condition of the Posterity of his three Sons, Gen. ix. 25. That Canaan should be Servant to Shem; which was accomplish'd, when the Children of Israel, the Posterity of Shem, subdued the Canaanites, and posses's'd their Land, about Eight hundred Years after this Prophecy: That Japhet should dwell in the Tents

of Shem; which was fulfill'd in the Greeks and Romans, descended from Japhet, when they conquer'd Asia: That Canaan should likewise be the Servant of Japhet, as well as of Shem. Upon which Mr. Mede observes, b that the Posterity of Cham never subdued the Children either of Japhet, or of Shem; tho' Shem hath subdued Japhet, and Japhet hath conquer'd Shem: which made c Hannibal, descended from Canaan, cry out, with Amazement of Soul, Agnosco fatum Carthagina.

God promiseth Abraham a Son, in his old Age, by Sarah his Wife, who was likewise of a great Age; and declares, that his Posterity, by this Son, should be exceeding numerous; that they should inherit the Land of Canaan, after they had been afflicted in a strange Land Four hundred Years, Gen. xv. 13. and that then they should come out of that Land with great substance; but that God would judge the Nation that had oppress'd them; or, that he would procure their Deliverance, by signal Judgments upon their Oppressors; and that in the fourth Generation they should be brought back again to the Land of Promise, v 16. (the Bounds whereof are described, v 18.) which agrees exactly with the Deliverance of the Children of Israel our of Egypt, computing the Years from the time that the Promise was made to Abraham, (Exod. xii. 40. (Gal. iii. 17.) and reckoning the Four Generations to be betwixt Isaac the Son promis'd to Abraham; and Moses, in whom the Prediction was fulfilled. Or, if we reckon, as divers d Rabbins do, from the time when the Children of Israel came into Egypt, from Levi to Moses, and from Judah to Caleb, were Four Generations inclusively. And whereas in our Translation we read, the Children of Israel went up harnessed, or five in a rank, out of the Land of Egypt, Exod. xiii. 18. in the Septuagint Version it is render'd,

They went out of Egypt in the Fifth Generation, including the Children of the Fifth Generation, whose Parents were the Fourth. In like manner the Olym-piad was styled πενταετης, not because it consisted of Five Years, but because it returned every fifth Year. And when the Intercalation was made every third Year, the intermediate Space of Time was called τετετετης. Or, if we compute from the First Generation born in Egypt, Moses and Aaron were of the Third Generation, and their Children of the Fourth entered in the Promiss'd Land. To compute from the Fourth Generation of the Amorites, may seem precarious; because we have no other means to know the Number of their Generations, that by an Estimate made from the Generations of the Hebrews. But whatever way we compute the Generations which we find recorded of the Hebrews; the Prophecy was certainly fulfilled. This Promise made to Abraham and his Seed, was renewed several times, and repeated again to him, and to Isaac and Jacob, Gen. xxvi. 3. and xxviii. 14. and was all along depended upon by the Israelites. God foretold of Abraham, That all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him, Gen. xviii. 18. which was fulfilled, in that God made Abraham’s Posterity his Messengers to communicate his Will to the rest of Mankind, and more especially in that Blessing which all Nations received in the Birth of Christ. This is a remarkable Prophecy concerning the greatest of Blessings, and is often repeated. The Blessing promised to Abraham for Ishmael, was no less punctually

fulfill'd: And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve Princes shall be beget, and I will make him a great Nation, Gen. xvi. 20. fulfilled, Gen. xxv. 12. 1 Chron. i. 29.

The Prophecy of Isaac, concerning Esau and Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 40. First, That the Poffertiy of Esau should serve Jacob's Poffertiy, was fulfill'd, in David's Victories over the Edomites, 2 Sam. viii. 14. 1 Kings xi. 15. 1 Chron. xviii. 13. and by Amaziah, 2 Kings xiv. 7. and then that part of it, That the Edomites should break the yoke from off their neck, was accomplished, 2 Kings viii. 20. 2 Chron. xxi. 8. Joseph's own Dream, and his Interpretation of the Dream of Pharaoh, when none of the Magicians or Wise Men of Egypt were able to interpret it, had remarkable and publick Circumstances, that could neither be mistaken nor forgotten in the Accomplishment. Jacob prefers Ephraim the younger Son of Joseph, before his elder Brother Manasseh, and foretells, that tho' Manasseh should be great, yet Ephraim should be greater than be, and his seed should become a multitude of nations, Gen. xlvi. 19. Accordingly we find, that after the Division of the Ten Tribes under Jeroboam an Ephrathite, those Tribes were denominated from Ephraim, as the two remaining Tribes had their Denomination from Judah; and the Royal Seat of the Kings of Israel was at Samaria, in the Tribe of Ephraim. Jacob afterwards describes the Borders of their several Poffessions in the Land of Canaan, tho' it were so many Years after divided among the Tribes by Lot, Gen. xlix. 13. He foretold the different State and Condition of the rest of his Sons; and particularly prophesied, That Judah should become very honourable among his Brethren, and victorious over his enemies; and that the sceptre should not depart from Judah unto Shilo came, i.e. until the Messiah came, as the Jewish Targums explain it. And upon the fulfilling of this and other Prophecies in the Penta-
tateuch, not only the Jews, but the Samaritans, who received no other Prophecies as they did these, expect-ed the Messiah at the Time in which our Saviour ap-pear'd in the World; and believ'd on him, because they saw the Prophecies fulfill'd in Him, Job. iv. 25, 29, 39, 42. Joseph took an oath of the Children of Isra-el, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence, Gen. i. 25. Which they did ac-cordingly, Exod. xiii. 19. Jacob had defir'd to be burried in the Land of Canaan; insomuch that he caus'd Joseph to swear to him, that he would bury him there, and not in Egypt; and Joseph and his Brethren went into Canaan to bury their Father, because that was the Land where Abraham and Isaac had been buried, and the Land which their Posterity was afterwards to posses: But Joseph, as a farther Token of Assurance to the Israelites, that they should inherit that Land, would not have his own Corpse carry'd thither, at his Death, but order'd his Bones to be kept, and carry'd up by their Posterity, at their leaving Egypt; and in the mean time, they were a perpetual Monument and Representa-tion to them of the Promise made to their Fore-fathers, and a Ground and Motive for their Trust and Confi-dence in God for the Accomplishment of it.

The Remembrance of Balaam's Prophecy was preferv'd in the East; and the Wise Men, upon the Ap-pearance of the Star, knowing it to be fulfill'd, came to Jerusalem, to enquire where they might find the King of the Jews, then newly born, Numb. xxiv. 15. Matt. ii. 2. He prophesied likewise of Agag by Name, saying of Israel, And his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted, Numb. xxiv. 7. Thereby foretelling the Government of Isra-el by Kings, and the Destruction of Agag by Saul; who being the first King that ever Israel had, overcame Agag King of the Amalekites, 1 Sam. xv. 8. The
fame Balaam foretold the Conquest of Alexander, in these Words, And ships shall come from the coasts of Chittim, and shall afflict Ashur, Num. xxiv. 24. By the Coasts of Chittim, are to be understood the Coasts of Greece, from whence Alexander's Army was transported into Asia; for Alexander came out of the Land of Chittim, or Chittim, 1 Mac. i. i. And Perseus was King of the Citiims, or Macedonians, chap. viii. 5. He foretold the Fate of the Moabites, the Edomites, the Kenites, and the Amalekites; and the Conquest of the Assyrians, as well as the Success and Victories of the Israelites, Num. xxiv. 17. These several Prophecies we have recorded in the Books of Moses, and ascribed to others; and the last, containing so many remarkable things, is from the Mouth of an Enemy.

Moses himself foretold, That the Children of Israel should, after Forty Years, come into the Land of Promise; That they should prove Victorious over the Canaanites; and, That their Country should, by the Divine Care and Protection, be preserv'd in safety, whilst they went up to worship at Jerusalem, thrice every Year: 

_Trice in the year shall all your Men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel: For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the, Lord thy God, thrice in the Year, Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24._

Here is the Promise of a constant Miracle to be fulfill'd to the Israelites thrice every Year, as long as their Government stood: All their Males were to go up to Jerusalem, at three set and known times, every Year; and yet their Enemies round about them, whom they had so many ways provok'd, were, by the Almighty Power of God, restrain'd from taking any Advantage of this Opportunity, which was frequently and notoriously given them, of invading their Country. The very Nature and Constitution of the Jewish Worship, made it impossible for their Government to
to sublift in the Observation of their Religion, without a Miracle wrought three times a Year for their Preservation. And the fulfilling of this Promise, which God had made to them by Mofes, and the preserving of them in the performance of that Worship which he had appointed them, was a continual Confirmation of his Law, and a repeated Assurance that it was from God. That they returned to Jerusalem every Year to solemnize these three Festivals, we may observe from the Scriptures of the New Testament. And Josephus witnesses, that to the time of the Destruction of Jerusalem, they left their Habitations, and went thither at these solemn Seasons: But God, for their heinous Wickedness, having withdrawn his Protection, that which was wont to be the City of Refuge and Security, was the Place of their Ruin and Extirpation.

By the Law of Mofes likewise, every Seventh Year they were permitted neither to sow their Land, nor to prune their Vineyards, nor to gather any Corn or Fruits that grew of their own accord: Which was a Law that must have brought them under great Extremities; and the Observation of it had been impracticable, if the extraordinary and miraculous Blessing of God had not supplied this constant want of the Seventh Year’s Product, with as constant an Overplus in the preceding Year. For as God, by Mofes, foretold, That on the Sixth Day there should fall Manna enough to supply them on the Sabbath-Day; so they had a Promise of Three Years Fruits precisely every Sixth Year, to supply that Want to which the Sabbatical Year must otherwise have reduced them: And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh Year? Be bold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our encrease: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth Year, and it shall bring forth Fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit, until

8 Jos. de Bell. Jud. l. 2. c. 21, 23. l. 7. c. 17.
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The ninth year; until her fruits come in, ye shall eat of the old store, Lev. xxv. 20, 21, 22. Which is another clear Instance, that the People of Israel could never have subsisted in the Observation of their Law, but by the constant and miraculous Accomplishment of the Prophecies, which contain’d the Promises made to them for their Preservation. But for their Distrust of the Divine Protection, in the Violation of this Law, they were to be punished with Captivity, Lev. xxvi. 34. And the Time of the Captivity in Babylon was, till the land had enjoyed her sabbaths, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. In Consideration of this Law, the Tribute of every Seventh Year was remitted to the Jews, by Alexander the Great, and by the Roman Emperors. The Observation of the Sabbatical Years was continued to the Time of Herod, who, in the third Year of his Reign, made his Advantage of it, in possessing himself of Jerusalem; God, for their Sins, as he sometimes punished’ d his People with Famine, then suffering them, in the Sabbatical Year, to have a Scarcity of Provisions, that Herod their King might rule over them; that they might from thence learn, that the Sceptre was to depart from Judah.

Moses, by God’s express Command, denounced this Judgment upon the murmuring Israelites, that all of them should die in the Wilderness, that their Children should wander there Forty Years; and that at the end of that Term of Years, they should be put into Possession of the Promised Land: Say unto them, As truly as I live, faith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcases shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless, ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones,
which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised; but as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness, and your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years.  
Numb. xiv. 28. Nothing can be more express and particular than this Prediction, and nothing was ever more exactly fulfilled. At the end of Forty Years, there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun, chap. xxvi. 65. In Blessing the Twelve Tribes of Israel he foretold the peculiar State and Condition of every distinct Tribe, and as Jacob had done, he foretold the Pre-eminence of Ephraim above Manasseh; they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh, Deut. xxxiii. 17. He foretold to them all in general, that they should have miraculous Success against the Canaanites; That they should possess themselves of their Land; That they should set Kings over them; That they should have a peculiar Place of Worship, whither they should all resort; and that they should have the Divine Oracles, and a Succession of Prophets, for their Direction in all Matters of great Importance and Difficulty. And Joshua appeals to the Experience of the Children of Israel, whether all had not been fulfilled which was promised, as far as his Time; And be bold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof, Josh. xxiii. 14. The Extent of the Dominions of the Children of Israel, after they came to be settled in the Land of Canaan, is foretold, Exod. xxiii. 31. Deut. xi. 24. and fulfilled, 2 Sam. viii. 3. Ezra iv. 20. And Solomon, at the Dedication of the Temple, declared in the Audience of all the People, That there had not failed one word of all God's good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant, 1 Kings viii. 56.
Moses also foretold, that besides a constant Succession of Prophets, for many Ages, there should arise a Prophet of extraordinary Power and Authority; and whosoever would not hear that Prophet, should be destroyed, Deut. xviii. 18. This Prophet was the great Expectation of the Jews, at the time of our Saviour’s coming, Joh. i. 21. vi. 14. vii. 40. And the Apostles prove our Saviour to be him, Acts iii. 22. vii. 37. Lastly, Moses foretold the Disobedience and the Revolt of the Children of Israel, the Judgments that should befall them for their Iniquities, and their Deliverance upon their Repentance: He foretold so many Years before they had any King, That they, and their King whom they would set over them, should be carried into Captivity; and that at the same time, when they were taken Captive by the Assyrians, who are described in the very same Words that the other Prophets use concerning them, the remainder should be carried into Egypt, Deut. xxviii. 36, 49, 50, 68. And we see it came accordingly to pass, Jer. xliii. Their Cities were to be laid waste, and their Sanctuaries brought to Desolation, Levit. xxvi. 31. And the Siege of Samaria by the Assyrians, and of Jerusalem both by them and the Romans, is particularly described to the very Circumstance of their eating the Flesh of their Sons, and of their Daughters, Deut. xxviii. 53. Which was before threatened, Lev. xxvi. 29. And is here again repeated, that it might be the more taken notice of. It was again foretold by Jeremiah, the time approaching when it was to be fulfilled, Jer. xix. 9. And is a thing that has scarce ever happened in any other Siege but those of Samaria and of Jerusalem, Lam. ii. 20, and iv. 10. Bar. ii. 3. 2 Kings vi. 29. This monstrous and dreadful thing was twice known in Jerusalem; first, when it was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar; and again, when it was destroyed by the Romans under

* Joseph. de Bell. Judaic. l. 7. c. 8.

Titus:
Titus: Such a Circumstance could not be foretold so long before, but by a Divine Prevision; and that so strange and unnatural a thing should befall the Children of Israel three several times, according to the express Words of a Prophecy, could have nothing of Chance in it.

Thus we see, that besides the Prophecies concerning the other Nations of the Earth, every State and Condition of the People of Israel, from their first Original, to the Destruction of Jerusalem, was the perpetual fulfilling of express Prophecies contained in the Books of Moses.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Miracles wrought by Moses.

If it be once proved, That Moses did what is related of him in the Pentateuch; it will unavoidably follow, That he did it by a Divine Power, and that he was God's Servant and Minister; and that therefore whatsoever he did or wrote, as by his Direction and Command, was really so. For if there ever were or can be any such thing as a Miracle, it must be confessed, that the Works performed by Moses were such; and therefore the only Enquiry will be, Whether they were really performed by Him: since it is absurd to think, that God may not, upon great Reasons, alter the course of Nature.

And I shall undertake to prove, supposing only that there was such a Man as Moses, and that the Jewish Law was given by him, That it is of Divine Authority, and stands confirmed by all the Miracles which are related in the Pentateuch, to have been wrought by Moses. And that there was such a Man, and
and that he delivered the Law to the Israelites, is affirmed by the best Heathen Authors, as Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and others; and was never yet, that I have heard of, questioned by any Man: For those who will not acknowledge that Moses wrote the Books which contain it, yet confess, that the Law itself was of his prescribing. But if it should be questioned, whether there ever was such a Man, who gave them their Law; how absurd is it to imagine, that a new and burthensome Law, which at first was so very uneasy to them, and for which nothing but a full Persuasion of its Divine Authority, could ever have made them so zealous, should be received by any Nation, merely upon a feigned and groundless Report, that Moses had, at some time or other, delivered it, in such a Manner, and in such Circumstances, if there never had been such a Man, or such a Law-giver in the World? Could any one, or more Men, persuade a whole Nation to this? Or could a whole Nation conspire to deceive their Posterity with a Belief of it? What mighty Charm could there be in a Name never heard of before, and in a Story newly invented, that a whole Nation should presently grow fond of it? They must consider Humane Nature very little, who can fancy any Thing so unnatural.

I shall therefore take it for granted, that there was such a Man as Moses, and that the Jewish Law was given by him: And if it be once proved, that the Matters of Fact, or Miracles related of him, were indeed performed, as they are related to have been; no rational Man can doubt but that they were brought to pass by an Almighty Power. I shall now therefore consider the History of the Jews barely as National Records, not as written by an Inspired Author: For it will appear from them, considered only as an Account of Matter of Fact, that Moses was a Person inspired and assisted by God, and both wrote and did all-
of the Christian Religion. 153

all by God's express Will and Appointment. And if we question the Authority of the Books of Moses in this Matter, when they are considered but as National Records, it must be upon one of these Accounts; Either, 1. Because the Matters of Fact contained in them, as they are there related to have been done, were not at first sufficiently attested. Or, 2. Because the Records themselves are feigned, and therefore the Relations there set down, are not to be depended upon. For if the Miracles be sufficiently attested, supposing the Truth of the History; then, if the History be true, the Miracles must be so too.

1. The Miracles and Matters of Fact contained in the Book of Moses, as they are there related to have been done, were at first sufficiently attested. The Permission of Polygamy amongst the Israelites, for the Increase of that People; the peculiar Fruitfulness of the Climate of Ægypt, where the Women are observed to bring forth often two or three, sometimes more Children at a Birth; the long Lives of Mankind, in those Ages; and above all, the Promise of God made to Abraham, That he would bless and multiply his Posterity in Isaac's Line, Gen. xxii. 17. caused the Children of Israel to be exceeding numerous, in a few Generations after they came into Ægypt: A Syrian ready to perish was their father; and he went down into Ægypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty and populous, Deut. xxvi. 5. The fighting Men, from twenty Years old and upward, that were numbered in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the second Year after they came out of the Land of Ægypt, were Six hundred thousand, and three Thousand and five hundred and fifty, besides the Tribe of Levi, Numb. i. 1, 46, 47. And the Males of the Levites that were numbered, from Thirty Years old to Fifty, were Eight

1 Columell. de Re Rust. l. 3. c. 8. Plin. Hist. l. 7. c. 3. Aul. Gell. l. 10. c. 2.
thousand and five hundred and fourscore, Num. iv. 47, 48. And the number of Males from Twenty Years old and upwards, which was taken in the Plains of Moab, was Six hundred thousand, and a thousand seven hundred and thirty, besides the Levites; and those that were numbered of them, were Twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upwards, and not a man of these were numbered before in the wilderness of Sinai, chap. xxvi. 51, 62, 64. And those of the other Sex must be supposed to have been about the same number, when both these Accounts were taken: In all, reckoning Men, Women, and Children, and Servants, the Number is computed at Three Millions.

And all this People, the Parents, and the Children, who, as they died, grew up in their stead, were conducted, for Forty Years together, by a constant course of Miracles wrought continually in their sight. God took him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terroirs, Deut. iv. 34. They could not be ignorant, whether they were Miracles wrought to procure their Deliverance out of Egypt; these were publick and notorious both to the Israelites and the Egyptians. The Magicians were not able to do the like with their Inchantments, but were forced to confess, This is the finger of God, Exod. viii. 19. And they were of that nature, and of such mighty consequence, that they could not fail of being particularly taken notice of, when two Nations were so much concerned in the Effects and Events of them. The Children of Israel had been Witenesses of Ten Plagues inflicted successively upon the Egyptians, in the most remarkable manner that can be conceived, to procure their Deliverance; and when Pharaoh pursued them, as they were going away, it was impossible for them, to escape from him but by Miracle; the People were in the greatest Consternation, they wished themselves again in Egypt, and
and made such Expostulations with Moses as it was natural for Men in that condition to make, and such as shewed, that, upon the first opportunity, they would have been ready to deliver up Moses, to secure themselves, and make their Peace with Pharaoh: And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness, Exod. xiv. 11, 12. But the Israelites were purposely brought into this Distress, by God's express Will and Command, that he might get him honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen, v 17. And the Sea being divided at Moses's lifting up his Rod, the Children of Israel went in the midst of it upon dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on the right hand, and on the left, v 22. And could they be ignorant whether they walked in the Water, or upon dry Land? Whether they were the Men that had escaped, or whether they had been all drowned? The Words are express, that the Waters were on both sides of them, in their Passage, and that they were separated to make way for them; which could not fall out by any ebbing of the Sea, for then they would have had Water but on one side of them: whereas now the Waters stood equally on both hands: The floods stood upright, as an heap, and the depths were congeal'd in the heart of the sea, Exod. xv. 8. And nothing can be supposed more absurd, than it is to imagine, that neither the Egyptians nor the Israelites should understand the Nature of the Red-Sea, but that the Course of the Tide should be known only to Moses. "There is no Man of Judgment, says a

\[\text{Sir W. Raleigh, Pt. i. 1. 2. c. 3. § 9.}\]
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very judicious Writer, that can think that Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who then excell'd all Nations in the Observations of the Heavenly Motions, could be ignorant of the Fluxes and Refluxes of the Sea, in his own Country, on his own Coasts, and in his own most traded and frequented Ports and Havens; and wherein his People having had so many Hundreds of Years Experience of the Tides, he could not be caught, as he was, through Ignorance, nor by any foreknown or natural Accident, but by God's powerful Hand only. If Moses had taken the Advantage and Opportunity of the Tide, he must have left all that End of the Red-Sea towards Sues on his Left-hand, dry and uncover'd, and when Pharaoh found the Flood encreasing, he might in his Return have gone before the Tide on his Right-hand. Those Words of the Scriptures, that God caused the Sea to run back by a strong East wind, do rather prove the Miracle, than that thereby was caus'd an Ebb more than ordinary: For that Sea did not lie East and West, but in Effect North and South, and it must have been a West and North-West Wind, that must have driven those Waters away through their proper Channels, and to the South-East into the Sea. But the East-Wind blew athwart the Sea, and cut it asunder, so as one part fell back towards the South, and main Body thereof; the other part remained towards Sues and the North: Which being unknown to Pharaoh, while he was check'd by that Sea, which used in all Times before to ebb away, the Flood press'd him and overwhelm'd him.

At the giving of the Law, the whole People of Israel had Warning given them three Days before, that they might sanctify and prepare themselves to make their Appearance before the Lord: All the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and beheld the Mountain smoking: And the Lord spake, in the Audience of the whole Assembly,
the Words of the Ten Commandments; and they were struck with such a Terror, that they removed and stood afar off, and desired Moses that he would acquaint them with what God should be pleased to give him in Command concerning them, that they might no longer hear God speaking to them, lest they should die, Exod. xx. 18. Deut. v. 22. The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys, Exod. xl. 38. Whether it were two days, or a month, or a year that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not, but when it was taken up, they journeyed, Numb. ix. 22. From the Time of their Escape out of Egypt, the Pillar of the Cloud by day, and the Pillar of Fire by night; the Manna with which they were fed, during the whole Time of their journeying in the Wilderness, till the very Day after they had eaten of the corn of the land of Canaan, Exod. xvi. 35. Josh. v. 12. And their Garments lasting for so long a Time, without any Decay, Deut. xxix. 5. These were constant and perpetual Miracles for forty Years together; and it is the most impossible Thing in the World to suppose, that a People consisting of so many Hundred Thousands, should for so long a time be imposed upon in Things of this Nature: Their Eyes, and Taste, and all their Senses were Witnesses, that they were conducted and fed and clothed by Miracle, for forty Years together.

Indeed, it was impossible to lead so great a Multitude, through a vast and barren Wilderness, by so long and tedious Journeys, without the Help of Miracles. If they had been under no other Distress but Want of Food, in so barren a Place, it had been impossible for any Number of Men, and much more for so vast a Multitude, to subsist for any time, without a Miracle: But they were fed with Manna from Heaven; not with such as the Manna is which is now any
where to be found, which is a kind of Honey-dew; but with *Manna* which was fit for Nourishment, not for Physick, and so hard as to be ground in Mills, and beaten in Mortars, and baked in Pans; *Num.* xi. 8. And yet it was melted by the Sun, and bred Worms and stunk, if it were kept but one Night, except it were on the Night before the *Sabbath*, though again, when it was to be preserved for a Memorial to future Generations, nothing was more lasting; and it fell on every Day of the Week but the *Sabbath*. The Manna therefore which is now, of what sort forever it be, is of a quite different Nature from this Miraculous *Manna*, (tho' it have its Name from it) as a learned Physician* has proved. But if the Manna in it self had been natural and common Manna; yet that it should have Qualities which no other Manna ever had, that its Fall should be constant, as Moses foretold, but with as constant Intermission upon one particular Day every Week, according to his Prediction; this could not be without a manifest Miracle: Thus the Water flowing from the Rock was like other Water, but the manner of producing it was evidently miraculous. Their *Water* was as miraculous as their Food, and their *Cloathing* as either; neither their *Raiment decay'd*, nor their *Bread* and *Water fail'd*, 'till they arrived in the *Promised Land*.

The March of the *Greek Army* out of *Asia*, under the Conduct of *Xenophon*, after the Death of *Cyrus*, is look'd upon as a thing scarce to be equalled in all human Story, tho' that whole Expedition was but for one Year, and three Months; and the Difficulties they met with were nothing, in comparison of those that beset the *Israelites* on every side, in that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, *Deut.* viii. 15. *A land of desarts*,

*Jo. Chryf. Magnen. de Manna, c. 2.*

and
and of pits, of drought, and of the shadow of death; a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt, Jer. ii. 6. Nothing but a Power of Miracles could have sustained them; and nothing but the Sense of it could have kept them within any Bounds of Duty and Obedience.

We see how froward and rebellious they were upon all occasions, notwithstanding the wonderful Power and Presence of God continually manifest amongst them; they would have been content with the Egyptian Slavery, and the Egyptian Gods too, rather than endure the Hardships of the Wilderness. Moses complains, that they were almost ready to stone him, Exod. xvii. 4. And out of despondency, pray’d, that God would kill him out of hand, rather than lay so great a Burthen upon him: And Moses said, The people amongst whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen: and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? Num. xi. 15, 21, 22. Whoever can believe, that Moses, by his own Skill and Management, could lead such a Multitude through such a Wilderness, so many Years Journey, can, it seems, believe any thing rather than the Scriptures; for this is one of the most incredible things that can be conceived; but it is not in the least incredible, that he might do it by the Divine Power and Assistance.

The Children of Israel tempted God ten times, by their Murmurings, and their Distrust of his Power and care over them, Num. xiv. 22. For which, many of them were punished with Death; ’till at last, the whole Number of Men that were Twenty Years old and upwards, had this Judgment denounced against them, That, for their Murmurings, but two of them, by Name Caleb the Son of Jephuneth, and Joshua the Son of Nun, should be suffer’d to enter into the Promised Land, and the rest should all die in the Wilderness;
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nefs; but that after Forty Years wandering in the Wild
derness, their Children should be brought in to pos-
sefs it: I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all
this evil congregation, that are gathered together against
me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there
shall they die, Num. xiv. 35. And the Men who were
sent out to search the Land, and brought the evil Re-
port upon it, died forthwith by the plague, before the
Lord, v 37. And these Men were the Heads of the
Children of Israel, a Man of every Tribe being chosen
out, every one a Ruler amongst them, chap. xiii. 2, 3.
And but two of them agreed in giving the true Ac-
count of the Land; so great an Aversion they had to
proceed any farther in their Way thither: And all the
congregation lifted up their voice and cried: and the peo-
ple wept that night. And all the children of Israel mur-
mured against Moses, and against Aaron: and the whole
congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died
in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this
wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto
this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our
children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to re-
turn into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us
make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. And all
the Congregation were forstoning Joshua and Caleb,
if they had not been hindered by the glory of the Lord
appearing in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all
the children of Israel, Numb. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10. Now,
upon so general a Defection, to pronounce perempto-
arily, that but Two by Name, of so many Thousands
should inherit the Land of Promise, and that all the
rest should die in that very Wilderness which they
complained so much of; and that no less than Forty
Years were to be spent in that wandering Condition,
of which they were already so weary: This is such
a Method of quelling so general a Discontent and
Mutiny, as never was heard of before nor since, and
which could proceed from nothing less than a Wisdom
and
and Authority which could check and control the most combined and inveterate Perversities of Men; and a Power which struck the Spreaders of this false Report with immediate Death, before their Eyes, for an Example of that Vengeance which they must all expect would fall upon them, sooner or later, within the Space of Forty Years. So that hereby was taken off all Prospect of Advantage, and all Hopes of any Reward for what they now with so much Regret and Impatience underwent; and from henceforth they were led merely by Conviction of the Divine Power and Presence amongst them, and of the Terrors of those Judgments, which, in all Revolts, seized upon the Disobedient. And now being restless and uneasy in their present Condition, and past all Hopes of remedying it, like desperate Men, they were, upon every little Occasion, thrown into violent Commotions; but were as soon controlled and appeased by visible Judgments upon the chief Authors of them.

For when we read, soon after, that a Rebellion was rais'd against Moses, by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; God gave such evident Tokens of that Authority which he had invested him withal, and so signally manifested, that what he had done amongst them, was by his Power and Commission, that it was impossible for any of them to be deceived in it, or to doubt of it. Though the Truth of it is, they had never from the very first doubted of God's Power amongst them, but were acted now with a Spirit of Rage and Despair, like the Men described by the Prophet, fretting themselves, and cursing their king, and their God, and looking upwards, Isa. viii. 21. Korah, of the Tribe of Levi; and Dathan, and Abiram, and On, of the Tribe of Reuben, being Principal and Leading Men of these two Tribes, with Two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown, gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron, charging them, That they took too much upon them. And
to clear himself of this Accusation, *Moses* implore God to vindicate his Innocency, before all the People; and, by Agreement, *Korah* and *Aaron* appear'd before the Lord, with Censers in their Hands, and Two hundred and fifty Men besides, with their Censers likewise. *Korah*, at the Time appointed, gathered all the Congregation against *Moses* and *Aaron*, unto the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. So that here was the most solemn Appearance of the whole People, who had entertained great Jealousies against *Moses* and *Aaron*, and were now met together, to see whether they could give sufficient Proof of their Authority, which they challenged over them. The Time and Place was appointed, and they came inclined and prepared to receive any farther ill Impressions concerning *Moses* and *Aaron*, if they could not have made out their Pretenensions, in the most remarkable and astonishng Manner, to the utter Confusion of all their Enemies. First, the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation; and then *Moses*, at God's Command, charges the Congregation to depart from the Tabernacles of *Korah*, *Daiban*, and *Abiram*, and declares, *Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works: for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visitied after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.* And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto *Korah*, and all their goods: they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. *And all Israel that were*.
were round about them, fled at the cry of them: for they said, Left the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense, Numb. xvi.

Thus Moses vindicated himself, and proved his Divine Mission and Authority in such a Manner, as it was impossible but that the whole People of Israel must be convinced of it: They were very suspicious and jealous of him, tho' they had had so much Experience of his Favour with God, and of all his mighty Works done in the midst of them: But when this dreadful Vengeance fell upon his Enemies, before the whole Congregation, who were met together on purpose to see whether God would declare himself for him; when the Earth divided itself to swallow some of these Men, and a Fire from Heaven devoured others, there was not a Man of all the Congregation but must be an Eye-witness to this Judgment; and there could be no Deceit nor Mistake in a Thing of this Nature: For Men may as well doubt, whether those whom they see live, are alive, as whether those whom they see taken away by so terrible and so visible a Death, are dead; and unless they can know this, there can be no Knowledge nor Proof of any Thing. They saw the Earth first divide itself, and then close itself again upon these wicked Men; they saw them go down alive into the Pit; they heard the Cry of them, and fled away for Fear: And they saw besides a Fire from the Lord consume no fewer than Two hundred and fifty Men, and these the Men that offer'd Incense, in Opposition to Aaron; Princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown, whose Death was very remarkable, upon the account of their Persons, as well as for the Manner of it. So many Men of that Rank and Character being taken away at once, was a Thing that would have been much observed, and strictly enquired into, if they had fallen by any other Death: But their dying in this Manner, was
so wonderful, and so plain a Declaration of the Divine Justice, that it could neither be unknown nor forgotten by any Man in the whole Congregation.

Yet their Discontents against Mofes still continued; for he and Aaron were charged with killing the people of the Lord, v. 41. and the congregation was gathered against Mofes and against Aaron: And behold, the cloud covered the tabernacle of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord appeared. And God’s Wrath was so hot against the People, for their Stubbornness and Disobedience, that notwithstanding the Intercession of Mofes and Aaron in their behalf, a Plague from the Lord raged so much amongst them, that they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the matter of Korah, v. 49. And there were, probably, many Families in every Tribe, which bore the Marks of God’s Displeasure, and of the Truth of Mofes his Mission: and then Aaron’s Rod alone blossomed, of all the Rods of the Twelve Tribes: But by this time the People were weary of their contumacy, and cried out, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish: Shall we be consumed with dying? Num. xvii. 12, 13. And thus was an end put to a Sedition, which was the greatest and the most dangerous, as Josephus well observes, that was ever known among any People; and such, as that so dreadful a Succession of Miracles was necessary to deliver Mofes out of it. I would know of the greatest Infidel, whether if he had lived at that time, and had been in the Wilderness with Mofes, and had been of Korah’s Conspiracy, (as it is most likely he would have been) I would know of him, I say, whether he could have done any thing more, to put Mofes upon the utmost Trial of his Power and Authority received from God, than these rebellious Israelites did? And if he could not, (as he must needs confess he could not) then he ought to be satisfied in the Authority of Mofes, as they themselves afterwards were, unless he has an Ambi-

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bition to shew, that some Christians can be more refractory than Jews.

Yet again, when they wanted Water, the People quarrel'd with Moses, and said, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord. And Moses brought Water out of the Rock, before the whole Congregation, in so great Plenty, that the whole People and their Cattel, just ready to perish with Thirst, were satisfied with it, Numb. xx. 3, 10. At another time, after a signal Victory over the Canaanites, they made the same Complaints again; and for their Murmurings, were stung by fiery Serpents, and many died; till a Brazen Serpent being erected, as many as looked on it, were miraculously cured, Numb. xxii. 6.

And if the delivering the Law in so conspicuous and wonderful a Manner; if so remarkable Judgments upon those that questioned and opposed Moses's Authority, and that transgressed his Law, by committing Idolatry; if a continual Course of Miracles, for Forty Years, done before the Eyes, and obvious to every Sense of so many thousands of People, be not a plain Demonstration, that the Matter of Fact, in all the Circumstances of it necessary to prove Moses to have acted by God's immediate Authority and Commission, was at first sufficiently attested; it is impossible that any Thing can be certainly testified.

We see how impossible it was for Moses to impose upon the People of Israel in Things of this Nature; if he could have been so far forsaken of all Reason and common Sense, as to hope to do it. But if he had defigned to put any Deceit upon them, he would certainly have taken another Course; he would have done his Miracles privately, and but seldom, not in the midst of all the People, for forty Years together: He would never have made two Nations, at the first, Witnesses to them; and then have proceeded in such a Manner, as that every Man among the Israelites must have known them to be false, if they had been;
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fo; he would have chosen such Instances to shew his Miracles in, as should have provoked no body; not such as must have enraged the whole People against him, by the death of so many thousands, so often put to death, if they had been slain by any other means than by the Almighty Hand of God. And indeed, what could destroy so many, so irresistibly, so suddenly and visibly, but the Divine Power? And what could be the Design and Intent of such Miracles, but to fulfil the Will of God, and make his Power to be known, and his Authority acknowledged, in the Laws which were delivered in his Name, and which were so often affronted and transgressed by these Sinners, against their own Souls? At their going out of Egypt, by a miraculous Providence, there was not one feeble Person among their tribes; but upon their Transgressions, they were punished by Diseases as miraculous.

We have other Evidence (as I have before observed) that Moses had no design to delude the People of Israel, from the Meekness of his Disposition, from his discovering his own Faults and Infirmities in his Writings, and from his not advancing his Family, but leaving his Posterity in a private Condition, and putting the Government into the Hands of Joshua, one of the Tribe of Ephraim. But when all the People of Israel were Witnesses to so many Miracles wrought by him, and particularly to so strange a Judgment as the cleaving asunder of the Earth, and the Fire and Plague by which so many thousands perished; we need not insist upon any other Proof, to shew that the miraculous Power and Divine Authority by which Moses acted and wrote, was as well attested, and as fully known to the whole People of Israel, as it is possible for any Matter of Fact to be known to any single Person.

2. Having shewn, That the Matters of Fact and Miracles contained in the Books of Moses, as they are related
related to have been done, were at first sufficiently attested; and that, if we may credit that Relation, all the Miracles there mention'd were certainly wrought by him; since they are of that Nature, that the People of Israel could not be deceived in them: I now proceed to shew, That the Relations there set down, are a true Account of those things, and such as we may depend upon. For if these Matters of Fact or Miracles are either feigned or falsified, this must be done either in Moses's time, or afterwards; and if in his time, then either by Moses and Aaron, with others who were concerned in carrying on the Design, or by the whole People of Israel together. And if it were done after Moses's Death, then again it must be done either by some particular Man, or by the Contrivance of some few or more together; or it must have been by the joint Knowledge and Consent of the whole Nation. I will therefore prove, (1.) That the Miracles could not be feigned by Moses and Aaron, and others concerned with them in carrying on such a Design. (2.) That the Miracles could not be feigned, nor the Books of Moses invented or falsified by any particular Man, or by any Confederacy or Combination of Men, after the Death of Moses. (3.) That the Miracles could not be feigned, nor the Books invented or falsified by the joint Consent of the whole Nation, either in Moses's time, or after it.

(1.) These Things could not be feigned by Moses and Aaron, and others concerned with them in carrying on such a Design. It is plain, that they could never invent such an Account as that of their miraculous Escape out of Egypt, and their Travelling in the Wilderness, under the conduct and support of the same miraculous Power, and then impose it upon the People of Israel for Truth. For the People are supposed to be chiefly concerned in the whole Relation. Moses appeals to their own Sense and Experience; The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but...
with us, even with us, who are all of us here alive this day, Deut. v. 3. And know you this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm, and his miracles, and his acts which he did in the midst of Ægypt, unto Pharaoh the King of Ægypt, and unto all his land; and what he did unto the army of Ægypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red-sea to over-flow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day; and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place; and what he did unto Da-than and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the son of Reuben; how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all their substance that was in their possession in the midst of all Israel: But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did, Deut. xi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Here is a Recapitulation of all the Miracles that had been wrought, with all Appeal to their Senses for the Truth of them. And Moses would never have made such Appeals as these, if they could possibly have disproved him; they could never be persuaded that they came out of Ægypt, after so many Plagues inflicted upon the Ægyptians, to procure their Deliverance, if there had been no such thing; or that they were so long time in the Wildernefs, and that so many and so great Miracles were wrought in their sight, if they had never been done before them. Though Men may, perhaps, be persuaded to believe, that their Ancestors, a long time ago, saw and heard things which they never saw nor heard; yet a whole Nation was never supposed to have been persuaded out of their Senses at once: And Moses could not attempt to make so many Men believe what they must all have known to have been false, as well as himself, if it had been so; but he would have laid the Scene at a greater distance of time, and not
have brought those in as chiefly concerned in the whole Business, who were then alive, and present, to convince him of Falsehood: And therefore, if the Particulars set down in the Pentateuch be false, and as ancient as Moses's Time, they must be invented with the Knowledge, and received by the Consent of the whole Nation. For Moses and Aaron could never so far delude so many Thousands, as to make them believe such Variety of Matter of Fact, in so many and so wonderful Instances set forth, and with such notorious Circumstances, and appeal to the Senses of those whom they deceived, whether they had not seen and perceived, and had the Experience of what had been done for so many Years, if it had been all but Fiction.

(2.) The Miracles could not be feign'd, nor the Books of Moses invented or falsified by any particular Man, or by any Confederacy or Combination of Men, after the Death of Moses. If the Miracles were feigned after the Death of Moses, either the Laws must likewise be invented or altered after his Death, and the Miracles inserted to procure them Authority; or the Laws remained as they had been deliver'd by him, and the Miracles only were added. For the Books of Moses may be consider'd, either as containing the Laws delivered by him, or as relating the Miracles by which these Laws were ratified and established; in each of which Respects, there could be no Forgery or Falsification. For,

First, The Laws themselves could not be invented, nor altered or falsified: Because the whole Jewish State and Policy was founded upon them, and could not subsist without them; and therefore they must be as ancient as the Jewish Government, which is confess'd on all Hands to have been first erected by Moses. For not only their Religious Worship, but their Civil Rights and Interests, depended entirely upon the Laws of Moses; their Publick Proceedings, and their Private Dealings one with another, were all to be regulated
lated and governed by these Laws: And when any Laws are brought into constant Use and Practice in any Nation, it is ridiculous to imagine that they can be altered and falsified, and a new System of Laws introduced instead of them, without the knowledge of the People governed by them, or any Remembrances of it left amongst them. No material Alterations can be made in Laws which are of continual Use, and which concern every Man's Interest, but they must be taken notice of and discovered by such as shall find themselves aggrieved by such Alterations. But this was less practicable amongst the Jews, than amongst any other People.

(i.) Because the Distinction of their Tribes, and the Genealogies which were kept of every Family, made them have a more separate and distinct Interest in every Tribe, and a more exact Account of Times, and perfect Knowledge of Things in every Family; and therefore they were not so capable of being imposed upon in Things of this nature, as the People of other Nations might be, where Marriages and Inheritances are promiscuous, and no occasion is given for the like Emulation and Watchfulness over one another, and where no such Remembrances and Notices of the Transactions of Affairs are to be consulted by any one of every private Family: In the wilderness of Sinai, on the first day of the second month, in the second Year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, Moses and Aaron assembled all the congregation together, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of their names, from twenty years old and upwards, by their poll, Num. i. 1, 18. And this was done again in the Plains of Moab, at the end of Forty Years, chap. xxvi. And these Genealogies were preserv'd, not only during the Captivity, Ezra vii. and down to the Reign of Herod; but even to the time of Josephus, who (in his First Book against Apion) says, That they had the Gene-
Genealogies of their Priests then still extant for Two thousand Years; and in the Account of his own Life, he transcribes his Pedigree from the Publick Registers.

By which means it came to pafs, that every Tribe had a kind of separate Interest; which was the occasion of Korah’s Sedition against Moses, who was probably one of the First-born of the Tribe of Levi. His Confederates, Dathan, Abiram, and On, were of the Tribe of Reuben. The Priests, Exod. xix. 22. and xxiv. 5. before the Consecration of Aaron and his Sons, could be no other than the First-born. And the Jealousy and Envy, which the Tribe of Levi, as well as the other Tribes, had against Aaron, because the Priesthood was confined to his Family, was the cause of that Rebellion: The Lord (says Moses to Korah) hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi; and seek ye the priesthood also? For which cause both thou and thy company are gathered together against the Lord? And what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? Num. xvi. 10, 11. And every Man amongst their Tribes might certainly hereby know how many Generations he was removed from those who first took possession of the Land of Promise; and might find the Names of his Ancestors registered, who were in the Wilderness with Moses, or came with Joshua over Jordan. And this must make the Memory of their Ancestors more dear and familiar to them; and it must make them have a greater Regard for any thing they had left behind them, especially for a Book upon which their Rights of Inheritance, and the Title they had to all they enjoy’d, depended: This was the Deed by which they held their Estates; and

{o Et multis primogenitis filiorum Israel.] Quoniam usque ad illam horam fuit cultus inter Primogenitos: hačenus enim non factum erat Tabernacleum feederis, & hačenus non datum erat sacerdotium Aba- roni, & obtulerunt holocausta & oblationes sanías coram Domino. Targ. Jonath. B. Uziel. in Exod. xxiv. 5.
the Last Will and Testament, as it were, of their Ancestors, amongst whom the Land was divided. But it is certain, Men are more careful of nothing, than of the Writings by which they enjoy their Estates; and there is no great Danger, when a Will is once come to the Hands of the right Heir, that it will be lost or falsified, to his Prejudice: But if the Books of Moses were altered, it must be upon the Account of some Advantage to such as must be supposed to make the Alterations; and consequently, to the Disadvantage of others, who therefore would have found themselves concern'd to oppose such Alterations. But as the Books of Moses were in the Nature of a Deed of Settlement, to every Tribe and Family; so they were a Law too, which all were oblig'd to know and observe, under the severest Penalties: And being so generally known, and universally practis'd, it could no more be falsified at any Time since its first Promulgation, than it could be now at this Day. For,

2. Another Thing which made the People of Israel less capable of being imposed upon in this Matter, was, That they were by their Laws themselves oblig'd to the constant Study of them; they were to teach them their Children, and to be continually discoursing and meditating on them; to bind them for a sign upon their hand, that they might be as frontlets between their eyes; to teach them their children, speaking of them when they sate in their houses, and when they walked by the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up; to write them upon the door-posts of their houses, and upon their gates, Deut. xi. 18, 19, 20. Nothing was to be more notorious and familiar to them, and accordingly they were perfectly acquainted with them, and (as Josephus says) knew them as well as they did their own Names; they had them constantly in their Mouths, and Thousands have died in Defence of them, and could by no Menaces or Torments be brought
of the Christian Religion.

brought to forfake or renounce them. And to this end, One Day in Seven was by Moses's Law set apart for the learning and understanding of it. The Jews have a Tradition, That Moses appointed the Law to be read thrice every Week in their publick Assemblies: And Grotius * is of this Opinion. However, the Scripture informs us, that Moses, of old time, had in every city them that preached him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day, Act. xv. 21. It is indeed the common Opinion, That there were no Synagogues before the Captivity. But then, by Synagogues, must be understood Places of Judicature, rather than of Divine Worship: For the Courts of Judicature were anciently held in the Gates of Cities, not in any Places peculiarly assign'd for that Use, Amos v. 12, 15. But there is no Reason to question but the Jews had their Proseucha's, or Places of Prayer, from the Beginning; since it is incredible, that those who lived at a great Distance, and could not come to Jerusalem on the Sabbath-days, and other times of Divine Worship, (besides the three great Festivals, when all their Males were bound to be at Jerusalem) should not assemble for the Worship of God in the Places where they dwelt; nay, they were by an express Law obliged to it on the Sabbaths: The seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings, Levit. xxiii. 3. They must therefore have Places in all their Dwellings to resort to, where they held their Convocations or Assemblies; which is proved out of the Jewish Writers, by a very learned † Author. And to these Assemblies they went on the New Moons, as well as on the Sabbaths, 2 Kings iv. 23. Which made the Psalmist, lament, that the Enemy had burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land, Psal. lxxxiv. 8.

* Grot. ad Matt. xv. 2. † Thorndyke’s Relig. Assemb. c. 2, 3.

|| Erexeos x ως xας; ωουαγιας ις xυε επι της γης. A jula. Incendunt omnes Synagogas Dei toritis in Terra.
called the Houses of God, Psal. xxxiii. 12. And Jeremiah, that the Lord had destroyed his places of assembly, Lam. ii. 6. And being met together, there is as little doubt to be made but that they read the Law; which was to be read by them in their Families, and much more in their publick Assemblies, on their solemn Days of Divine Worship. The Books of Moses therefore were read in their Synagogues, in every City, in Jewry, from ancient Generations, or from the first Settlement of the Children of Israel in the Land of Canaan. And this denotes the beginning of the Gospel Dispensation towards the Gentiles. Thus St. James explains those Words of St. Peter, 1 Peter, v. 14. 

And therefore his own Words, 21. must be understood so, as to extend to the Age in which Moses lived. And thus the Books of Moses still are read by the Samaritans, as well as by the Jews; which shews, that this was a Custom ever observ'd, not only before the Captivity, but before the Separation of the Ten Tribes.

And then, at the end of every seven Years, the Law was read in the most publick and solemn manner, in the Solemnity of the Year of Release, in the Feast of Tabernacles. Moses wrote a Book of the Law, and commanded it to be put in the side of the Ark, Deut. xxxi. 26. as the Two Tables of Stone were put into the Ark it self, chap. x. 5. And this he delivered to the Priests, and to all the Elders of Israel, and commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of Release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose: thou

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9 'Εξ ἀρχαιον χρονων, Polycarp. Ep. ad Philip. c. 1. signifies, from the first Propagation of the Gospel, or the first Conversion of the Philippians.

Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children which have not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it, Deut. xxxi. 10, 11, 12, 13. How is it possible, that any more effectual care could have been taken to secure a Law from being deprav’d and alter’d by Impostures? Every seventh Day, at least, was set apart for the reading and learning it, in their several Tribes, throughout all the Land; and then once in seven years it was read at a publick and solemn Feast, when they were all obliged to go up to Jerusalem. And for this purpose, Moses wrote a Book of the Law, which was put in the side of the Ark, that it might be there for a Testimony against them, if they should transgress it, much more, if they should make any Alterations in it.

And out of this Book the King was to write him a Copy of the Law, Deut. xvii. 18. And this Book of the Law was found by Hilkiah the High-Priest, in the House of the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14. 2 Kings xxii. 8. For after all that the wicked and idolatrous Kings could do to suppress the Law of Moses, and draw aside the People to Idolatry, the Authentick Book of the Law written by Moses himself, was still preserv’d in Josiah’s time, besides the several Copies which must be dispers’d throughout the Land, for the use of their Synagogues, and those which must be remaining in the hands of the Prophets, and other pious Men.

And there is little reason to doubt, but that this very Book written by Moses, was preserv’d during the Captivity, and was that Book which Ezra read to the People. It is by no means credible, that the Prophets would suffer that Book to be lost, much less that
that they would suffer all the Copies generally to be lost or corrupted; which indeed, considering the Number, was hardly possible. Is it probable that Jeremiah would use that Favour which he had with Nebuchadnezzar, to any other Purpose, rather than for the Preservation of the Book of the Law? This Use Josephus made of his Interest with Titus, to preserve the Holy Scriptures. And the Jews say, that both the Tabernacle and the Ark were secured by Jeremiah, in the burning of the Temple, at the Time of their Captivity, and consequently the Law was preserve'd, which was kept in the Side of the Ark; but it is much more probable that the Book of their Law was secure'd, than the Ark itself, that being both more easily convey'd away, and not so tempting a Prey to the Enemy. We find the Law cited in the Time of the Captivity, by Daniel, Dan. ix. 11. by Nebemiah, Nehem. i. 8, 9. and in Tobit, who belonged to the Ten Tribes, Tob. vi. 12. and vii. 13.

And it is not to be doubted, but that these and other pious Men had Copies of it by them, and were very careful to preserve them. Maimonides u says, that Moses himself wrote out Twelve Books of the Law, one for each Tribe, besides that which was laid up in the Side of the Ark; and the Rabbins teach, that every one is obliged to have a Copy of the Pentateuch by him: And Ezra and Nebemiah w are said to have brought Three hundred Books of the Law into the Congregation assembled at their Return from Captivity. It is certain, there were Scribes of the Law, before the Captivity, and in the Time of it, Jer. viii. 8. Ezra is styled a ready Scribe in the Law of Moses; and the Scribe, even a Scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel.

f Joseph. Vit. sub fin. t 2 Maccab. ii. 5.

And
And by Artaxerxes, in his Letter, he is called a Scribe of the law of the God of heaven, Ezra, vii. 6, 11, 12. By which it appears, that there were Scribes of the Law during the Captivity, who were known by this solemn Style and Character, and whose Care and Employment it was, to study and write over the Law, of whom Ezra was the Principal at the Time of their Return.

It is most probable then, that the Book of the Law was preserv'd in Moses's own Hand, till the coming of the Jews from Babylon; besides the Copies that were preserv'd in the Hands of Daniel, Nebemiah, Ezra, Zecbariah, and the other Prophets, who were not only of unquestionable Integrity, but wrote themselves by Divine Inspiration.

3. Nothing is more expressly forbidden in the Books of Moses, than all Fraud and Deceit; and it cannot reasonably be suspected, that any Man would be guilty of a Fraud of the highest Nature imaginable, to introduce or establish a Law that forbids it. Moses had forewarned them against all such Practices, both in his Laws in general, and by an express Prohibition: Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, Deut. iv. 2. And all who had any Regard to the Observation of his Laws, would observe this, as well as other Parts of it; for this preserv'd the Authority of all the rest inviolable: And if they had had no Regard to the Law, but had altered it as they pleased, they would certainly have made such Alterations as would have gratified the People, and would have taken great care to leave nothing which might give Offence; but the Laws of Moses are such, as that without a Divine Authority to enforce them, they would never have been complied with, but would have been grievous to a less suspicious and impatient People than the Jews were. If it be said, That the Prohibition against Alterations might be added amongst other things, there

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is no ground of Probability for it, but so much odds against it, that a Man might as well suspect that any other Passage in the whole five Books had been forged, as to pitch upon that particular Verse, and say that it is not genuine. Besides, why should Impostors insert such a Clause as would hinder them from changing any thing in the Law ever after? Why should they not rather reserve to themselves a Liberty of changing and adding as often as they thought fit?

Secondly, As the Laws themselves could not be invented nor alter'd after Moses's time; so neither could the Account of the Miracles wrought by him, be inserted after his Death, by any particular Man, nor by any Confederacy or Combination of Men whatsoever. For if the Miracles, by which the Law is supposed to be confirm'd, were afterwards inserted, they must be intended as a Sanction, to give Authority to it, and keep the People in awe, when they were become uneasy and disobedient under the Government of those Laws. But it must needs be much more difficult to introduce Laws at first, than to govern a People by them, after they have been once introduc'd, and are settl'd and receiv'd amongst them. Indeed, it is incredible, how Laws, so little favourable to the Ease or Advantage of a People, which were so expensive and burthensome in their Ceremonies, and which were purposely design'd, in many things, to be contrary to the Customs of all the Nations round about them, and to the Customs which they had been themselves acquainted with in Egypt, in so many Instances, could be at first introduced, but by Miracle: But if they could have been once introduced without Miracles, there is no reason to think, but that when the People were used and accustom'd to them, there would have been no need of any Pretence of Miracles, to keep them in obedience to them; and as little reason there is to imagine that they would have been over-aw'd by a Report of Miracles, which must be suppos'd never to have


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have been heard of, 'till the People gave occasion for the Invention of them, by their Disobedience.

The Books of Moses were read (as I have shewn) in the Synagogues, or Religious Assemblies, in the several Tribes, at least every Sabbath-day, and were appointed to be solemnly read, in the audience of all the People, at the Feast of Tabernacles, every seven Years: and if they had had no Knowledge of the Law of Moses, but from the Rehearsal of it at the Feast of Tabernacles; yet can we conceive, that the Body of the Jewish Nation should be so stupid and forgetful, as not to remember when these Miracles must be supposed to be first read to them, that they had never heard them before? But how impossible is it, that they should be thus imposed upon, when they heard the Books of Moses read every Week to them, and had them besides in their own keeping, to read them at their leisure? The Miracles now make up great part of the Books of Moses; they are every where interspers'd and intermix'd, throughout the History; and they are of such a nature, as is most apt to make Impression upon the Memories of Men: And can we imagine, that Miracles, so often repeated, and every where inculcated, could be infered by any Contrivance, and imposed upon a People who were all wont to hear the Law publickly read in a solemn Assembly once every Seven Years, and heard it read in their Synagogues besides every Seventh Day? Would they not be infinitely surpriz'd, the first time they heard the Relation of the Plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, of the Judgment upon Korah and his Company, and of the miraculous Punishments which befel the Idolatrous and Disobedient in the Wilderness? Would they not soon have found out so obvious a Deceit, as this must have been, if it had been one? If we can think that such Insertions could pass without discovery; why may we not as well believe too, that as many more might be made now, and not be discover'd? Would
not the whole Body of the People have been able to testify that all this was counterfeited, and inserted into the Law; for no such Thing was read to them in their Synagogues upon the Sabbaths, nor had been read at the end of the last Seven Years, but it was all now added to terrify them, and keep them from following the Customs of other Nations? Would not this have been the worst Contrivance that could have been thought of, to keep a People in Awe, to tell them of such Things as every Man of them could disprove, that was of Age, and had but Understanding and Memory enough to know what he had heard so often read before, and to distinguish it from such Things as are so remarkable, that they could hardly escape any one's Memory, who had ever heard of them?

They had Books of the Law for their private reading; and besides their reading of it in their Weekly Assemblies, they had a solemn Publication and Proclamation of their Law once every Seven Years, as it were purposely to prevent any Design of falsifying it: And to have read any Thing so remarkable, as the Miracles of Moses are, in all their Circumstances, so often repeated and instilled upon, if the People had not found them in their own Books, and had not been used to hear them read to them, from the Time of the giving the Law by Moses, had been only for the Projectors to proclaim themselves Impostors, but could never have deceived any Man. How impossible any Contrivance of this Nature would have been among a People so suspicious and turbulent as the Jews, we may perceive from what happen'd to an *African Bishop who had a Design to introduce the Translation of St. Jerom into his Church. For when his People observed Hedera to be read for Cucurbita, that is, Ivy instead of Gourd, Jonah iv. they were in such an Uproar on the Alteration of this one Word, in a disputable Case, and of

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little or no Consequence, that he was forc'd to con-
tinue the former Reading.

And besides the Care that was taken for the Pre-
servation of the Books of the Law, there were pub-
lick Memorials of the principal Miracles enjoin'd; fuch was the Feast of the Passover, in Remembrance of
the Angel's passing over the Israelites, when he flew
the First-born of the Egyptians; and the Feast of
Tabernacles, in Remembrance of their dwelling in
Tents in the Wilderness; fuch was the Confession and
Commemoration of those that offered the First-fruits,
setting forth the Mercies of God, in bringing them
out of the Land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and
with an out-stretched arm, and with great terribleness,
and with signs, and with wonders, Deut.xxvi. 8. and
fuch were the Brazen Serpent, the Ark, and the Ta-
bernacle: These were Things seen and observed, or
known by all; and they could not be introduced af-
ter Moses's Time, because there could be no Pretence
for it; since they who introduced them, must sup-
pose them to have been before, at the very Time
when they designed first to introduce them. The
Urim and Thummim was both a constant Miracle, and
a constant Attestation to the Law, by which it was
ordained. And it appears, that the Priests who were
to examine and judge of Leprofy either in Persons or
Things, were secured from the Infection of it, though
it were infectious to all others: And their constant
Service could not be performed without a miraculous
Dispensation.

Thus it is evident, That there is all the Proof
which it is possible to bring in any Case of this Nature,
that the Books of Moses could not be falsified by any
Man or Party of Men whatsoever; since the Nature
and Institution of the Law itself did effectually pro-

9 Vid. Lightfoot's Prospect of the Temple, c. 34. p. 2030.

vide
vide against all Impostures; and the Jews had all the assurance that it is possible for any People to have, that the Books of Moses are the same which he wrote and left behind him. And this inspired them with such a zeal for their Law, as to sacrifice their Lives in vindication of it: whereas there was no Book whatsoever, as Josephus observes, amongst the Heathens, which any Man amongst them would not rather a thousand times see destroyed, though it were in never so much esteem with them, than he would suffer for it: Which shews, that the Jews were fully convinced of the Divine Authority of their Law, from all the Evidence above-mentioned; and were persuaded, that it is the same which Moses delivered, and left behind him.

(3.) The Pentateuch could not be invented nor falsified by the joint Consent of the whole Nation, either in Moses's time, or after it. For how is it possible that such a thing should have been concealed from all other Nations? and, that a whole Nation should know of the Imposture, and no Man ever discover it, nor any Apostate ever divulge it, but they and their Posterity should always profess, that they believed the Law to be revealed to Moses by God himself, just as we now have it in the Pentateuch? that under all Afflictions and Adversities, they should impute their Sufferings to the violation of the Law; and so many should die, rather than depart from it?

Upon the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, Jeroboam would certainly have discover'd it, if he had but suspected any such thing as an Imposture, or could but have hoped to make the People believe that the Laws of Moses were not of Divine Institution, but of Humane Invention and Contrivance: but he supposed the Truth of its Divine Original, whilst he tempted the People to the Transgression of it; Behold thy God, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, 1 Kings xii. 28. he supposes them brought out of the Land
Land of Egypt, and brought out by a Divine Power; and endeavours to persuade them, that the two Calves which he had set up in Dan and Bethel, were the Gods who delivered them, and by whose Authority the Law was given them; and that therefore either of those Places was as proper to sacrifice in, as Jerusalem: which however absurd it were, yet he did not think so absurd, as to endeavour to make them believe that their Law itself was no better than an Imposture: he had some hopes to succeed in this Project; and the Event shews, he understood the Temper and Principles of the People he had to deal with; but the other was too gross for him to attempt.

The true Prophets of Israel were ever as zealous for the Law of Moses, as the Prophets of Judah, and the False Prophets of either Kingdom, never durst deny its Authority: these False Prophets affronted and contradicted the Prophets of the Lord, but they ever owned the Law, and pretended to speak in the Name of that God who had deliver'd it to Moses.

And this Division of the Ten Tribes made it impossible afterwards for either the Kingdom of Israel, or of Judah, to make any Alterations in the Books of Moses; because there was so great Emulation and Enmities betwixt the two Kingdoms, that they could never have agreed to insert the same Corruptions; and if either of them had attempted such a thing, it would soon have been discovered by the other; and therefore the Agreement of the Samaritan with the Hebrew Pentateuch, is a plain Argument that they are but different Copies of the same Book, and that it is undoubtedly genuine. The Children of Israel, notwithstanding their great proneness to Idolatry, never cast off the Law of Moses as they would certainly have done, being so often brought into Bondage by their neighbour Nations, if they had not been well assured of the Authority of that Law which they transgress'd; but they were reduced to the Obedience of the Law,
by the Oppressions of Idolatrous Nations; they hoped for Deliverance upon their Repentance, according to the Promises made in it, and could by no Temptations or Torments be persuaded or forced to renounce it: But the long Captivity in Babylon wrought a perfect Cure in the Jews, as to their Inclination to Idolatry; which could never have been unless by their own Experience, in seeing the Prophecies fulfilled, and by other Arguments, they had been fully convinced of the Truth of their own Religion beyond all others.

If it had been of their own Invention, the People would have made their Law, in every respect, more favourable to themselves; they would not have clogged it with burthensome Ceremonies, to distinguish themselves from the neighbour Nations, to whose Idolatries they were so long prone, and from which these Ceremonies were designed to restrain them. They who were for a long Time so fond of the Idolatries of the Heathen, would never have invented Laws so uneasy to themselves, and so contrary and odious to other Nations; they would never have framed them themselves, and then have pretended a Divine Revelation for those Laws with which they were so little pleased. They would never have exposed themselves to the whole World, through all Ages, as a stubborn and rebellious People, notwithstanding so many and so convincing Miracles so long wrought amongst them. The Miracles which I have mention'd, were most of them Judgments upon the Israelites, for their Disobedience; and they would never have set down these Miracles, but would rather have left them out, though they were true, as disgraceful to their Nation. For thus Josephus has omitted some things, to avoid the Scandal which, he was aware, would have been given to the Heathen, by a full and punctual Relation of the whole History of the Jews, as it is described in the Books of
of Moses. And they could be as little ignorant as Josephus, what would prove disgraceful to them, and what would make for their Honour and Renown; and when the Design of these supposed Forgeries and Falsifications must have been to advance the Glory of the People of Israel, they would never have made such as these. No, if they had made any Alterations, it would have been, to strike out those numerous Passages which are so reproachful to their Nation, and to have inserted others, which might raise the Fame and Glory of Themselves, and of their Ancestors; and to have changed those Ceremonies that were so burthensome and so singular, for those which would have been more easy to themselves, and might have recommended them to the good Opinion and Esteem of the neighbour Nations. But when so refractory a People became so zealous for such a Law, so uneasy at first, and so distasteful to them; it is an undeniable Argument, that they had the greatest Assurance of its Divine Original, and that they would neither falsify it themselves, nor suffer others to falsify it.

The People of Israel must be supposed to be unanimous to a Man, in the making these Laws, if they were of their own making; for if any one had dissented, he could not fail of Arguments to draw others after him. In making Laws, the Interests and Conveniencies of the Law-makers are always the Motives for the enacting them; and besides the Publick Honour and Welfare of the Nation, which too often are less considered, the particular Interest of every single Man would have made him concern'd to put a Stop to such Laws. No People can be supposed to consent to the making Laws, by which they are forbidden to sow their Land every Seventh Year, and are commanded to leave their Habitations, and to go up to the Capital City, from every Part of their Country, thrice in a Year: No People could agree to enact such Laws of
of their own Contrivance; because none could subsist in the Observation of them, without a Miracle. How can we conceive it possible for any People to subsist by such Laws, if they had been of their own making? or, that any Nation should agree in the enacting such Laws as must provoke all their neighbour Nations to make War against them? nay, by which they actually declared an irreconcilable War against seven Nations at once? For one Nation to distinguish themselves, by their Laws and Constitutions, from all other People; to lay the very Foundations of their Government, in the Disgrace and Infamy of all their neighbour Nations; to report, that after so many loathsome and grievous Plagues, inflicted upon Pharaoh and his People, they came out of Ægypt, and at last, by the Destruction of him and his whole Army in the Red Sea, made their Escape; and that they forced their Way through all the other Nations that withstood their Passage into Canaan, and vanquished and destroyed them as they went: and then to proclaim a sacred War against all the Nations whose Land they were to possess, and many of whose Posterity were remaining to the time of the Captivity; and were sometimes struck with Terror at the Remembrance, which was retained among them, of these Judgments, (1 Sam. iv. 8. vi. 6.) but might have been able to confute great part of what the Israelites affirmed of themselves, if it had been false, and of a late Invention: For any People, I say, to invent such Accounts of themselves and their Ancestors, and then to make such Laws, and to have the one believed, and the other obeyed, is altogether incredible. When they had enraged all the neighbouring Nations to their Destruction, they obliged themselves, by their Laws, to leave all their Borders naked, thrice every Year, and to give them an opportunity to destroy them; and no People could have lived half an Age in such a Condition, under such Laws, unless they had
had been protected by God himself, the Author of them.

It appears therefore, that as neither Moses himself, nor any Party of Men, either in his time, or after it, could either invent, or change and falsifie the Books which are under his Name; so it is still more extravagant, (if possible) to conceit, that the whole People of Israel should either in Moses's time, or afterwards, be conscious to such an Imposture; and yet that no Man should ever discover it, but it should to this day be concealed from all other Nations; and that neither at the time of the Division of the Ten Tribes, when Jeroboam was forced to set up Altars in other Places, to keep the People from going up to Jerusalem to worship, nor upon any other occasion, this Secret, if that may be called so, which must be known to so many Thousands, should ever come to light. Besides that, they could never have invented those Laws, by unanimous Consent amongst themselves, which they were so hardly brought to obey; and if they had not been disobedient, they would never have pretended they were, and have invented Miracles to make it believed; and if they had been never so forward in their Obedience, they could not have lived in the Observation of the Law, without a perpetual Miracle.

If then the Miracles of Moses, and consequently the Divine Authority by which he gave his Law to the Israelites, be sufficiently attested, supposing the Matters of Fact to be true, which are contained in the Pentateuch: And if neither Moses himself could feign the Matters of Fact, nor any other Person or Persons, either in his time, or afterwards, could insert them, or change the Law; and the whole Jewish Nation could not at any time conspire in such a Fiction and Imposture: We have all the Assurance that it is possible to have, and all that any sober Man can desire, both of the Truth of the Miracles wrought by
by *Moses*, and of the Divine Authority of the Books penn'd by him. And it will be found, that after all the Reflections made by Infidels, upon the Credulity, as they esteem it, of others, there are none so credulous as they, for they reject the most certain, to believe the most incredible Things in the World.

The Divine Mission and Authority of *Moses* being fully proved: From thence it will follow, 1. That God having instituted the *Jewish* Government, was, in Point both of Wisdom and Honour, concerned in the Administration of it, and that a more especial and peculiar Care and Providence must be watchful over this *holy Nation*, and peculiar *People*. 2. That whatever befel them, either by Prophecies or by Miracles, and the extraordinary Appointments of God, according to the Revelations made in the Law of *Moses*, has, besides its own proper and intrinsick Evidence, the additional Proof of all the Miracles and Prophecies of *Moses*. So that the Proof of the Divine Authority of *Moses's* Books, is at the same time a Proof of all the other Books of Scripture, so far as they are in the Matter and Subject of them consequent to these. 3. That the *Pentateuch*, and the other Parts of the *Old Testament*, (not to mention the *New Testament* in this Place) reciprocally prove each other, like the Cause and the Effect; the *Pentateuch* being the Cause and Foundation of These; and These the Effect and the Consequence of the *Pentateuch*, and the Fulfilling the several Predictions of it.
C H A P. VII.

Of Joshua and the Judges, and of the Miracles and Prophecies under their Government.

It is generally agreed, that Joshua himself was the Author of the Book under his Name: And some, who are of another Opinion, yet acknowledge that it must be written by his particular Order, in his Life-time, or soon after his Death. The Land was described by Cities in a Book, which was brought to Joshua, Jos. xviii. 8, 9. The Nature of the Thing itself required, that the Division of the Land of Canaan amongst the several Tribes, should forthwith be committed to Writing: For no People can be named, who had the Use of Letters, that trusted the Boundaries of their Lands to Memory; and there is no Delay to be used in such Cases: Joshua therefore, who did by Lot set out the Bounds of the Tribes, at the same Time put them down in Writing; which he left upon Record to Posterity, to prevent Disputes, and to be appealed to, in case any Controversy should arise. But the bare Distribution of the Land was not to be transmitted, without an Account of the miraculous Conquest of it, which might dispose them to be contented with their several Lots, and remind them of their Duty, in the Possession and Enjoyment of a Land, in which they were settled by the immediate Hand of God.

The Book of Joshua appears to have been written during the Life-time of Rabab, Jos. vi. 25. and of Caleb, Jos. xiv. 14. and by one who passed over Jordan when its Waters were cut off: For none, but one, who had been present, could properly have said, until we were passed over, Jos. v. 1. and to have been written (in part at least) by Joshua himself, and annexed
nex'd to the Law of Moses, chap. xxiv. 26. But the five last Verses, giving an Account of the Death of Joshua, and of what followed after it, were added by some of the Prophets, probably by Samuel, who, according to the Jewish Tradition, is the Author of the Book of Judges, where we find the same things repeated concerning the Death of Joshua, Judg. ii. 7.

The Book of Judges and a Ruth are reckon'd by the Jews as one Book; and the Book of Judges is reckon'd among the Books of the Prophets, Mat. ii. 23. Judg. xiii. 5. and it seems to be entitled to Samuel, Acts iii. 24. where Samuel is mention'd as the first of the Prophets, that is, the first Author of the Books written by them: For which reason, he is likewise by the Jews accounted the first of the Prophets. That the Book of Judges was penn'd before the taking of Jerusalem by David, we may learn from Judg. i. 21.

After the Death of Moses, Joshua undertakes the Government and Conduct of the People of Israel, according to God's Appointment, and his Investiture to it by Moses, Num. xxvii. 22. who also foretold the great Success that afterwards attended him, Deut. i. 38. and at his first Entrance upon the Government, God gave to him the same Divine Attestation that had before been given to Moses in their Passage thro' the Red-Sea: And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know, that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee, Josh. iii. 7. And for a certain Demonstration that the living God was among them, and would give them Victory over the Seven Nations, and Possession of their Land, the Priests did, by God's Appointment, bear the Ark before the People; And, according to the express Prediction of Joshua, as soon as their Feet were dipt in the rim of the water,

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b F. Sim. Suppl. to Leo of Modena, c. 1.
in the time of Harvest, when the River Jordan is at the highest, and overflows all its Banks, the Waters divided themselves; those above stood on one side in heaps, and those below were cut off and failed, the Priests standing with the Ark, in the midst of the Channel, upon dry Ground, 'till all the People were passed over, and until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the People, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua, Josh. iv. 10. Now, it is an undoubted Tradition amongst the Jews, That the Tents of the Israelites in the Wilderness contain'd a Square of Twelve Miles, and that the Host took up the same Space whilst they pass'd Jordan. However, this is certain, that they kept at the distance of about Two thousand Cubits from the Ark, when it stood in the midst of Jordan, Josh. iii. 4. so that the Waters must be withdrawn for many Miles in the Passage of the whole Army over the River, if they pass'd it in a regular March, and in such Order of Battle as to be able to oppose the Enemy; or if they march'd in a narrower Body, they must be so much the longer in their Passage: Which way soever it were, it was a very great and manifest Miracle. The People being all gone over, and every thing perform'd which God had commanded, the Priests with the Ark came out of the Channel of the River, where they had all this while stood, and as soon as their Feet were lift up unto the dry land, beyond the Waters which stood then on an heap, and did not flow down as at other times, they resum'd their Course, and returned to their place, and flowed over all the banks, as they did before, Josh. iv. 18. And as a Memorial of this Miracle to all Posterity, Twelve Stones were set up in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the Priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood, v. 8, 9. and Twelve Stones more were taken out of Jordan, whilst it was dry, by Twelve

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Men chosen out of the People, One out of every Tribe, and were pitched in Gilgal, ý 20. Thus did the Lord magnify Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life, ý 14. Here was a Miracle wrought in the most remarkable Manner, to which the whole People were Witnesses, and effectual Care was taken to keep up theRemembrance of it. The Waters of Jordan were cut off, for the Passage of the Children of Israel into Canaan, as the Waters of the Red-Sea had been divided, to procure their Escape out of Egypt; and such an Experiment was not to have been made twice, if it had not been a true Miracle.

They were no sooner come into the promised Land, but all the Males were Circumcised, (that Rite having been omitted in the Wilderness) and were thereby disabled for War: Which had been a strange Policy, for the Invaders of a Country to wound themselves, and render themselves unfit for Fight, as soon as they arriv’d in the Coasts of the Enemy, if the Canaanites had not been restrained by a miraculous Awe and Power from setting upon them, as the Sons of Jacob did upon the Shechemites, Gen. xxxiv. before they were recovered of their Soreness, after Circumcision. And for a perpetual Memorial of this Action, the Place where they were Circumcised was called Gibeah haarahloth, or, the hill of the Fore-skins.

The Walls of Jericho were thrown down, only by marching round it seven Days, and blowing with Trumpets; and this was accompanied with a Prophecy, That whoever should attempt to rebuild Jericho, should lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son should he set up the gates of it, Josh. vi. 26. which was fulfill’d in the Reign of Ahab, when Hiel the Beth-elite lost his eldest Son Abiram, upon his laying the Foundation of it, and his youngest Son Segub, upon his setting up the Gates, 1 Kings xvi. 34. These Miracles, and the Standing still of the Sun and Moon
Moon, whilst the Israelites pursued and vanquished their Enemies; and the prodigious Hail-stones cast down from Heaven, which flew more of them than the Sword could do; and a continued Course of Victories, never interrupted but for Achan’s Offence, struck such a mighty Terror into the Canaanites, that some of them fought out Ways to make their Peace with the Israelites, by Submission; and others fled into foreign Countries. And to shew that they conquer’d by a Miraculous and Divine Power, not by any carnal Force or Strength; Joshua, by God’s Command, destroy’d the Horses and the Chariots that he took from the Enemy, Josh. xi. 9. Which had been a strange Action in Human Policy; but by such unlikely Means he subdued one and thirty Kings of the Canaanites, chap. xii. and then divided the Land, not yet conquer’d, amongst the Tribes of Israel, being as certain of it, as if they had it already in Possession, chap. xiii. 2, 7.

Joshua, after so many Victories, and so many Miracles, when the Land of Canaan came to be divided among the Children of Israel, took no more of his own Inheritance, than they were willing to spare him, after the Land had been divided among the Tribes, chap. xix. 49. And at last, as Moses had done, he appeals to their own Experience, and to their very Senses, for the Truth of all the Wonders and Deliverances, and the mighty Works which God had wrought amongst them, chap. xxiv.

After the Death of Joshua, who had ruled twenty-eight Years, God rais’d up Judges out of several Families and Tribes, with an immediate and extraordinary Commission to govern and protect his People: So that there could be no private Ends, or politick Designs carried on, under the Pretence of a Divine Commission. But upon their Disobedience and Idolatry.

* Mat. ad Jos. xxiv. 31.*
latries, they were, from time to time, punish'd with Slaughter and Captivity; and, upon their Repentance, were as constantly deliver'd; Judges being purposely rais'd up to be conquerors and Deliverers, and never failing of Success.

But besides these who were impower'd by God, upon extraordinary Occasions, they had other Judges, or Chief Magistrates, to administer Justice, and to preside over the Publick Affairs, for the Welfare of the People: such were Eli and Samuel. Eli was a great Example, how much Fondness, and Natural Affection, may prevail over good and wise Men; but he was more affliicted to hear that the Ark of God was taken, than at the Death of both his Sons; that gave him his mortal Wound, and he could not outlive the hearing it, i Sam. iv. 18. Samuel's Sons were wicked as well as Eli's, and he doth not conceal their Faults, but plainly says, That they turned aside after lucre, and took Bribes, and perverted judgment, chap. viii. 3. But he appeals to the whole People for his own Integrity, who solemnly declare him free from any Oppression or Injustice. He resign'd the Government, tho' he had the Power in his hands to appoint two Kings successively; and by God's Commandment, rais'd both Saul and David out of their Obscurity to a Throne. Samuel says plainly, That when the Elders of Israel came to him to ask a King, the thing displeased him, i Sam. viii. 6. And he who could make two Kings of two different Tribes, and of no Interest in their respective Tribes, might as well have made himself King, if he had acted upon Human Considerations, and by Human Power and Means. The Divine Power therefore was visible in the Government of the Children of Israel, from the time of Moses and Joshua to Saul; for they were constantly govern'd by Persons of God's Appointment; their Government was a Theocracy, being administered by God's immediate Direction.
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cation, the Lord their God was their King, 1 Sam. xii.
12. During which time, they had likewise Prophets, Judg. iv. 4. vi. 8. And tho' the Word of the Lord was precious, or rare, in the Days of Eli, yet the manner of Divine Revelation was so well known to him, that he perceived that the Lord had called Samuel, Sam. iii. 1, 8.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the People of Israel under their Kings.

After a standing Regal Government was settled among the People of Israel, they were either Happy or Miserable at home, and either a Defeat or Victory attended their Armies abroad, as they prov'd obedient or disobedient to the Law of Moses, and to the Word of the Lord, deliver'd by his Prophets. Upon the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, when Two Tribes only remain'd in the Obedience of Reboboam, and in the true way of Worship, this had been the time, (as already has been said) if there had been any Imposture hitherto carried on, to discover it; for they had all the Temptation, and all the Opportunity to do it, that could possibly be given. But after the Division of the Ten Tribes, Jeroboam durst not so much as attempt to draw them off from an Acknowledgement of the Divine Authority of that Law, by which they were obliged to go up to Jerusalem to sacrifice, though he persuaded them to change the Place of their Worship, and to go no longer up thither. And God had his Prophets in Israel, who were as zealous for the Law, as the Prophets of Judah; for in both Kingdoms they had still Prophets to admonish them, and to direct them in all Matters of great Importance.
portance. Though the Urim and Thummim, and the Shechina, were confined to the Aaronical Priesthood, and the Ark of the Testament; yet the other kinds of Prophecy were vouchsafed to Israel, as well as Judah: And the Captivity both of Judah and Israel by the Assyrians, and the Deliverance of the Jews out of it, befel them according to express Prophecies; and both during the Captivity, and at their Return, they had Daniel, Zechariah, Malachi, and other Prophets amongst them; and for so many Ages, from their first coming out of Egypt, the whole People were made continually Witnesses of the manifest Power and Presence of God amongst them. This will be evident, by making some Observations concerning the Prophets and their Writings, and concerning their Prophecies and Miracles.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Prophets, and their Writings.

The kinds of Prophecy among the Jews, were,
1. The Shechina. 2. The Urim and Thummim. 3. Revelation by Visions and Dreams, or by Inspiration; for I shall not here distinguish these Ways of Revelation, to consider them apart. And when these kinds of Prophecy ceas’d under the Second Temple, the Bath Kol, or Voice from Heaven, was the only Way of Revelation: But of this there is little or nothing certain to be rely’d upon.

1. The Shechina, was the fitting, or dwelling of God between the Cherubims, on the Mercy-Seat, or Cover of the Ark, Psal. lxxxi. 1. and xcix. 1. from whence he gave out his Answers by an Articulate Voice, Exod. xxv. 22. and xxix. 42. Numb. vii. 89.

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2. The *Urim* and *Thummim* upon the Breast-plate of the High-Priest, Exod. xxviii. 30. was another standing Oracle, to be consulted upon all great Occasions, Num. xxvii. 21. 1 Sam. xxviii. 6. xxiii. 9. xxx. 7. Ezra ii. 63. And the Answers were return’d by a visible Signification of the Divine Will. This Oracle was not only venerable amongst the Jews, but was famous amongst the Heathen (as *Josephus* assures us) for its infallible Answers. Mr. Mede thinks the *Urim and Thummim* to have been in Use among the Patriarchs, before the Law was given; because the making of them is not spoken of amongst the other Things of the *Ephod*. The common Opinion is, that this Oracle was delivered by the shining of such Letters of the Tribes Names, engraven on the Stones in the Priest’s Breast-Plate, as express’d the Answer: But the fame learned Author thinks, that the *Urim* and the *Thummim* were distinct Oracles; the *Thummim* shewing when their Sacrifices were accepted, and the *Urim* answering such Questions as were proposed upon any important Occasion.

3. Revelations by Vision and Dreams, or by Inspiration, were the Revelations which properly denominated those, to whom they were made, Prophets. For the Prophets were Persons sent by God, with an extraordinary Commission, to declare his Will; and they were not confined to the Tribe of Levi, or to any one particular Tribe, but sometimes taken out of one Tribe, and sometimes out of another. For tho’ the Jews had Colleges and Schools to prepare and qualify Men, by a virtuous and religious Education, for Divine Illuminations; yet divers others, who had not been educated in this Manner, were endued with the Spirit of Prophecy; and some of them were but of very mean Employments, and others again of Royal Blood.

* Joseph. Antiq. 1 3. c. 9.  
* Mede’s Discourse, 35.  
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They reproofed both their Kings and their Priests with a fearless and undaunted Freedom and Authority: and this Plain-dealing, such as became Men who spake and acted by a Divine Impulse, without Design, and without any Disguise, sometimes commanded great Reverence towards them from Princes, not easie to be well advised or directed. Rehoboam, a wilful and rash Prince, at the head of an Army of an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen Men, upon the Word of the Lord, delivered to him by Shemaiah, returned home without attempting any thing, to regain the Tribes that had revolted from him to Jeroboam, 1 Kings xii. 21. Abab, though an exceeding wicked King, after a signal Victory, bore the Reproof of a Prophet, who denounced a Judgment upon Him and his People, for letting Benhadad go, and was much concerned at it, 1 Kings xx. 42, 43. And the same Abab rent his Clothes, and put on Sackcloth, and fasted, at the Reproof of Elijah, 1 Kings xxi. 27. Amaziah, by the Admonition of a Prophet, dismiss'd an hundred thousand mighty men of valour, whom he had hired of the Israelites for an hundred Talents, being content to lose so many Talents, and to want their help in the War, and to venture the Ravage that such an Army, who look'd upon themselves as affronted, made in his Country; upon the Prophet's assuring him, that God would give him the Victory, if he would dismiss them, but not otherwise; and telling him, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this: And the Event proved the Truth of the Prediction, 2 Chron. xxv. The Children of Israel likewise, at the Word of Oded the Prophet, sent back two hundred thousand Persons of the Kingdom of Judah with great Spoil, which they had taken, 2 Chron. xxviii. So ready and so general a Compliance, in such cases, could arise from nothing but a certain Belief and Experience of the Truth of what the Prophets delivered: But at other times they were despised and persecuted. And
And the Truth of their Prophecies was not only attested by Miracles, and justified by the Event, and confessed by the Deference and Respect both of the Kings and People; but it was asserted by the Sufferings, and sealed by the Blood of the Prophets, and was at last acknowledged by the Posterity of those who had slain them; they being most forward and zealous to adorn the Tombs of the Prophets, whom their Fore-fathers had killed; and to die, in vindication of those Prophecies, for which they had been slain. There was a constant Succession of Prophets, from the time of Moses, till the Return of the Jews from their Captivity in Babylon; some prophesied for many Years; Jeremiah, for above one and forty Years; Ezekiel, about twenty Years; the least time assigned to Hosea's Prophecy, is forty three Years; Amos prophesied about six and twenty Years; Micah, about fifty; Isaiah, Jonah, and Daniel, a much longer time: so that they lived to see divers of their own Prophecies fulfilled; and to have suffered as false Prophets, if they had not come to pass. And though many Prophecies were not to be fulfilled, till long after the Death of the Prophets who delivered them; yet they wrought Miracles, or they foretold some things, which came to pass soon after, according to their Predictions, to give Evidence to their Authority, and confirm their Divine Mission. St. Jerom observes that the Prophets are not said to have received the Presents, which were offer'd them, in Micheam, c. iii. As to the Presents, which are sometimes said to have been made the Prophets, it was a Custom, and is known to be still in the Eastern Countries, to approach no Man of Eminency without a Present; which was a Token of Respect and Reverence, being in it self often inconsiderable; as Saul for want of Bread, presented Samuel with the fourth part of a Shekel of Silver, 1 Sam. ix. 8. which is not above Nine-pence of our Money. The Children of Belial, to shew their Contempt of Saul,
brought him no Presents when he was King, 1 Sam. x. 27. And Samuel was presented with a Gift, because of his Dignity; for he was an honourable Man, chap. ix. 6.

The Prophets committed their Prophecies to Writing, and left them to Posterity, Isa. xxx. 8. Jer. xxx. 2. and xxxvi. 32. Hab. ii. 1, 2. And the Writing of the Histories of the Jews belonged to the Prophets, 1 Chron. xxix. 29. 2 Chron. xii. 15. xiii. 22. xx. 34. xxvi. 22, xxxii. 32. 3 Josephus accordingly writes, that from the Death of Moses to the Reign of Artaxerxes Successor to Xerxes in the Kingdoms of Persia, the Prophets penned the Histories of their own Times. And both in their Prophetical and Historical Books they deal with the greatest Plainness and Sincerity; they record the Idolatries of the Nation, and foretell the Judgments of God which were to befall it upon that account; and they leave to Posterity a Relation of the Mifcarriages and Crimes of their best Princes. David, Solomon, and others, who were Types of the Messias, and from whose Race they expected Him, and looked upon the Glories of their several Reigns to be Prefages of His, are yet described not only without Flattery, but without any Reserve or Extenuation; they write as Men who had no Regard to any Thing but Truth, and the Glory of God, in telling it.

The Prophets were sometimes commanded to seal and shut up their Prophecies, that the Originals might be preserved till the fulfilling of them, and then compared with the Event, Isa. viii. 16. Jer. xxxii. 14. Dan. viii. 26. and xii. 4. For when the Prophecies were not to be fulfilled till many Years, and, in some Cases, not till several Ages afterwards, it was requisite that the Original Writings should be kept with all Care; but when the time was so near at hand, that the Prophecies must be in every one's Memory, or that the Originals could not be suspected or supposed to

< Contra Ap. i. 1. >
be lost, there was not the same Care required, Rev. xxii. 10. It seems to have been customary for the Prophets to put their Writings into the Tabernacle, or lay them up before the Lord, 1 Sam. x. 25. And there is a Tradition, That all the Canonical Books, as well as the Law, were put into the Side of the Ark.

It is certain, that the Books of the Law, and the Writings of the ancient Prophets, were carefully preserved, during the Captivity, and are frequently referred to, and cited by the latter Prophets: The Pentateuch has been already spoken of; and this is as evident of the Books of the Prophets. The Prophecy of Micah is quoted, Jer. xxvi. 18. a little before the Captivity; and under it, the Prophecy of Jeremiah is cited, Dan. ix. 2. and all the Prophets, y 6. And so the Prophets in general are mentioned, Nehem. ix. 26, 30. Zechariah not only cites the former Prophets, Zech. i. 4. but supposes their Writings well known to the People; Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity? chap. vii. 7. The Prophet Amos is likewise cited, Tob. ii. 6. and Jonas, and the Prophets in general, chap. xiv. 4, 5, 8. There can then be no reason to question, but that Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Zechariah, and the other Prophets in the time of the Captivity, were very careful to keep the Books of the former Prophets; for they frequently cite them and appeal to them; and expected Deliverance out of their Captivity, by the Accomplishment of them. And perhaps, from the Originals themselves, or however, from Copies taken by Ezra the Scribe, or by some of the latter Prophets, or at least acknowledged for genuine, and approved of by them, the ancient Prophecies, and other Inspired Writings, were preferred; and those of the latter Prophets.

d Joseph. Antiq. l. 11. c. 1. & l. 6. c. 5.

Epiphan. de Ponderib. & Menfr. c. 4. Damascan. de Fide Orthodox. l. 4. c. 17.
were added to them; and all together, make up the Book of the Prophets, mention'd Acts vii. 42. which was read, as well as the Law, every Sabbath-day, Acts xiii. 27.

The Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings have the Title of the former Prophets, in the Hebrew Bibles, to distinguish them from the Books, which bear the Title of the later Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c. The Books of Joshua and Judges have been already spoken of. The Books of Samuel were written by Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, 1 Chron. xxix. 29. From whence we may conclude, that the First Book of Samuel, to the 25th Chapter, was written by Samuel himself; and the rest of that, and the whole Second Book, by Nathan and Gad. But Samuel being a Person so much concerned in the former part of the History, and having written so much of it, out of respect to him, the whole two Books go under his Name: though, indeed, the Jews anciently reckoned both the Books of Samuel as one Book; and Aquila (as Theodoret has observed) made no distinction between the First and the Second Books of Samuel, following the Hebrew Copies of his time: And it is no wonder, that a Book begun by Samuel, and continued by other Prophets, should bear the Name only of Samuel. From 1 Chron. xxix. 29. we may likewise learn, that the Beginning of the First Book of Kings must be written by one of these Prophets. The History of Hezekiah in Isaiah and in the Book of Kings is in the same Words, 2 Kings xviii. 13. xix. xx. Isa. xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxviii, xxxix. Which shews, that the historical Books were compos'd by the Prophets, or transcrib'd from their Writings. Both the Books of Kings, as far as Hezekiah's Reign, were written before Josiah's time; for, 2 Kings xviii. 5.

it is said of Hezekiah, That he trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him of all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before him: And of Josiah, it is said, 2 Kings xxiii. 25. That like unto him there was no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, &c. For it is evident, that Josiah, in his Reformation, exceeded Hezekiah; and from hence it appears, that the History of Hezekiah must be written before Josiah's time; or else it could not have been, with Truth, said of Hezekiah, That there was no King after him who was like him, or equalled him, of all the Kings of Judah. From 1 Chron. iv. 43. it appears, that it was written before the Captivity; though the Genealogies were transcribed afterwards out of the Records, as we learn from 1 Chron. ix. 1. The Second Book of Chronicles was not distinguished by the Jews from the First, but both made one Book, as did the two Books of Kings. That the Second Book of Chronicles, as well as the First Book of Kings, was written before the Captivity of Judah, we may conclude from 2 Chron. v. 9. x. 19. 1. Kings viii. 3. for the Ark was not remaining after the Captivity. Great part of the Second Book of Kings was penned before the Captivity of Israel, 2 Kings xiii. 23. The last Chapter of the Second Book of Kings, gives so particular an Account of the manner of carrying them away Captive, in every material Circumstance, that it seems to have been written at that very time; and is an Argument, that Memoirs were constantly taken and preserved, of all that happened. The Second Book of Chronicles concludes with the first Year of Cyrus, in the same Words with which the Book of Ezra begins, being added by him at the time when Cyrus gave out his Proclamation: for the Prophets, from time to time,
made Continuations to the Histories of their Predecessors, by inserting what related to their own Times; and it was no unusual Thing, among the Ancients, (as Grotius observes) to begin one Book with the Conclusion of another. This we see in the History of Dionysius Halicarnassus, who knew as well as any Man the Art of Writing, and was as much acquainted with the Works of the Authors before him. To say, without any Authority from MSS. that this could so often happen in his History, by any Mistake of the Transcribers, is altogether groundless. The End of his Tenth Book, and the Beginning of the Eleventh, have the same Sense, tho' with such Variation in Words, as could not be by Chance. It is observable, that the Historical Books of Scripture have a plain Reference one to another: Thus Joshua begins his Book, Now, after the death of Moses, or as it is in the Septuagint, And after, &c. So the Book of Judges, Now after the death of Joshua. And Ruth, in like manner, Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled. All the Historical Books refer to each other, except the First Book of Chronicles, and that of Nehemiah, which yet by the Jews, was reckoned, together with Ezra, but as one Book. The reason why the First Book of Chronicles can have no reference to any preceding Book, is plain, because it begins with the Genealogy from Adam. And Nehemiah begins his Book by prefixing his Name, The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah, and then sets down the Year and Month; so that there could be no need of any other Connexion. In this he imitated the Prophets; The vision of Isaiah the son of Amos; The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah. But Ezekiel and Jonah have likewise used the same Reference, with which the Historical Books begin. Tho' this

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could not be so needful in Prophecies, to which the Name of Prophets stand prefixed, as in Historical Books written without the Author's Name: None of which was designed as a separate Work by itself, but for a Continuation or Supplement of what had been written before, that all together might make up one entire History, in the same Manner as Moses, and all Authors, both ancient and modern, usually connect the several Books of which their Works are composed. The * Book of Esther was taken from publick Acts, read every Year on the Feast of Sixrim: Which is sufficient Evidence both of its Original, and of its Preservation. † Origen concludes from chap. xix. 23. that the Book of Job was written by him, or his Friends, in their own Language, and translated by Moses into Hebrew; for a Pattern of Patience to the Israelites under their Bondage in Egypt: And with Origen the Rabbins herein agree.

The Psalms are quoted under the Title of the Prophets,¹ Mat. xiii. 35. and k xxvii. 35. and from the first Penning, they were used in the Publick Service of God, i Chron. xvi. 7. 2 Chron. v. 13. vii. 6. xx. 21. xxix. 30. ₂ fer. xxxiii. 11. Ezra iii. 10, 11. This was known even to their Enemies, in their Captivity, Psal. cxxxvii. 3. and some of them were written by the Prophets under it. And Lessons out of the Law and the Prophets, with Hymns out of the Psalms, and Prayers, made up the Jewish Form of Worship. Moses and the Prophets, are put for the whole Old Testament, Luke xvi. 29. Acts xiii. 15. And Luke xxiv. 44. the whole Old Testament is divided into Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. The Psalms being put for all the Hagiographa,¹ because the

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* Vid. Targum in Esther ix. 27. & cap. ii. 23. viii.
† Orig. in Job lib. i. initio. Sixtus Senenf. l. i.
₁ Psal. LXXVIII written by Asaph.
₂ Psal. XXII. by David.
₁ Surenhusius de concil. V. & N. T. loc. p. 281.
Psalms were the First in order of the Hagiographa. The Law, by an usual Figure of Speech, s named for the Psalms, John x. 34. xv. 25. for the Prophets, 1 Cor. xiv. 21. and for the Old Testament, Rom. iii. 19. In which sense the LXXII. are by some Authors said to have translated the Law, when they translated the Jewish Canon of Scripture, as * Eusebius, Epiphanius, and most of the Rabbins agree.

And if both the Law and the Prophets, comprehending all the Books of Scripture written before the Captivity, were still extant, and well known and made use of by pious Men during all that time; and the People had Copies of them, or had Means and Opportunities of being acquainted with them, as the Prophet Zechariah supposes, Zech. vii. 7. there is no reason to imagine, that they had not sufficient Knowledge of the Hebrew Tongue at their Restoration, many being still alive, who were first carried away Captive: And the Writings of the Prophets, during their Captivity, and upon their Return, shew that the People did understand it; for they all wrote in the Hebrew Language, except upon some particular Occasions, where their Prophecies more immediately concerned the Babylonian Affairs. Both Men and Women could understand Ezra, when he read the Law; And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law, Neh. viii. 3. It was not the Language, unless in some Particulars, which in all Languages will want Explication to the Vulgar, who are Natives; but the Sense and Meaning, that was interpreted, † 7, 8. And in the same manner, the Letter of Arta-

† Και ἀνεγινώσκας οὖ ἔβλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ιδιδαχαὶ Ἑβδαχ, καὶ διεσέλλης ἐν ἑπίσημῃ κυριακῇ, καὶ σωπῆς ὁ λαὸς ἐν τῇ ἀνάφωσι. Et legerunt in libro Dei distinctè & apertè ad intelligendum, & intellexerunt, cum legeretur.
Xerxes was both written in the Syrian Tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue, Ezra iv. 7. Nebuchadnezzar particularly complains, that the Children of those who had married strange Wives, could not speak in the Jews language: Which supposes that the Children of other Parents, as well as the Parents themselves were taught to speak the Hebrew Tongue, Neb. xiii. 24. And the Decree of Abasuerus in favour of the Jews, was written unto every province, according unto the writing thereof; and unto every People, after their language; and unto the Jews, according to their writing, and according to their language, Est. viii. 9. Which seems to imply, that the Jews still retained not only their Language, but their manner of writing it, or the Form and Fashion of their Letters, under the Captivity. The Hebrew Tongue is now understood among the Jews, tho' spoken readily by few, beside their Rabbins: But we may observe, how easy it is for that People, distinguished and separated by their Rites, from those among whom they live, to retain their Native Language in Captivity, by what they do now. For in many Jews, who out of Germany went into Poland, Hungary, and Russia, still retain the German Tongue in their Families; and those that, when they were driven out of Spain, fled to the Levant, carried the Spanish Tongue along with them; which remains the Language of their Posterity: And in Italy the German Jews speak Dutch, and the Spanish Jews keep the Spanish Tongue.

So little Credit is to be given to the Story in the Apocryphal Book of Ezra, that the Law being burnt, Ezra was inspired to dictate it all anew, which was taken from his Mouth by five Writers, who in forty Days wrote two hundred and four Books, the former of which were to be made publick, but the seventy last were to be delivered only to the Wise, i. e. to the Rabbins, 2 Esd. xiv. 40. which is plainly a Jewish
The Reasonableness and Certainty

Fable invented to authorize their Traditions. And yet this groundless Story, so contrary to Scripture, and to the Writings of some of the most learned of the *Rabbins*, in a Book that is rejected both by *Protestants* and *Papists*, has prevailed too much with both.

After their Return, the *Jews* were a free People, till the time of *Alexander the Great*, who only requir’d Tribute of them, but left them to their own Law and Government; so that no occasion was given to any considerable Change in their Language, as *Vossius* computes, 'till the first Year of the cxvii Olympiad, when *Jerusalem* was taken by *Ptolemaeus Lagi*; and twenty seven Years after was the Version of the Septuagint, by whom, not long after the Decease of those that return’d from the Captivity, the Scriptures were translated into the *Greek* Tongue; and were dispersed into so many Hands, among the *Jews* and *Proselytes*, that the Copies could not be destroyed, either in the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, or at any other time, by the Malice of Persecutors, or any other Accident. And tho’ the *Jews* were so fond of other Traditions, as to *make the word of God of none effect* by them; yet they never added any Books to the Canon of Scripture, in favour of those Traditions for which they were so zealous: But when they had no longer any Prophets among them, they durst not place any other Books in the same Rank and Authority with those which the Prophets had left behind them. All the Canonical Books were written by inspired Authors, and have been in constant use among the People of the *Jews*, in their private Houses and publick Assemblies, even from the first writing them; for they were preserv’d during the Captivity, and both understood and used by the *People*: but their other Books, written

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under the second Temple, tho' never so useful and pious, were never receiv'd with the like Esteem and Veneration; they pretended to no more than Human Composition, and were never rank'd with those of Divine Authority. P Josephus declares, that there was no Succession of Prophets after the Reign of Artaxerxes; and that the Historical Books written afterwards, were not of the same Authority with those before that time. The Jews, with a general Consent, acknowledge, that during the second Temple, there was neither the Ark, (nor consequently the Shechina) nor the Urim and Thummim, nor the Fire from Heaven, nor the Holy Oil, nor the Holy Spirit, in the Gifts of Prophecies and Miracles. This is a Confession of the Jews against themselves; which is much urged upon them by Christians, to prove that our Saviour is the Messiah, and that his Presence alone could make the Glory of the latter house greater than of the former, Hag. ii. 9. And their Confession here-in adds great Weight to their Testimony in behalf of all these kinds of Prophecy, which they affirm to have been under the first Temple, and of this Prophecy of Haggai, as well as of the rest in the Old Testament.

C H A P. X.

Of the Prophecies and Miracles of the Prophets.

The False Prophets prophesied in the Name of Jehovah, 1 Kings xxii. which supposes that True Prophecies were wont to be deliver'd in his Name, or else they could never have hop'd to deceive by it.

q Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. Par. 1. 1. 2. c. 35.
And in the Historical Books of the \textit{Old Testament}, in which the Prophecies and Miracles of the Prophets are related, reference is frequently made to the Records then extant in the \textit{Chronicles} of the Kings of \textit{Judah} and \textit{Israel}; most of the Prophecies and Miracles being of that publick Nature, and so intermix'd with the Affairs of State, that they must be recorded together with them.

Josiah \textsuperscript{a} was prophesy'd of by Name, three hundred sixty one Years before the Event: \textit{Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name}, 1 Kings xiii. 2. And this was foretold by a Prophet, who came out of \textit{Judah}, purposely to denounce the Judgments of God upon the Priests of the Altar, and upon the Altar itself, which Jeroboam had newly set up at Bethel, when Jeroboam fled by the Altar to burn Incense: And his Prediction, at the same time, was confirm'd by two Miracles; one wrought upon Jeroboam himself, by drying up his Hand, which he stretched forth against the Prophet, and which, by the Prophet's Prayer, was restor'd again whole to him, as it was before; the other Miracle was wrought upon the Altar, by rending it, and pouring out the Ashes from it. And a Prophecy deliver'd in the Presence and to the Face of an enrag'd Prince, against the Religion of his own setting up, to secure to himself the Kingdom he so lately became possess'd of, at the very time when he was offering Incense upon his new Altar: And this Prophecy, confirm'd by an immediate Judgment both upon the King himself, and his Altar, in the sight of so numerous an Appearance as must be present on so solemn an Occasion, and these Enemies to the Prophet, who came from \textit{Judah}, and to his Religion; a Prophecy thus delivered, had all the Circumstances to make it remarkable and notorious, in all the

\textsuperscript{a} Joseph. Antiq. l. 10. c. 5.
of the Christian Religion.

Tribes both of Israel and Judah, then at Hostility with each other, that can almost be conceiv'd: And yet the strange Death of the Prophet of Judah, for transgressing, by his own Confession, the Word of the Lord to him; and his Sepulchre, with its Title or Inscription, still remaining at Bethel when Josiah demolished the Altar there, gave a farther Confirmation to it.

The fulfilling of this Prophecy by Josiah, was no less remarkable, 2 Kings xxii. 15. Josiah was the Son of a very wicked King, and born at a time when the People were exceedingly corrupted by the Idolatry of his Grandfather Manasses; and his Sons likewise proved wicked: so that he was so singular in his Piety, and so wonderful an Example of it, that no Man of his own Age could have imagined that of him, which had been foretold so many hundred Years ago. In all human Appearance, this was a very unlikely time to see that Prophecy fulfill'd; and that which had been wonderful in any Age, was much more wonderful in this: and in so wicked an Age, this good King set about the Work of Reformation very young; to shew, that it was not of Men, but of God. The Prophet Abijah, who had prophesied, that Jeroboam should be King of the Ten Tribes, (1 Kings xi. 31.) foretold likewise the Death of Jeroboam's Son, the Destruction of his Family, and the Captivity of those Tribes by the Assyrians, (1 Kings xiv. 10.)

The Deliverance of Judah, at Jehoshaphat's Prayer, was foretold by Jahaziel, in the midst of the Congregation; and was accomplisht accordingly, by their Enemies destroying one another, 2 Chron. xx.

Elijah foretold, that the Dogs should lick Abah's Blood in Jezreel, where they had lick'd the Blood of Naboth: Which, as Josephus says, was objected by

b Joseph. Antiq. l. 8. c. 10.
Zedekiah, one of the False Prophets, against Micaiah, who foretold, that Ahab should be slain at Ramoth-gilead; but he was brought home in his Chariot from Ramoth-gilead to Samaria, and there the Dogs lick’d his Blood in Jezreel, 1 Kings xxii. 38. So that both the Prophecy of Elijah and Micaiah was fulfill’d. And when one Prophet seems contrary to another, one foretelling the principal Thing, and another some accidental Circumstance, which those that were present, and most concerned in the Action, could not imagine, ’till it happen’d; and False Prophets, in the mean time, watch the Event, to take all Advantages from it, against the True Prophets, and can find none: nothing more can be desired, to assure us of the Truth of any Prophecy. The same Prophet foretold the like Judgment upon Jezebel, and that the House of Ahab should be like the House of Jeroboam, and like the House Baasha; the Destruction of both which had been foretold by other Prophets, and their Prophecies fulfill’d, as this of Elijah’s also was.

Elijah, by a Writing sent to Jehoram King of Judah, foretold his Death, and the strange manner of it, viz. That after the Loss of his Children, and his Wives, and all his Goods, he should be afflicted in his Bowels, and that his Bowels should fall out by degrees, 2 Chron. xxi. 12. And as Isaiah prophesy’d of Cyrus, and another Prophet of Josiah, by Name, long before they were born: So Elijah left behind him this Prophecy in writing which was deliver’d to Jehoram. The same Prophet not only foretold the Death of Abaziah, but caus’d Fire twice to come down from Heaven, upon those who were sent to apprehend him, 2 Kings i. And at his Prayer, Fire descended from Heaven, and consumed the Sacrifice, in the sight of Baal’s Prophets, being four hundred and fifty; to whom Elijah, who was the only Prophet of the Lord there present had made this Proposal,
posal, The God that answereth by fire, let him be God: And when Baal, notwithstanding all their hideous Cries, and the cutting themselves, did not hear them; then, upon Elijah's Prayer, the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench, 1 Kings xviii. 38. Which was the same Miracle, repeated in the midst of Idolaters, who were so provoked and enraged against the Prophet Elijah, that had been before wrought in the sight of the People of Israel, in the time of Moses, Lev. ix. 24. and of David, 1 Chron. xxi. 26. and at the Dedication of Solomon's Temple, 2 Chron. vii. 1. "And this Miracle of Elijah, in bringing down Fire from Heaven, to consume the Sacrifice, and that of Moses in like manner, were both confess'd to be true, by Julian the Apostle himself.

The miraculous Cure of Naaman's Leprosie, must be notorious throughout the Kingdoms both of Syria and Israel, 2 Kings v. The wonderful Deliverance of the Israelites, when the Syrians heard a Noise of Horses and Chariots, and therefore rais'd the Siege of Samaria, and the Plenty which followed, was foretold by Elisha, with a Judgment upon that Lord who doubted of the Truth of his Prediction. The same Prophet foretold the Death of Benhadad King of Syria, and that he should never recover of his Sicknes, nor die a Natural Death. And the Reign of Hazael, who succeeded him, is described in such true and dreadful Characters, that Hazael thought it impossible for him to be guilty of so much Cruelty, 2 Kings vii. viii.

The Leprosie inflicted upon Uzziah, for presuming to burn Incense unto the Lord, which it was lawful for the Priests only to do, was a permanent Miracle; for his Leprosie continued till his Death; and for

that reason, he lived separately, and his Son, from that time, had the Administration of Affairs, 2 Kings xv. 5. And this Miracle of the Leper was accompanied with a terrible Earthquake, mentioned Zech. xiv. 5. Amos. i. and the Ruins which were caus'd by the Earthquake, remain'd as a perpetual Memorial of the Judgment.

An hundred fourscore and five thousand of the Assyrians were slain by an Angel of the Lord, in one Night, 2 Kings xix. 35. and this Deliverance was foretold by Isaiab, when the Assyrians were in the height of their Pride and Blasphemy, and the People of Judah in the Extremity of Danger and Despair. Isai.xxxvii. It happening likewise, that this Invasion of the Assyrian Army was in the Year of Jubilee, the Enemy had ravaged and consum'd the Corn of the last Year, and by the Law concerning the Years of Jubilee, the Jews were commanded not to sow in those Years, (Lev. xxv. 11.) so that there was a miraculous Provision promised and accordingly made them, of two Years Sustenance, without their own Care or Labour, 2 Kings xix. 29. At the Prayer of Isaiab, the Sun went back ten Degrees, for a Sign to King Hezekiah of his Recovery: and the Princes of Babylon sent Embassadors to enquire of this Wonder, 2 Kings xx. 11. 2. Chron. xxxii. 31. Isai.xxxix. 1.

It was impossible there should be any Mistake in Miracles of this nature, which have the same Evidence that those of Moses himself had, having the

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\[d\] Hieron. in Isai. c. vii. & in Zech. c. xiv.
\[e\] Jofeph. Antiq. l. 9. c. 11.
\[f\] Quia apud eos (Chaldæos) astrarum observantia est, stellarum; curfas longe usque & exercitacione cognitus, intellelexerunt jolum reversionis, Dei spatia duplicata, servire ei, quam solem Deum putabant. Cuncta causas hujus miraculi, rationem; perquirerent, fama per omnes Gentes solventane, didicerunt propter agensationem Regis Iudææ, etiam cursum ejus clarissimi mutatum. Hieronym. in Isai. xxxix. 1.
joint Testimony of a whole People to prove the Truth of them.

Isaiah foretold the Destruction of the Kingdom of Israel, with the set time of it; Within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people, Isai. vii. 8. * The exact fulfilling whereof the Jews prove, by computing from the twenty fifth Year of Uzziah’s Reign, which was the Year of the Earthquake, mention’d, Amos. i. 1. which they say attended the Judgment inflicted upon Uzziah, for usurping the Priest’s Office. The Defolation foretold by him of Babylon is attested by *Eye-witnesses to be fulfilled in all Particulars, chap. xiii. 19. † All the Ground on which Babylon was spread, is left now desolate, nothing standing in that Peninsula, between the Euphrates and the Tigris, but only part, and that a small part of the great Tower, which God hath suffered to stand (if Man may speak so confidently of his great impenetrable Counsels) for an Eternal Testimony of his great Work in the Confusion of Man’s Pride; and that Ark of Nebuchadnezzar, for a perpetual a Memory of his great Idolatry, and condign Punishment; nothing else shewing the Figure of any thing, which hath been either of Ornament or of Greatness, or of Place inhabited. So truly doth God judge the huge Sins of the World, and maintaineth so justly the Credit of his Messengers, that though they speak great things, they never speak vain things."

After the Death of Alexander, Babylon was little regarded, but fell to decay, 'till it became quite desolate. Strabo applies to Babylon, what had been said

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* Euseb. & Hieron. in Esai. vii. 8.  
† Sir Ant. Shelly’s

P 4
of Megalopolis in Arcadia. The Great City is a great Ruine. And with him agree, Diodorus Siculus, Pausanias, and Pliny.

Isaiah prophesied of Cyrus by Name two hundred and ten Years before the Accomplishment of his Prophecy; and foretold the Rebuilding of the Temple, an hundred and forty Years before it was demolished. The Expressions describing his Conquests are so plain, and full, that as St. Jeron observes, the History of Cyrus, by Xenophon, is an admirable Comment upon this Prophecy of Isaiah, That faith of Cyrus, He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy Foundation shall be laid. Thus faith the Lord to his Anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue Nations before him: And I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of Iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places. He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, faith the Lord of Hosts, Isa. xliv. 28. and xlv. 1, 2, 3, 13. And this Cyrus himself, tho' an Heathen Prince, was so sensible of, that he acknowledged it in his Proclamation which he put forth for the Building the Temple: Thus faith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of Heaven given me, and be bath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23. Ezra i. 2. And the Circumstances of the Birth, Edu-


i Joseph. Antiq. l. 11. c. 1.

k Hieron. ad Isai. c. 44.
cation and Advancement of Cyrus, were so far from having any thing in them, that looked towards the fulfilling these Prophecies, that they all seemed extremely to make against it, and did thereby wonderfully manifest the Divine Wisdom and Power in the Prophecies, and in the Accomplishment of them.

For there is no Historian (says Sir W. Raleigh, speaking of the Conquest of Babylon,) who was either present at this Victory of Cyrus, or that received the Report from others truly, as it was, that could better leave the same to Posterity, after it happened, than Esay hath done in many Places of his Prophecies, which were written two hundred Years before any thing attempted.” And the same Prophet who foretold the Empire of Cyrus the Persian, foretold likewise, That the Kingdom of the Chaldeans should be destroyed by the Medes, Isa. xiii. 17. And it was prophesied by Jeremiah, that it should be destroyed by the Kings of the Medes, Jer. li. 11, 28. And this is the more remarkable, because though Darius Medus conquer’d Babylon, yet he dying soon after, and Cyrus succeeding him, the Fame of Cyrus, who was, at the taking of Babylon, but General of his Army, so obscured the Name and Memory of Darius, that Historians have taken no notice of him; though he is found mention’d by the Scholiaft, upon Aristophanes, who says, that a Darius, who was before him that was Father of Xerxes, gave Name to the pieces of Coin call’d Δαγενος, who must be Darius Medus. So much better were Transactions known to the Prophets before-hand, than to Historians afterwards. The Judgments which were to befal divers other Nations, were also foretold by Isaiah, and described by particular Circumstances: He pro-

1 L. 3. Part. 1. c. 3. § 5.  
2 See Sir W. Raleigh, l. 3. c. 2. § 2  
3 Aristoph. Concionant. Suid. vid. Δαγενος.
The Reasonableness and Certainty

phesied of the Overthrow of Tyre by Alexander the Great; From the land of Chittim it is revealed to them, Isa. xxiii. 1. The Land of Chittim is Macedonia, 1 Mac. i. i. viii. 5. And Isaiah expressly calls Tyre an Island, xxiii. 2, 6. and therefore must mean that Tyre which was taken by Alexander; tho' it were not yet built, but rose out of the Ruins of Tyre on the Continent, which Nebuchadnezzar destroyed, according to Ezekiel's Prophecy. The Destruction of Nineveh o was foretold by the Prophet Nabum, an hundred and fifteen Years before-hand. "P Nineveh (that which "God himself called that Great City) hath not one "Stone standing, which may give the Memory of "the Being of a Town: one English Mile from it, "is a place called Mosul, a small thing, rather to be "a Witness of the other's Mightiness, and God's "Judgment, than of any Fashion of Magnificence in "it itself.

The Prophet Jeremiah foretold the Conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, and the Captivity of the Jews by him, in so remarkable and solemn a manner, that it was notorious to all the neighbouring Nations: For, according to the Custom of delivering Prophecies by some visible Signs, as well as in Words, he sent Bonds and Yokes to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which came to Jerusalem (from these several Kings) unto Zedekiah king of Judah; and foretold, That all these Nations should serve Nebuchadnezzar, and his son, and his sons son, Jer. xxvii. 3, 7. And the Jews put him in Prison for his Prophecy; where he was kept when Nebuchadnezzar took the City, and set him at liberty. And when the Chaldeans had raised the Siege,

o Jos. Antiq. l. 9. c. ii. 1νωτερον πολις ιφανετη παραχεμα την τη Συρων κατατυη, Strabo, l. 16. p. 1071.
" P Sir Ant. Sherley's Travels i. • • Persia, p. 21.
by reason of Pharaoh's Army, which was coming to
the Relief of Jerusalem; Jeremias told the Jews, That
Pharaoh's Army should return into Egypt, without
effecting any thing; and that the Chaldeans should
come again, and take the City, and burn it with fire,
Jer. xxxvii. 5. He likewise prophesied against Egypt,
which the Jews made their Refuge and Sanctuary;
and pointed out the very Place where Nebuchadnezzar
would pitch his Tent, by taking great Stones, and
hiding them in the Clay, at the entry of Pharaoh's
House Tahpanhes, in the sight of the Men of Judah;
declaring, That his throne should be set upon those stones,
and he should spread his royal pavilion over them, Jer.
xlili. 9, 10. It is obserivable that Jeremiah, when he
might have gone to Babylon, and lived in Safety and
Honour there, chose rather to remain in his own Coun-
try, and persist in the discharge of his Office; and
when he was constrained to go into Egypt, he still
retain'd the same Zeal and Spirit of Prophecy. And
the Accomplishment of his Prophecy concerning Pha-
raoh, chap. xlviv. 30. is to be seen in Herodotus.
The Prophet Jeremiah was opposed and contra-
dicted by several False Prophets, who prophesied de-
ceitfully and flattering Delusions to the People, per-
suading them, that no Evil should come upon them;
of whom Jeremiah foretold, That Hananiah should die
that same Year in which he vented his false Prophe-
cies, chap. xxviii. 16, 17. and, That Abah the Son of
Kolaiab, and Zedeciah the Son of Maaseiah, should
be taken Captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and slain in the
sight of the People of Judah, and roasted in the Fire,
chap. xxix. 21, 22. And thus distinctly foretelling
the Time and Manner of the Death of those false Pro-
phets, he vindicated his own Prophecies, which were
at first so unwillingly believed, beyond all Contradi-
tion.

9 Herodot. Euterp. c. 169.
But that which seemed most strange, and was most objected against in the Prophecies of Jeremiah, was his Prophecy concerning the Death of Zedekiah; for in this, He and Ezekiel were thought to contradict each other. Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem at the same time when Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon, and concerning the same things; and Jeremiah's Prophecy was sent to the Captives in Babylon, and Ezekiel's to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem. But Jeremiah said, Thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. Yet hear the word of the Lord, O Zedekiah king of Judah, Thus saith the Lord of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword; but thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shalt they burn odours for thee, and they will lament thee, saying, Ab, Lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the Lord, Jer. xxxiv. 3, 4, 5. But Ezekiel prophesied in these Words; I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans: yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there, Ezek. xii. 13. Now these two Prophets writing of the Captivity of Zedekiah, reckon up all the Circumstances of it between them, in such a manner, as that they were believed to contradict each other; and thereby the Expectation and Attention of the People was the more excited to observe the Fulfilling of their Prophecies. Jeremiah said, That he should see the King of Babylon, and be carried to Babylon: Ezekiel, That he should not see Babylon. Jeremiah, That he should die in peace, and be buried after the manner of his Ancestors: Ezekiel, That he should die at Babylon. And if we compare all this with the History, nothing ever was more punctually fulfilled: For Zedekiah saw the King of Babylon who,
commanded his Eyes to be put out, before he was brought to Babylon; and he died there, but died peaceably, and was suffered to have the usual Funeral Solemnities, 2 Kings xxv. 6, 7. And therefore both Prophecies proved true in the Event, which seemed before to be inconsistent. And so critical an Exactness in every minute Circumstance, in Prophecies delivered by two Persons, who were before thought to contradict each other, was such a conviction to the Jews, after they had seen them so punctually fulfilled, in their Captivity, that they could no longer doubt but that both were from God.

Jeremiah foretold also, That the Kingdom of the Chaldceans should be destroyed, and that the Jews should be restored, after a Captivity of seventy Years: These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years: And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldceans, Jer. xxv. 11, 12. For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place, Jer. xxix. 10. And upon this Prophecy of Jeremiah the Jews depended, under the Captivity, Dan. ix. 2. Zech. i. 12. and it was exactly fulfilled to them. He foretold, that the Vessels of the Temple should be brought back again at the coming of the Jews out of their Captivity in Babylon, chap. xxvii. 22. And it was the particular Care of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, that they should be returned, Ezra i. 7. vi. 5. vii. 19. He bought a Field of Hanameel his Uncle's Son, and the Evidences of the Purchase, which were subscribed in the sight of many Witnesses, were delivered to Baruk, to be preserved in an Earthen Vessel, as a Token of the Peoples return out of Captivity, and to be produced at their Return in confirmation of his Prophecies, Jer. xxxii. 9.
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ons of Nebuchadnezzar's Posterity, that should succeed him, till the Destruction of that Monarchy, are foretold, Jer. xxvii. 7. The Destruction of Babylon, with the manner of taking the City, as it was foretold and described by the Prophet, agrees punctually with the Account of it by *Herodotus and Xenophon. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his City is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. Which should be in time of Feasting and Drunkenness. And this was declared in a memorable and solemn manner, by writing it down, and by casting the Book into Euphrates, Jer. li. 31, 32, 39, 57, 62, 63. The Historians inform us, that the City of Babylon being provided with all Necessaries to endure a Siege for many Years, Cyrus order'd the Banks of the River to be cut; and the Waters to be drained, till it became fordable, and then surprized the City by the Chanel, both at the Entrance of the River into the City, and at its Passage out again. And this Stratagem he contrived to execute on a Festival, when the People, without any Apprehension of Danger, were entertaining themselves with Dancings and other Diversions: And his Soldiers at the same time entring the most distant places of so great a City; both Ends were taken, before they that dwelt in the midst of the City, knew of it. So that Messengers were sent from both parts of the City, in great haste and confusion, to inform the King, that his City was taken at the End, that is, by a common Hebraism at each end; or from End to End; for one is not in the Hebrew, partis added by our Translators in a different Character. And which is the same thing, each Mes-

* Herodot. Cyri. 1. 191. Xenoph. Inf. Cyri. 1. 7. Herodotus was born within these four Years of the Time, and Xenophon not very long after. Bishop of Jerusalem.

fenger should tell the King, that his City was taken at one end. That they should run from each end, the Prophet plainly foretels, in saying, that they should meet one another. \textit{v} Aristotle says, it was reported, that the City had been taken three Days before the People in all parts of the City knew of it.

\textit{Jeremiah} also prophesied, That the Seed of Israel should never cease from being a Nation to the End of the World; which we see fulfilled in their continuing a distinct Nation, tho' dispers'd in all parts of the World, Jer. xxxi. 36.

The Destruction of Tyre and Zidon, and of Egypt, was foretold by the Prophet Ezekiel; and the Retraction of the Egyptians, after forty Years, Ezek. xxviii. 19. and xxix. 12, 13. As Isaiah had foretold the Destruction of the latter Tyre by Alexander, long before it had any Being; so Ezekiel prophesied, that Nebuchadnezzar should destroy Palatyrus, or Tyre, on the Continent, but situate at the entry of the sea, Ezek. xxvii. 3. which was never to be rebuilt, chap. xxvi. 14, 21. xxvii. 36. But Tyrus in the Isle had its Rise from the Ruins of this. The Prophet says, that this Tyre was strong in the sea, chap. xxvi, 17. that its borders were in the midst of the seas, chap. xxvii. 4. which a learned Author understands of its Maritime Power. And whereas the Prophet afterwards adds, that this Tyre was made very glorious in the midst of the seas, \textit{v} 25. that the east-wind had broken her in the midst of the seas, \textit{v} 26. and that this Lamentation should be made over her, \textit{What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?} \textit{v} 32. The same Author understands these, and other Expressions of the like Nature, to be spoken allegorically But they seem rather to imply, that the City, standing on the Continent, was in great measure compassed by the Sea, being situate on a Rock, (as the same Tzor signifies).
nifies) or a large Promontory reaching into the Sea. Ezekiel foretold the desolate estate of Ægypt for forty Years, and that, tho' at the end of that time, the Ægyptians should return from the Captivity, yet they should be a base Kingdom: It shall be the basest of the Kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more above the Nations. For I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the Nations, Ezek. xxix. 12. Which Prophecy has been most remarkably fulfilled. For after the Conquest of Ægypt it never has been an independent Kingdom, but subject to the Persians, then to the Macedonians, afterwards to the Romans, next to the Saracens, and now to the Turks. And during that Interval of Revolt from the Persians, they were still, as Ezekiel foretold, a base Kingdom. Alexander the Great's Victory at the River Granicus, his Vanquishing Darius, and his Conquests of the Medes and Persians, and the Division of his Empire, after his Death, between Ptolemaeus Lægus, Philip or Arideus the Brother of Alexander, Seleucus Nicanor, and Antigonus, are first allegorically described, and then explain'd, by the Angel Gabriel.

The Prophanation of the Temple, and of the Sanctuary, by Antiochus Epiphanes, with the Death of Antiochus, and a Description of his Temper, and of his very Countenance, was clearly delivered by Daniel, four hundred and eight Years* before the accomplishment, Dan. viii. Daniel likewise described the Fate of the four Monarchies, the Restoration of the Jews, and the Rebuilding of their City, and the Birth and Death of the Mæssias, with the precise Time of both, and of the Destruction of the City and the Sanctuary. And Alexander the Great is said † to have been encourag'd by Daniel's Prophecy, in his Expedition. Indeed, his Prophecy, and the History of the four

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* Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. c. 11.  
† Ibid. l. 11. c. 8.
Monarchies, are so exactly parallel, that Porphyry could find no other Evasion, but to say, That the Book of Daniel was written after the Events: Which, as Grotius observes, is as absurd, as if a Man should maintain, that the Works of Virgil were not written under Augustus, but after his time: For the Book of Daniel was as publick, and as much dispers'd, and as universally received, as ever any Book could be.

Lastly, Haggai and Malachi prophesied, That Christ should come before the Destruction of the Second Temple, Hag. ii. 7, 9. Mal. iii. 1. Hesca foretold the present State of the People of Israel, in those remarkable Words, They shall be wanderers among the nations, Hos. ix. 17. And Amos, in a more particular manner declared, That the sinful Kingdom should be destroyed, but that the House of Jacob should be preserved: **I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, faith the Lord; for lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth,** Amos ix. 8, 9. After the Destruction of their Kingdom and Government, and the Dispersion of the People into all Parts of the Earth, they were still to remain a separate People, distinguished from those among whom they lived.

Not to insist therefore upon other Miracles and Prophecies, which were concerning things of lesser Moment, or less remarkable in the Eyes of the World; these may suffice, which were of that publick nature that there could be no Deceit or Mistake in them: Multitudes of Men, whom Prejudice or Malice had prepared to make the utmost Discoveries, were Witnesses to the Miracles; and both the Prophecies themselves, and the fulfilling of them, were notorious to other Nations, as well as to the Jews, to whom they were deliver'd, and in whose hands they have ever

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since been, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day. The Jews had as good Evidence, for instance, that Elijah wrought his Miracles, as they could have, that there was such a Man in the World. And when the publick Transactions and Councils of Princes, the Fate and Revolution of Empires, with the prefixed Time and Place, and the very Names of the Persons, were so particularly foretold, two or three hundred Years before the Things came to pass; we may as well question the Truth of all History, as the Certainty of these Revelations: For indeed, they are the History of Things that were to come, set down in the very Circumstances in which they afterwards were brought to pass. And yet if a Man should dispute whether there ever were such a Man as Elijah, or such a Prince as Josiah, or Cyrus, he would but make himself ridiculous; but if he deny that Elijah wrought such Miracles, or that Isaiah spoke of Cyrus, and another Prophet of Josiah, by Inspiration, perhaps he may be thought to have made some great Discovery, and to know something above the rest of Mankind, and shall be likely to meet with Applause, instead of that Contempt which such Pretences deserve: So strangely partial are Men for any thing which is but against the Authority of the Scriptures. For I think it will be hard for Men to bring better Proof, that there were such Men as Elijah, and Josiah, and Cyrus, than may be brought to shew, that the latter were by Name prophesied of long before their Birth, and that the first wrought all the Miracles related of him; or to produce clearer Evidence, that there was such a City as Jerusalem before the Reign of Cyrus, than we have, that the Destruction of the City and Temple, and the Captivity of the People, with their Restoration after seventy Years, was foretold by Jeremiah.

The Prophets did their Miracles in the most publick manner; and their Prophecies were deliver'd, not
of the Christian Religion.

in Corners, but openly, before all the People; not in obscure and ambiguous Words, but in plain Terms, with a particular Account of Persons, and Time, and Place: They were kept, they were read and studied by that very People, who at first as little regarded them, as any Man now amongst us can do, but flew the Prophets themselves, and rejected their Prophecies with Rage and Indignation; but were afterwards, by the Event of things, so fully convinced (which was likewise foretold, Ezek. xxxiii. 33.) of their Divine Inspiration and Authority, that they wholly depended and rely'd upon them, and liv'd in an uncomfortable Exile, upon the whole Hope and Expectation of seeing the rest of their Prophecies fulfill'd. And therefore, the Posterity of those who had slain the Prophets, had the highest Veneration for the Memory of these Prophets whom their Fore-fathers had kill'd; they built and adorn'd their Sepulchres, when it was so reproachful to them to erect Monuments of perpetual Acknowledgment, That they were the Children of them which killed the Prophets, Matth. xxiii. 31. And chose to die any Death, rather than renounce the Authority of their Books, or part with them, even when they had forsaken their Doctrine, and chang'd the Substance of their Religion, for vain Traditions, and superstitious Observances. They referr'd themselves to these Prophets, for the Authority of their Religion; and acknowledg'd, that they had neither Prophecies nor Miracles after the Captivity. For during the Captivity in Babylon, the False Prophets had lost all Reputation with the People, who found themselves so miserably disappointed in the deluding Hopes, which those Prophets, that set themselves in opposition to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, had given them. Those Prophets became a Curse and a Proverb of Reproach among the Jews, as Jeremiah had foretold, Jer. xxix. 22. And from that time, False Prophets never could gain Esteem enough
enough to vent their Prophecies, if they attempted it.

C H A P. XI.

Of the Dependence of the several Parts of the Scriptures upon each other; and that the Old Testament proves the New, and the New again proves the Old, as the Cause and the Effect.

It is a thing altogether incredible, that the Inhabitants of so small a part of the World as Judaea is, should lay a Design of imposing upon the rest of Mankind, which could prove so successful for so many thousand Years together; and that they should be such Masters of Deceit, and the World so fond of receiving Revelations from them, that at last, tho' the greatest part of that People, disclaim'd the Books, which some few, and those the most unlearned among them, would impose for Inspired Writings; yet the Authority of these Books should be more acknowledged in all parts of the World, than those had ever been in which they all unanimously agreed, and the rest should be received for the sake of these, more than ever they had been upon their own Account; which is the Case of the Books of the Old and New Testament. If the Jews (even the meanest and most ignorant of them) could do this merely by their own Wit and Device, they must have a Genius superior to that of all Mankind besides. For what imaginable Reason is there, why the Oracles of all the Heathen Nations should never be much regarded, and now in a manner, utterly lost, and that the Books of the Jews should still be preserv'd in their full Authority,
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thority; but the Power and Advantage of Truth in these, and the want of it in them?

And the Evidence of this Truth is most observa-

ble, in the mutual Dependence which all the Parts of the Scriptures have one upon another. They were pen’d by Men of different Countries, different Ages, different Conditions, and Callings, and Interests, from the King to the poor Fisherman, some by Prophets of Judah, and some by those of Israel, and others by Prophets born in Chaldea; and yet all carry on the same Design: They are not like the Oracles of the Heathen Gods, which must stand or fall by themselves; but there is an admirable Series and Connexion between all the Writings of the Holy Scriptures, by which the several Parts of them give a mutual Support and Attestation to each other. The Pentateuch of Moses contains the first Lineaments, and evident Types and Prophecies of all that is contained in the rest: He foretold, That a Succession of Prophets should arise, and that there would likewise be False Prophets; He shew’d how they were to be discovered and distinguished from the True Prophets, and declared, that at last the Great Prophet should be sent, who is Christ; and he foretold all that was to befal the Jews from his own time, to the Destruction of Jerusalem. And as Moses has given us the general State of the Jews, for all Generations; so the several Prophets, who were sent from time to time, according to his Predictions, foretold particular Events, and more especially they foretold and described the Times of the Gospel. This was the great Design of all Prophecies, and the Thing that God had spoken by the Prophets, which have been since the world began, Luke i. 70. For in Christ was the Accomplishment of all the Types and Prophecies in the Old Testament.

And this Dependence and Coherence between all the Parts of the Scriptures, in the Matter and Design
of them, which is as great as the Dependence of one Part of any Book written by the same Author, can be upon another, gives great Strength and Confirmation to the whole; since it is an Evidence, that it was all inspired by the same infallible Spirit. And if one Part of Scripture be prov'd to be true, all must be so: For besides the particular Evidence which may be brought for any part separately, we must consider the Connexion which it has with the rest, and the Evidence which is derived upon it by this Connexion. If the Pentateuch be once proved to be of Divine Authority, then the Prophets who succeeded Moses must be divinely inspired; because he foretold the Succession of such Prophets: And if the Prophecies and Miracles of the Prophets were divine, the Pentateuch must be so; because they all along acknowledged and appeal'd to it, as containing God's Covenant with his People the Jews, and being therefore the Ground and Foundation of their own Mission. If Moses and the Prophets be from God, the Gospel must be from Him, if that be foretold by them: And if the Prophecies and Miracles of our Saviour and his Disciples prove their Divine Authority, the Writings of Moses and the Prophets must be likewise of the same Authority; because they acknowledge them for such, and prove their own Authority from them, as well as from the Miracles that they themselves wrought. And if the Prophecies and Miracles either of Moses or of the Prophets, or of our Saviour and his Apostles, taken by themselves, and apart from the rest, be sufficient, they must needs be more convincing, when they are considered together, in their united Force and Light.

I must farther observe, that Miracles without Prophecies, or Prophecies without Miracles, or that one evident Miracle, or one evident Prophecy; at least, That either the Miracles or Prophecies of some one
one Person, in the several Ages in which so many Prophets lived, would have been a sufficient ground of Faith, and that therefore they must all be much rather so in conjunction: But I shall only desire it may be remembred, That whatever Evidence has been brought in proof of the Divine Authority of the Books of Moses, and of the Prophets, doth reciprocallly prove both the one and the other; and that therefore whatever is brought from either of them, in proof of the Gospel, has the Evidence of the whole; and that the Gospel in different respects doth prove them, and is proved by them, both deriving Authority from the Books of the Old Testament, and communicating its own Authority to them: For as the Cause may be proved by its Effect, and the Effect by its Cause; so both Predictions prove the Things foretold; and the Accomplishment of the Things foretold, verify the Predictions; and Miracles wrought in consequence of Prophecies concerning them, have doubly the Divine Seal and Attestation. Now, the Messias is the Scope and Centre of the whole Old Testament, as the Jews themselves ever understood it; and whatever Testimony is produced from thence, brings with it the Evidence of the whole: And a like Evidence is again reflected upon the whole Old Testament, by the Accomplishment of any part of it in the New, and by the Appeal which our Saviour and his Apostles constantly made to it.
CHAP. XII.
Of the Person of our Blessed Saviour.

That in the Reign of Tiberius, there liv'd such a Person as Jesus Christ, who suffer'd under Pontius Pilate, is expressly written by Tacitus; and that he cured Diseases, and wrought other Miracles, was never denied by the worst Enemies to the Christian Name and Doctrine. So that the Substance of the History of the Life and Death of our Saviour, is acknowledged by our very Adversaries, and the Power, by which he wrought his Miracles, is the thing which was in dispute between them and the Primitive Christians. And therefore I shall take the Observations which I make concerning our Blessed Saviour, from that Account which the Evangelists give of him, which is in great part confess'd by the Jews and Heathens, and which deserves at least the same Credit that all other Histories do, till it can be disproved; and in the following Chapters I shall shew, that it is infallibly true.

The Divine Nature of our Blessed Saviour is of another Consideration: We are in this Place to consider him, according to the Appearance he made in the World: And this was such as shew'd him to be void of all ambitious and aspiring Thoughts, and to be meek and humble, and perfectly virtuous and holy. His Miracles were wrought without Vanity or Ostentation, and never out of Revenge, or to shew his Power over his Enemies, but always with a gracious and merciful Design: He avoided all Opportunities of Popularity; he would not intermeddle in private Affairs, when he was appeal'd to; and made his Escape, when the

*Vulgus Christianos appellabat. Austor nominis ejus Christus, qui, Tiberio imperante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, supplicio affliebatur. Tacit. Annal. l. 15. c. 44.*
People would have taken him by force to make him a King, after they had seen the Miracle of the Loaves; by which it appeared, that he, who was able to sustain so many thousands in the Wilderness, might have made himself as great as he would, notwithstanding any Opposition. He suffered the Acclamations, and accepted of the Hosanna's of the People, to fulfil a Prophecy concerning himself; but took so little Delight in these Applauses, that he wept over Jerusalem, when the whole City was moved at his Entrance, and nothing but Joy or Wonder had a place in any other's Thoughts, Matt. xxi. 10. Luke xix. 41.

He dealt freely and generously with his Disciples, not deluding them with vain Hopes, nor promising them great Matters, but checking their aspiring Thoughts, and telling them truly and plainly, that they were to expect nothing but Miseries in this World, from the Profession of his Doctrine. He put it to their own Choice, whether they would take up their Cross, and follow him; and when he was betray'd by one of these very Disciples, he uses no upbraiding or reproachful Language, but bespeaks him with a Divine Patience and Meekness: No Man ever suffer'd with so much Injustice and Cruelty, nor ever any Man with so great Compassion and Charity towards all his Enemies.

He lived a mean and despis'd Life, and never was in such a condition as could tempt any Man to flatter him, or to conceal any Fault, if he had been guilty of any; and he had always many Enemies, who endeav'our'd to fasten the worst Calumnies upon him, but their Malice tended only to render his Innocence the more manifest and illustrious.

The Person who betrayed him, and delivered him into the Hands of his Enemies, was one of the Twelve, one of his own Disciples and Apostles, whom he had sent out to gain Proselytes, and had committed to him a Power
a Power of working Miracles, and of doing whatsoever was requisite to gain Reception for his Religion in the World. *Judas* was one of the Twelve, who were nearest to him, and were admitted to all the Secrets of his Kingdom, and were entrusted with the most hidden Mysteries, and obscure Doctrines of his Religion; whatsoever was spoken to others in Parables, was explained afterwards to them in private; nothing was with-held from them, which it was convenient for them to be acquainted withal, or which they were capable of knowing. Nay, *Judas* seems to have had a particular Mark of Favour placed upon him, in that he was the Keeper of the Bag; for it was an Office of some Trust and Confidence: However it gave him an opportunity of knowing, whether his Master had any such ambitious Designs, as he was accused of. For if he had perverted the Nation, and forbidden to give Tribute to Caesar, and had endeavoured to set himself up as King of the Jews, which was the Charge laid against him before Pilate, such a Project could not have been carried on without amassing a great Treasure; of which therefore if any such thing had been in hand, *Judas* had been best able to give an Account. But when one, who had constantly attended upon him, and was so intimately acquainted with all the Secrets of his Life and Doctrine, had nothing to allege against him, after he had betrayed him, what could make more for his Justification, or be a clearer Demonstration of his Innocence? When Men are once prevail'd upon to turn Traitors, they seldom do things by halves, but if there be the least pretence or colour to be found, they will be sure to lay hold of it to justify their Villany. And it is the most undeniable Proof of our Saviour's Innocence, that Treachery itself could discover nothing to fasten upon him: But tho' *Judas* had been suborned by the Chief Priests to betray his Master for thirty Pieces of Silver, yet neither that nor a greater Sum, (which we
may be confident would not have been denied him) could prevail with Judas himself, to undertake to appear as a Witness against him.

When one of his own Disciples was persuaded, or rather had offered of his own accord to betray him, it could not be imagined, but that the Chief Priests would urge him to come in, as a Witness to the Accusations which they had framed against him. This had been a much more acceptable Service to them, than barely to deliver him up: For what could have brought a greater Disgrace upon his Person, or more Discredit upon his Religion, than for one of his own Disciples to witness against him, that he had committed things worthy of death? Men, who were at such a loss for matter to charge Christ with, and at last could not make their Witnesses agree together, would never, we may be sure, have omitted such an Opportunity as this of loading him with Infamy, and stifling his Doctrine in his Death. And he who was so ready and forward to betray his Master would never have stuck at accusing him if he had had any thing to say against him; and no other Reason can be given why he did not do it, but that he was over-awed by that Innocence and Holiness, which he knew to be in him, and was seized with such Remorse of Conscience and Terror of Mind, as not to be able to bear up under the Guilt of what he had already done. For Judas, who had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of Silver to the Chief Priests and Elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood: And they said, What is that to us, see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of Silver in the Temple, and went and hanged himself; Mat. xxvii. 3, 4. How could the Chief Priests themselves have contrived a better way to vindicate our Saviour's Innocence, if they had never so much endeavour'd it, than for one of his own Disciples, after he had betrayed him, instead of witnessing
witnessing against him, which it was natural to suppose he would have done, to be so far from that, as to come before them all, and fling down the Money in the Temple, which they had given him as the hire of his Treachery, and declare publickly, that he had betrayed the innocent Blood; and then to give a farther Proof of all this, out of mere Anguish and Horror of Mind, to go immediately from them, and hang himself?

If our Saviour had done any thing, whereby he could deserve to be put to Death, Judas must needs have known it; and when he had once betrayed him, it cannot be supposed he would forbear to discover any thing he knew of him. But when on the contrary he was so far from accusing him, that as soon as he saw him condemned at the Accusation of other false Witnesses, he could not bear the Agonies of his own Mind, but went and made away with himself; this is as evident a proof of Christ’s Innocence, as any of the other Apostles themselves could ever give; and Judas is so far an Apostle still, as to proclaim his Master’s Innocence in the Face of the Sanhedrin, and then to seal that Testimony with his Blood.

It has been thought * by some, that Judas, as wicked as he was, had never any Design to cause his Master to be put to death, or to be any way instrumental towards it; but he supposed that Christ would be secure enough against the Chief Priests in his own Innocence and Holiness, or that they would not dare to hurt him for fear of the People, which had been a Restraint upon them in their former Attempts; or that he could easily make his Escape from them, as he had formerly done, and therefore his Covetousness tempted him to believe, that though he should betray his Master, yet he would come to no harm by it. However, it is certain, that Judas himself cleared our Saviour’s Innocence, by betraying him, more than any other

* Theophyl. in Matt. xxvii.
Man could have done, who had not been his Disciple: And his making that Confession, and then his dying upon that Account, and in that Manner, may afford us an Evidence, which we must have wanted, to certify us in the Truth of the Christian Religion, if Christ had not been betrayed, or had been betrayed by any but one of his own Disciples.

When he was condemned and crucified, one of the Thieves, who was crucified with him, made an open Profession of him; when there could be no Temptation of Flattery, nor Leisuro or Patience for a Man in that condition to speak in that manner, but by the special Providence and Grace of God: And to give an early instance of the great Efficacy of his Cross, and of the Mercy, which it reacheth forth to all repenting Sinners, our Saviour assures him, that that very Day he should be with him in Paradise. A strange Discourse upon the Cross! To speak of Kingdoms, and promise Paradise under so much Infamy and Torment! That one should have the Faith to ask, and the other the Power to promise so great things in that Condition! Who could have had the Courage to promise so much upon the Cross, but he, who was able to perform it?

And as no Ill could ever be proved against him, but all Circumstances concurred to confirm his Innocence; as Herod dismissed him, and Pilate often declared him to have committed nothing worthy of Death; so the Devils themselves, during his Life here upon Earth, confessed him to be the Son of God, and after his Death, b by their Oracles acknowledged him to have been an holy Person, whose Soul was tranflated into Heaven.

And this Person, thus innocent and holy both in his Life and Doctrine, was prophesied of many Ages

before his Birth, and all the Prophecies concerning the Messias were exactly in a wonderful manner fulfilled in him. These Prophecies concern either his Birth, or his Life, or his Death, or his Resurrection and Ascension.

I. The Prophecies concerning the Birth of the Messias were fulfilled in our Saviour. For his Birth was prophesied of in all the Circumstances of the time, and the place of it, and the Person of whom he was born.

(1.) As for the Time; by Jacob's Prophecy (Gen. xlix. 10.) the Messias was to come about the time of the Dissolution of the Jewish Government. The Sceptre was not to depart from Judah, that is, the Power and Authority of the Jewish Government was not to cease, until Shilo came, which the ancient Jewish Interpreters expounded of the coming of their Messias.

To which purpose it is held by the Jews, that the great Sanbedrin sat in the Tribe of Judah, though but part of the Court in which they sat belonged to that Tribe, and the rest was in the Tribe of Benjamin. And the Jews, among all their Objections, never objected against the time in which our Saviour came into the World; but many of them have confessed that the Messias was born at that time; and say, that because of their Sins, he has concealed himself ever since. And the latter Jews have, by a great many Stories, endeavoured to make it believed, that there is a Kingdom still of their Nation, in some unknown part of the World; tho', if this were true, it could prove nothing to their purpose, the Prophecy being concerning their Power and Authority in the promised Land, the Borders whereof are there mentioned by Jacob, v 13.

\[c\] See Bishop Pearson on the Creed.
\[d\] Lightfoot, Prospect of the Temple, c. 21.
\[e\] Manasseh, Messias.
It is certain, that soon after our Saviour's coming, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jews dispersed, and upon severe Penalties forbidden to come to their desolate and ruined City, or so much as to look upon Zion, the City of their Solemnities, unless it were once every Year to lament their Calamity; and they have ever since been a wandering and despicable People. And several times, when they have attempted to rebuild their Temple, they have not been suffered to do it; particularly, when they had the Favour and Encouragement of Julian the Apostate; who, out of malice to the Christian Name and Doctrine, was forward to promote the Work, they were hindred by an Earthquake, and a miraculous Eruption of Fire bursting out near the Foundation, which burnt down what they had erected, and destroyed those that were employed in it; and this we have attested not only from Christian Writers, who lived near that time, but by an eminent Heathen Historian of the same Age. Now it was foretold by the Prophets Haggai and Malachi, that Christ should come before the Destruction of the Second Temple, and the Destruction of this Temple

\[ ^{2} \text{Hieron. in Sophon. c. i. Greg. Nazian. Orat. xii. p. 202.} \]
\[ ^{3} \text{Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam Templum, quod pòs multa ës internercina certamina, obsidente Vespasiano posleaque Tiu. agre est expugnatum, inflaurare sumpibus cognobat (Julianus immodicus, negatiunque maturandi Alyphio dederat Antiochenis, qui eil Britannias curaverat pro Praefetibus. Cùmitaque rei idem fortiter infibrat Alypius, juvareteque Provinciæ Reclor, metuendi glori flammamurum prope fundamente cerebris assiultibus crumptentes, fcevere lomam extiffis aliquties operantibus inacessium, bocque modo Elemento destinatiis espellente, cessavit inceptum. Ammian. Marcellin. l. 23. c. 1.} \]
was foretold by Daniel, with the precise time of our Saviour's coming; and to manifest to the World that Christ is come, and that therefore the Jewish Worship and Government is utterly at an end, as the Prophets had foretold, God has been pleased in so miraculous and terrible a manner to shew, that he will not suffer their Temple to be rebuilt; and whereas the Messias was to come to the second Temple, now for so many hundreds of Years, they have had no Temple at all for him to come to.

(2.) As the time of Christ's Birth was foretold by the Prophets, so was the place likewise; and that was Bethlehem, a small City, and therefore the more unlikely in all humane Account to have that Honour bestowed upon it, to become the Birth-place of him, who, the Jews expected, should be a Temporal Prince: Yet this was so well understood by the Jews of that time, notwithstanding their mistaken Notion of a Temporal Messias, that when Herod gathered all the Chief Priests and Scribes of the People together, and demanded of them, where Christ should be born, they answered him with one consent, in Bethlehem of Judæa, and quoted the Prophecy of Micah for the Proof of it, Matt. ii. And many believe that Jesus was the Messias, or the Christ, of whom they were then in Expectation; others made this Objection, that he could not be the Christ, because he came out of Galilee: but hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? This was the great Objection against our Saviour, that he could not be the Christ, because he did not come out of Bethlehem, but out of Galilee: For they thought he had been born at Nazareth in Galilee, not at Bethlehem in the Tribe of Judah; whereas he was indeed born at Bethlehem, and that by so strange and particular a Providence, as doth evidently prove him to be the Christ.
For it came to pass in these days, that there went out a Decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the World should be taxed, and registred according to their Families; and all went to be taxed, every one into his own City, into the City, which belonged to his Lineage and Family. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the City of Nazareth into Judea unto the City of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the House and Lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused Wife, being great with Child; and so it was, that while they were there, the Days were accomplished, that she should be delivered, Luke, ii. 1, &c. Here we see, that their going from Nazareth to Bethlehem was not in the least designed by the Virgin Mary and Joseph, but they were oblig’d to go thither by a new and strange Decree of the Emperor, and accordingly they went in Obedience to this Decree. If the Blessed Virgin had dwelt at Bethlehem, though the Prophecy had been fulfilled, yet there had been nothing in the Circumstances extraordinary; if she had gone thither of her own accord, or if some private Business had called her thither, this might have been looked upon as a Contrivance, and a Design to be thought the Mother of the Messiah; if God himself had by an immediate Revelation sent her thither, yet this still had been liable to Cavils, and might have been suspected of Imposture. But when at the Command of an Heathen Prince, and such a Command as had never been given out at any time before, the Virgin Mary was forced upon a long and tedious Journey, at an unseasonable time of the Year, being then great with Child, and therefore very unfit for such a Journey, and not in a Condition to have the least Inclination or Thought of undertaking it, when she was obliged by so unexpected and unwelcome a Command to repair to Bethlehem, and was at that very time deliver’d of her Son; all these Circumstances so wonderfully concurring, have something more convincing in them, than can well be express’d.
And it hath been observed by learned and judicious Men, that this Tax or Register was designed and begun in some parts of the Empire xxxviii Years before, but was hindered by Disturbances which happened; upon which Account it is supposed, that anciently the Spaniards began their Era xxxviii Years before the Computation of other Christians, supposing that the Taxing had been in Judea at the same time, that it was begun amongst them so many Years sooner; but the Divine Providence so order'd things, that it should not be carried on then, but should be deferred till that very time when Christ was to be born, that by this means Bethlehem might be the Place of his Birth.

And by the same special Providence it came to pass, not only that this Prophecy was fulfilled concerning his being born at Bethlehem, but that it should be register'd in the Publick Records of the Empire; to which Justin Martyr and Tertullian appeal for the proof of it, and St. Chrysostom mentions them as extant at Rome in his time, near four hundred Years after the Birth of our Saviour. And his being born there, proves that he was of the Seed of David, as it was prophesied that the Messiah should be: For the Decree required, that all should resort to the City of their Lineage or Family, and Bethlehem was the City of David. So that from our Saviour's being born at Bethlehem, and that by so remarkable a Providence,


without any human Foresight or Design; we have two evident Proofs that he is the Christ, he was of the Seed of David, and was born at Bethlehem; and this was attested by the Publick Records, or Censual Tables at Rome, which were often appeal’d to for the Truth of it, and were remaining to be consulted for several hundred Years afterwards. And the Jerusalem Gemarists do confess, that the Messiah was born at Bethlehem before their times.

(3.) The Person of whom our Saviour was born, had been likewise foretold. For, not only the time of his Birth, that it was to be before the Destruction of the Temple; and the Place, that it was to be at Bethlehem; but the Tribe of which he was to be born, the Tribe of Judah; and the Family, the Family of David and the very Person, that she was to be a Virgin: all were particularly foretold by the Prophets, and accordingly expected at that time by the Jews.

Concerning the Tribe and Family of which our Saviour was born, I shall observe, that effectual Care was taken, by the Law of Moses, to keep a perpetual Distinction of their several Tribes and Families: For by the Law of Inheritances, no Inheritance could pass out of a Family, either by Sale of Lands (for every fiftieth Year was a Year of Redemption, and every Man returned to his own possession, and every man to his own Family, Lev. xxv. 10.) or by defect of Heirs Male; for if there were Daughters, they were to inherit; and if there were no Daughters, it was to pass to their nearest Kinsman, Num. xxvii. And the Daughters, who were Heiresses, were obliged to marry to one of their Father’s Tribe and Family, chap. xxxvi. 8. But if a Man died without Children, his Brother or his next Kinsman was to raise up Seed unto the Deceased, and the First-born was to succeed

in the name of him that died without issue, *Deut. xxv. 5, 6. *Ruth iii. 12. So that he had a Natural and a Legal Father, the Names of both which must be enroll'd in their Registers, to entitle him and his Heirs to their Inheritance. All which was appointed with a peculiar Regard to the Messiah, that the Prophecies concerning his Tribe and Family might be known to be fulfill'd at his Birth.

The Genealogies of the Jews therefore were of two kinds; one of their Natural, and the other of their Legal Descent and Parentage; and we have both these Genealogies of our Saviour set down, the one by St. Matthew, and the other by St. Luke, which must be exactly the same with the Registers of the Genealogies then extant, which both in their publick Records, and in their private Books, were kept with Care and Exactness, their Expectation of the Messiah obliging them to it, and the Constitution of their Government necessarily requiring it. For all the Title and Claim they could have to their inheritances, entirely depended upon it; and they were so careful herein, that their Genealogies were preserv'd to the Destruction of Jerusalem. For this Reason, all went to be taxed, every one into his own city; because the publick Genealogical Tables were kept in each City, of the Families belonging to it. And if the Genealogies in St. Matthew and St. Luke had been different from those in the publick Registers, this had for ever silenc'd and extinguish'd all Pretences to our Saviour's being the Messiah; but they being exactly the same, did prove, that the Prophecies concerning the Messiah, were fulfill'd in him: For the Virgin Mary being the only Child of her Father, or at least having no Brother, it was lawful for her...
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to be espoused to none out of her own Family; and therefore the Pedigree of Joseph, as was customary in such Cases, is set down; this shewing her Lineage and Family, as certainly as her own Pedigree could have done: For the poorest amongst the Jews observed the Law of Inheritances, as strictly as the rich; and even in Exile it was observed, as well as when they were in possession of their Inheritances, Tob. vi. 10, 11.

Isaiab and Jeremiab had prophesied, that the Messiah should be born of a Virgin; and so their Prophecies had been understood by the ancient Jews. And that a Virgin should bear a Son, can seem to no Man incredible, who will but consider, that the God of Nature cannot be confined to the Laws of his own Institution; and that to make Man of the Dust of the Earth, or by other means than by natural Generation, as the first Man and Woman must certainly be made, whatever Hypothesis be admitted, is as unaccountable and as wonderful as this can be. But to make this Conception of the Blessed Virgin the more easily believed, the Birth of Isaac, when his Mother Sarah was old, and had been barren, and other Births of the like nature, were both Types of Christ's Birth, and an Evidence of the Power of God above the Course of Nature; particularly St. John Baptist, being born of a Mother who was both old and barren, was in this, as well as in other things, the Fore-runner of Christ.

But this Virgin was to be espous'd to Joseph, a just and good Man, both that he might be a Security and Protection to her, and might be assisting to her, in her Care and Tenderness for the Blessed Infant; and likewise, that he who was most concern'd to make the Discovery, if it had been otherwise, might testify to the World, that an Angel from Heaven


m See Bishop Pearson on the Creed.
had satisfy'd him, that she was with Child of the Holy Ghost. Jealousy, the Wife Man says, is the rage of a man, therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance: he will not regard any ransom, neither will he be content, tho' thou givest him many gifts, Prov. vi. 34, 35. And the Jewish Law, in this case, was as severe as any could well be: For a Virgin betroth'd, who had been thus found guilty, was to be stoned to Death, Deut. xxii. 23. And tho' Joseph not being willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily; yet this shews, that if it had prov'd, as he at first suspected, he was not a Man that would have been insensible of the Injury; and it is a good Evidence, that there was nothing to be objected, when there was nothing that Jealousy could object; and no Testimony could possibly have satisfy'd those who will not be satisfy'd; tho' Joseph himself testified, that the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a Dream, saying, Joseph, thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy Wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And his carrying the Infant into Egypt, at another Appearance of an Angel, and all his Behaviour, shews, that as he was the most competent Person to deliver this Message of the Angel to the World, so he was the most zealous and forward Assister of this Article of our Faith.

And besides his first Suspicions, his other Prejudices and Discouragements must be so great, that nothing but a clear and undoubted Revelation could possibly remove them; he could expect nothing but Trouble and Danger to himself, he could not hope to be reputed the Father of the Messiah, since the Prophets had foretold, that he was to be born of a Virgin. The Jews had this Notion of him, When Christ cometh, no Man knoweth, whence he is, Joh. vii. 27. And how should they be persuaded, that he was the Son of Joseph? Nothing could be more contrary
contrary to the Expectation they had of the Messias, than that he should be a Carpenter's Son: This was thought by them a sufficient Reafon to reject both his Doctrine and his Miracles: and Joseph had no cause to flatter himself that it would be otherwise. Simeon prophesied of Christ, that he was set for a sign, which should be spoken against; and Herod presently seeks to take away his Life by a terrible Maffacre; yet Joseph was so well satisfy'd with the Angel's Revelation to him, and was so well assured of the Certainty of it; that he willingly exposed himself to all the Inconveniences and Dangers, which he could not but see must be the necessary Confequence of it, and which he soon saw come so thick and violently upon him. *A Sword was to pierce through the Virgin's own Soul also.* But all the Hazards and the Sorrows, which were foretold them, and which accordingly they underwent, may abundantly convince us, that they could have no Design or Prospekt of any Advantage, but of declaring the Truth, and that Salvation which was brought to them and to all Mankind by it.

Thus we see that both the Time and Place of our Saviour's Nativity, and the Person of whom he was born, are evident Proofs of his being the Christ. He was to be born whilst the second Temple stood, he was to be born at Bethlehem, and he was to be born of a Virgin of the Tribe of Judah, and of the Lineage of David; all which most exactly agree in the Birth of our Saviour.

II. The Prophecies concerning the Life of the Messias, were fulfill'd in our Saviour. The Mean- nels and Obscurity, and Sorrows of it are express'd, Isai. liii. 2, 3, *For he shall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and, as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despis'd and rejected of men, a man of Sorrows, and acquainted with*
with grief, and we hid as it were our Faces from him, he was despised and we esteemed him not. His Meekness and Patience are described, Isa. xlii. 2, 3, 4. 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 be 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 await for his Law. His Abode was to be chiefly in Galilee, Isa. ix. 1. Matt. iv. 14. And accordingly, he was brought up at Nazareth, and dwelt at Caper- naum. And those who have the greatest Name among the Apostles were Galileans, Mat. iv. 18, 21. Joh. i. 44.

His Miracles are every where inculcated by the Prophets, and this was so well understood by the Jews of that time, that many of the People believed in him, upon the account of his Miracles, and said, When Christ cometh, shall he do greater Miracles than these, which this man hath done? Joh. vii. 31. And when St. John Baptist sent two of his Disciples to enquire of our Saviour, whether he were the Christ, he gives them no other Answer, but that they should acquaint John with what things they had seen and heard, how that the blind saw, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, to the poor the Gospel was preached, Luke vii. 22. which was the literal fulfilling of that Prophecy, Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6. And it was the very Character, which all the Prophets had given of the Messias. St. John Baptist, of whom Josephus gives a high Commendation, and whom all Men looked upon as a Prophet, Mat. xxi. 26. had before declared Jesus to be the Christ, though he now sent two of his Disciples to enquire of him, not for his own, but for their Satisfaction, that they might be Witnesses, how the Prophecies were fulfilled in him. And both the Preaching and Baptism of John was preparatory to
of the Christian Religion.

that of Christ, and was foretold by the Prophets, 
\[\text{Isa. xl. 3. Mal. iv. 5.}\]

But besides the Record of John, the Holy Ghost gave witness to Christ, visibly descending upon him at his Baptism, with a Voice from Heaven, pronouncing the Words prophetically deliver'd before concerning the Messias, which were always understood by the Jews to be meant of him, \[\text{Matth. iii. 13.}\] And this Voice was again repeated, tho' not so publickly as before, at his Transfiguration, \[\text{Matth. xvii. 5.}\]

III. The Types and Prophecies concerning the Death of the Messias were fulfilled in our Saviour. His Death was foretold both in the Writings of the Prophets, and by several Types or Actions which did represent and prefigure his Death, with the manner and Circumstances of it; and this was one kind of Prophefying, by the Resemblance of Actions and Things, as well as by Descriptions in Words. Thus Abraham's offering up Isac, was a Type of Christ's being offer'd upon the Cross; and Isac's carrying the Wood on his Shoulders, was a Type of Christ's carrying his Cross. The lifting up the brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, was a Type of Christ's being lifted up; and the Paschal Lamb, was a plain Type of the Sacrifice of Christ. Our Saviour Christ was sacrificed upon the Cross, at the very time of the Passover, even "in the very same month, on the very same day, and at the same hour, when his Type the Paschal Lamb was to be kill'd the Blessed Jesus expired." A Bone of him was
not broken, which was typified of him in the Paschal Lamb; the breaking of his Legs, was prevented by his voluntary giving up the Ghost, when he had so much Strength and Vigour after all his Pains, as to cry out with a loud Voice; which, by the course of Nature, a Person who had endured so much before, and had hung bleeding and languishing for three Hours at least upon the Cross, 'till he expir'd by the Force and Extremity of his Torments, could not have done; and his being dead sooner than was expected, and sooner than the Malefactors were, caused the fulfilling this prophetical Type, *a Bone of him shall not be broken*, Exod. xii. 46. Numb. ix. 12. He died likewise in the Year of Jubilee, (as Dr. Lightfoot computes) by which the Release and Redemption which he purchased for Mankind was typified: But according to Archbishop Usher, the Jubilee fell upon the Year of Christ's Baptism, when he began to preach the acceptable Year of the Lord, Luke iv. 19. and that Remission of Sins, which was prefigur'd by the Release in the Year of Jubilee. And as the fulfilling of these several Types concurred in our Saviour, so the fulfilling of them was brought to pass by the Malice and Cruelty of his Enemies, and of those very Jews who had ever understood these Types to relate to the Messiah.

The Prophecies in like manner, were fulfilled in Him; not by any Design or Contrivance of his own, but by the mere Envy and Malice of his Murtharers. He was betrayed by one of his own Disciples, as it had been foretold of him, Psal. xlii. 9. John xiii. 18. Matt. xxvii. 9. Zec. xi. 12, 13. The thirty pieces of Silver, for which he was betray'd, were by the Chief Priests given to buy the Potters Field; by which was fulfilled a noted Prophecy, that stands record-ed in the Book of Zechariah; but because Jer-

miab had prophesied of the same thing before him, or for some other Reason, it was better known among the Jews by the Name of Jeremiab's Prophecy: unless, as some suppose, Jeremy be put for Zachary, by a Mistake of the Transcriber; which was obvious enough, in transcribing the Abbreviation of the Name of Zachary, Iez for Zeez; or unless the true Reading be, that which was spoken by the Prophet, without the mention of any Prophet's Name, according to the Syriac and Persic Versions, and some MS. Copies still extant, and others mentioned by St. Augustine. The great Antiquity of the Syriac Version, even before the Canon of Scripture was finished, makes this Account the most probable. Our Saviour was buffeted and spit upon, according to a Prophecy of Isaiah, Isa. 1. 6. He had Vinegar given him to drink mingled with Gall; and his Garments were parted amongst the Soldiers, by casting Lots: both which were foretold, Psal. xxii. 18. lxix. 21. They pierced his Hands and his Feet, Psal. xxii. 16. by Crucifixion, a Punishment never used among the Jews; which yet had been foretold should be inflicted on Christ so many Ages before it was known to them. This Prophecy could not have been fulfilled, unless Christ had been delivered up to the Romans, a People who had no Being in the World for divers Ages after this Prediction: And no other Nation, as Scaliger has observed, had this kind of Punishment, by fastening Men to a Cross with Nails thrust through their Hands and Feet. And as Judea had not a been under a Procurator before the Birth of Christ, nor till the Banishment of Archelaus by Augustus; so the Power of Life and Death, with which the Procurator of Judea was entrusted, was not commonly granted to Procurators. All
which manifests an extraordinary Providence in the Accomplishment of this Prophecy. They that pass’d by, reviled him in the very Words of the Psalmist; and in his Agony he cried out in the Words of the same Psalm xx. 1, 7, 8. His Death was voluntary; for tho’ it was in the power of his Enemies to crucifie him; yet his Life was in own power, which he resigned in the Words of another Psalm, Psal. xxxi. 5. And he caused another Prophecy to be fulfilled, by dying at that very point of time, which, if his Death had been deferred a little longer, had not been fulfilled; for the Soldiers broke the Legs of the two other that were crucified with him; but finding him dead, they broke not his Legs; though one of them suspecting that he could not be so soon dead, pierced his Side, to try whether he were really dead or not, by which that Scripture was fulfilled, which faith, they shall look on him, whom they pierced, John xix. 34. Zech. xii. 10. Which Text the Ancient Jews interpreted of the Messias. The lii Chapter of Isaiah is a clear Description of our Saviour’s Passion, almost in every Circumstance of it. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth; his Silence being taken special notice of by Pilate himself, and his Meekness towards Judas, his most ungrateful Disciple, is wonderful beyond all Example. He made his Grave with the Rich in his Death; though he died in that shameful manner, under the Imputation of so much Wickedness, yet Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable Counsellor, was suffered by Pilate to bury him,
which he did in his own new Tomb. He was
numbred with the Transgressors; and in that sense
made his Grave also with the wicked, being crucified
between two Thieves; and so was not only reputed
a Malefactor, and underwent the Punishment of
Transgressors, but was executed at the very time
and place with them, and buried when they were.

He made Intercession for the Transgressors, for the pe-
nitent Thief in particular, whom he promised, that
he should be with him that Day in Paradise, and for
his Persecutors themselves, praying that they might
be forgiven. The Prophecies of this Chapter are so
very plainly and directly fulfilled, that I have known
a Child apply them to the Passion of Christ.

One of the most glorious Characters, by which the
Messias was described by the Prophets, was, that he
should be their Prince and King, and this led the
Jews into that fatal Mistake of a Temporal Messias:
For Messias or Anointed signifies King, as well as
Prophet or Priest, (in which three Offices Unction
was used, Exod. xi. 15. 1 Sam. xv. 1. 1 Kings xix.
16.) And they were all united in our Saviour, who
was the Messias anointed and inaugurated by the
Descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in a visible
Shape, and with a distinct and audible Voice, decla-
ring him to be the Son of God. And that all the
World might know our Saviour to be the King of
the Jews, that Title was fix'd upon his Cross in
three several Languages, the most vulgar Tongues
then in the World, that no Nation might be igno-
rant, that Christ the King of the Jews was then
crucified. For Pilate would not alter the Inscrip-
tion; but though they had frightened him before by
observing to him, that it was Treason against Cæ-
far to call any one King besides him, yet when they
would now have had him change the Inscription,
and have written only, that he said, I am King
of the Jews, Pilate gave a short and resolute Answer, what I have written, I have written. How much ever it were at his Peril to provoke a malicious People, in a Point, wherein they thought the Honour and Safety of their Nation so much concerned, and in a point, which could not but be exceeding tender to so jealous an Emperor as Tiberius: But Pilate had suffered himself to be carried too far already against his own Conscience, and had shewn great Aversion to their Proceedings, in the whole Managament of his Tryal; and the same Providence, which had ordered every Circumstance to the Manifestation of the Truth, and the Conviction both of the Jews and Gentiles, now so disposed this remarkable particular, that the last period of his Life, in Opposition to all the Spight of the Jews, should be adorned and dignified with his true Title and Character, under which he had been foretold by the Prophets, in Capital Letters upon his Cross.

Thus were the Prophecies concerning the Birth, and Life, and Death of the Messiah, exactly fulfilled in our Blessed Saviour, which were so many, that they could not be fulfilled by chance; and the fulfilling of them depended so much upon the Words and Actions of others, and even of his worst Enemies, that it could proceed from no Design or Contrivance of him or his Disciples: They were fulfilled in him by the Malice chiefly of his Enemies, and according to the Interpretation which they themselves were wont to give of them.

IV. His Resurrection likewise and Ascension were the fulfilling of express Prophecies, as the Apostles proved to the face of his Crucifiers, Acts ii. And these were such Accomplishments of Prophecies as depended upon the sole Will and Power of Almighty God, and yet as certainly came to pass, as the Birth, and Life and Death of Christ did: As shall be proved in due place.
Of the Prophecies and Miracles of our Blessed Saviour.

As our Blessed Saviour was prophesied of by all the Prophets who were before him, so he was himself the Great Prophet that was to come, and was at the time of his being in the World expected of the Jews; and he fulfilled that Prediction by the many eminent Prophecies which he spake. He foretold the Treachery of Judas, and knew from the beginning who it was that should betray him; he foretold the manner of his own Death, that is was to be by Crucifixion, though the Jews often fought Opportunities to put him to Death privately, and that was a kind of punishment which the Jews could not inflict: but if they had killed him themselves, and had not brought him to the Roman Judicature, they would have done it by Stoning, as they murdered St. Stephen. He foretold all the Circumstances of his Sufferings, that he should be delivered unto the Chief Priests, and unto the Scribes, and that they should condemn him to death, yet that they should not take away his Life themselves, but should deliver him to the Gentiles, and that they should mock him, and should scourge him, and should spit upon him, and should kill him, and that he would rise again the third day, Mark x. 33, 34. Of which his Enemies took such notice, that they used all their vain Endeavours to prevent it. He declared, that he would go unto the Father, John xiv. 18. by his Ascension, John vi. 62. He assured his Disciples, that his Gospel should be preached over the whole World, and that one particular Action, at which they were offended, of the Woman who anointed his Head, should never be omitted whereupon his Gospel should be preached, Matt. xxvi. 13. He declared
declared, that there should arise False Christs and False Prophets; but that his Religion should prevail against all the Opposition which it would meet withal, and continue to the end of the World. He foretold the Denial of St. Peter, and the Manner of his Martyrdom, and both were foretold to St. Peter himself, and his Denial, but a very little while before it came to pass, when St. Peter looked upon it as a thing impossible, who alone could have it in his power to hinder it. He prophesied of the Destruction of Jerusalem, which came to pass about forty Years after his own Death, within the Compass of that Generation, as he had foretold. a The very Foundations of the Temple and City were destroyed, and the Ground plowed up, so that one Stone was not left upon another of all the magnificent Buildings of the Temple, which the Disciples so much admired, when our Saviour told them, that this should be the Fate of that b glorious Pile, Matth. xxiv. 2. And as I have already observed upon another Occasion, when Julian with a Design c to defer this Prophecy, endeavouring to have it rebuilt, both the Works and the Workmen were miraculously destroyed by a Fire bursting out of the Ground. d Tacitus mentions the Prodigies foregoing the Destruction of Jerusalem. And the History of the Jewish War by Josephus, is the best Commentary upon the Predictions of our Saviour: There we read of all the Prodigies, and Signs and Wonders, where in

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a Κελῶδος Καισάρε ήδη την πολιν απανών, και τον νεον καλασκαπτήν—


c Τιθύδειν κατελίγγει τας το Ελέαν προφοις. Sozom. lib. 5. cap. 21.

Heaven or in Earth, and of all the Calamities, whether by Pestilence, or Famine, or Sword, which our Saviour had foretold. The Inhabitants fell by the Edge of the Sword, and were led away Captive into all Nations, Luke xxi. 24. The chiefest place of Security was the mountainous part of Judæa, which our Saviour foresaw, when he advised his Disciples to flee to the Mountains, Matt. xxiv. 16. And Ceßius Gallus compassed Jerusalem with his Army, which was a warning to the Christians to depart, and then by raising the Siege unexpectedly, and against all Reason, gave them an opportunity to escape to Pella, in the Mountains of Perea, exactly according to Luke xxi. 20, 21. And what Dion Cassius relates in the Reigns of Claudius, Nero, Vitellius and Titus, may serve as a Comment upon our Saviour's Prophecy; for there were famines and pestilences, fearful fights and great signs from heaven, and great earthquakes, the sea and the waves roaring, xxi. 11, 25. The Sun was darkned, and the Moon did not give her light, Matt. xxiv. 29. Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth, Luke xxi. 26. and there was so terrible an eruption of Vesuvius, that the Ashes were carried by the Winds into Africk, and into Egypt and Syria, with so great smoak and darkness, that it was thought the World had been at an end.

Christ promised to send down the Holy Ghost upon his Disciples, with a Power of working Miracles, of Prophefying, and of speaking with New Tongues: and this was to be bestowed upon them at Jerusalem, from whence they were commanded by him not to depart till the Promise had been fulfilled, which was to be not many days after his Ascension, Mark xvi. 17. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, 5. And accordingly it came

\[\text{E} \text{Pασχαλογια} \text{α} \text{και} \text{τη} \text{σολωμων} \text{αντιδοξια} \text{ς}. \text{J} \text{os} \text{eph.} \text{de} \text{Bell.} \text{Jud.} \text{l.} \text{2.} \text{c.} \text{24.} \]
\[\text{E} \text{υσ} \text{εβ.} \text{H} \text{i} \text{f} \text{t.} \text{i} \text{.} \text{3.} \text{c.} \text{5.} \text{E} \text{p} \text{i} \text{p} \text{i} \text{ph} \text{a} \text{n.} \text{d} \text{e} \text{P} \text{o} \text{nd.} \& \text{M} \text{em.} \text{n.} \text{15.} \]

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to pass but ten Days after, on the Feast of Pentecost. Origen acquaints us, that Phlegon, tho’ he was not so well inform’d, as to distinguish what was foretold by St. Peter, from the Predictions of our Saviour himself, yet acknowledged that Christ had prophesy’d of things to come, and that his Prophecies were fulfill’d by the Event.

Our Saviour’s Miracles verified the Prophecies, which had been concerning the Messias; for the Jews expected, that the Messias should manifest himself by Miracles to the World, as they concluded from the ancient Prophets: and therefore St. John Baptist did no Miracles, that he might not be mistaken for the Messias, of whom Miracles were a principal Token to know him by. His Miracles were wrought in the midst of his Enemies, and extorted a Confession from the Devils themselves of his Divine Power; they were of that nature, that it was impossible for those before whom they were wrought, to be imposed upon by them, and as impossible for them to be performed but by the immediate Power of God. The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes was twice done, and the Persons who were Witnesses to it, were at one time five thousand men, besides women and children, Matt. xiv. 21. And the other time four thousand men, besides women and children, Matt. xv. 38. a Miracle wrought at two several times, and obvious to all the Senses of so many thousand Men, besides Women and Children, who being hungry, found themselves filled and satisfied with this miraculous Food in the barren Wilderness, where it was impossible for them to be supplied by natural Means, was impossible to be mistaken. The Miracles of our Saviour were so many, and so publick and undeniable, that St. Peter appeals to the Jews themselves, declaring that Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them, by miracles, and

8 Contra Celsum, 1. 2. wonders.
wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves also knew, Acts ii. 22. The Nobleman's Son was cured at a distance, and the multitude were Witnesses to the Request he made to our Saviour, and to our Saviour's Answer upon it, and the Nobleman's Family were Witnesses that the Cure was effected at that very time. He cast Devils out of one known to have been a long time possessed, and then suffered them to go into the Swine, to make it appear, that they were indeed evil Spirits, which had possessed the Man, contrary to the Doctrine of the Sadducees, who believed no such thing as Spirits. He cured the Leprous, and sent the cured to the Priest, as the Law required, that he by Inspection might examine, whether it were a perfect Cure or no. He gave sight to one born blind, and this was upon Examination attested to the Pharisees themselves. Sometimes he made the Blind to see, only by touching their Eyes; at other times, he did but command them to receive their Sight, Luke xviii. 43. The Cure was always performed without any Operation, or Application of Remedies; and it was instantly perfected: So that their Eyes could immediately endure the Light, which no Eye can do, that is cured otherwise than by Miracle. Lazarus was raised to Life again, after he had been dead four Days, before so many Witnesses, that the Scribes and Pharisees were not able to contradict the Truth of it, but were mightily enraged against him for it, and consulted to put Lazarus to Death, because many were induced to believe on Christ, by reason of so great and manifest a Miracle. For Bethany was but about two Miles distant from Jerusalem, and this Miracle was the Cause of his Reception there with the Hosanna's and Acclamations of the People: And when the Pharisees, and the Chief Priests were informed of it: they assembled in Council, to advise what was to be done: What do we?
The Reasonableness and Certainty

for this man doth many miracles, (Joh. xi. 18, 47. xii. 17, 18.) They acknowledg’d, that he had wrought many Miracles, and when they ascribed them to Belzebub, this was a Confession, that Miracles were perform’d by him, tho’ they blasphemed the Power, by which they were effected. And not only the Jews of that Age, but their Posterity, have not deny’d, that Christ wrought Miracles, which was also confess’d by Julian the Apostate. Some who had been cured, and others who had been raised from the dead, by our Saviour, were living for many years after, as Quadratus testified of his own time, in his Apology to Adrian the Emperor.

The Circumstances of these, and the rest of our Saviour’s Miracles, shewed that they were really perform’d, and they were wrought with this Intent and Design, to prove him to be the Christ. The Nature therefore and End of them shews, that nothing less than a Divine Power could have effected them: For God would never have suffer’d them to be wrought to vouch an Imposture to the World under his own Name and Authority, if they could have been performed by some other Power. A learned Physician has written a Treatise to shew, that according to the Principles and Axioms of the best Physicians, all the Diseas’es which our Saviour cur’d, were incurable by natural Means, and it is evident to every Man, that many of them were so. He manifested his miraculous divine Power upon his Enemies, in curing the
Ear of Malchus; (Luke xxii. 51.) in causing those who were sent to apprehend him, to fall to the Ground, struck down only by the Word of his Mouth; and in procuring the Dismission of his Disciples upon demand, in order to fulfil one of his own Prophecies, (Job. xviii. 6, 8.) But I shall insist more particularly upon the Resurrection of our Saviour, this being the most wonderful, and a Confirmation of all his other Miracles, and of the whole Gospel to us.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Resurrection and Ascension of our Blessed Saviour.

The Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour was prophesied of by David, Psal. xvi. 8. Acts ii. 27. And it was prefigur'd by the Type of Isaac's Deliverance, when he had been offer'd up by Abraham, who both believ'd that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, and received him also from thence in a figure, Heb. xi. 19. And it was also prefigured by the Type of Jonas's Deliverance, after he had been three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly, Matt. xii. 40. To which may be added the Testimony of a Jew in Bereith Rabbâ, that † there is many a three Days space in the Holy Scripture, of whom is the Resurrection of the Messias. Our Saviour role, as he foretold he would do, on the third day, including the Day of his Burial, Matth. xvi. 21. xvii. 23. xx. 19. Acts x. 40. He was three Days and three Nights in

† Ainsw, on Gen. xxii. 4.
the Grave, that is, three \textit{νυκτόμεσι}, according to
the Account of the Jews, who reckon'd the Evening
and the Morning, or the beginning of the Night and
the beginning of the Day, as one Day, or one Re-
volution of the Sun; and computed from Evening to
Evening, \textit{Lev. xxiii. 32}. And in the Computation of
the eight Days for the Circumcision of their Children,
they computed inclusively any part of the Day in
which the Child was born, for the whole: Thus
the \textit{a Romans} computed their \textit{Nundinae} and their \textit{Ca-
lends}, \\
\textit{&c.} And the \textit{b Olympiads} among the \textit{Greeks}
contain'd five Years inclusively; and thus we call
that a Tertian Ague, which has but one Day's inter-
misson.

But the Resurrection of Christ, which was the
Accomplishment of these Types and Prophecies, be-
ing Matter of Fact, must be proved, as all other Mat-
ters of Fact are, by Witnës's: And the Apostles in
a body offer'd themselves as Witnës's to testifie this
great Article of our Faith: \textit{This Jesus hath God raised
up, whereof we all are Witnesses, Acts ii. 32}. The
thing therefore to be consider'd, is, Whether they
were effectually qualify'd to be Witnesses in this Mat-
ter. And to prove that they had all the Qualificati-
ons which can be required in any Witnesses, I shall
shew, 1. That they had certain Knowledge of the
thing which they were Witnesses of, and could not be
deceived themselves in it. 2. That they would not
deceive others, having no Temptation to it, but
acting against all the Interests and Advantages of this
World. 3. That they alledge such Circumstances,

\textit{a Annun ita divisorunt, ut nonis modo diebus urbanas res usurparent,}
\textit{reliquis septem ut rura coerent.} Var. de Re Ruff. lib. ii. præf. \textit{Tas
\textit{l. 7.}

\textit{b Sed borum omnium \textit{πενταεθεσα} maximè notandis Temporibus
Græci obseruant, i. e. \textit{quaternum} annorum circuitus, quas vocant \textit{O-
lymiadas}.} Censorin. de \textit{Die Natali}, c. 18.
as made it impossible for them to deceive those to whom they testified the Truth of Christ's Resurrection, tho' they had never so much mind to do it. And when Men testify things, which they have such Means and Opportunities of knowing, as make it impossible for them to be mistaken in them; when they can have no Advantage but by telling the Truth, and can expect nothing but Sufferings from it in this Life; when they produce such Circumstances, as put it out of their own power to deceive; and such as those, before whom they speak, may know to be false, if they be so; this certainly is all that can be desired in any Witnesses.

1. The Apostles, who were Witnesses of our Saviour's Resurrection could not be deceived themselves in it. They were ever far from being credulous, and easy of Belief, as they shew'd upon all occasions, and particularly they never could be brought to believe the Doctrine concerning the Resurrection of Christ, till their own Senses had convinced them: but before, they had wrong Notions and Apprehensions of it, and either misunderstood and misapplied all that had been said to them about it; or whatever they knew or believ'd concerning it before, they had no Expectations of it when he was once dead.

Our Saviour had in express Terms foretold his Resurrection upon the third Day, several times, Matth. xvi. 21. xvii. 23. xx. 19. But his Disciples did not rightly apprehend, or thoroughly consider what he said to them, tho' he expressed himself in the plainest Words: For they were wholly taken up with great Thoughts and Expectations of an Earthly Kingdom, and of Temporal Power and Honour; at one time Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee, Matth. xvi. 22. And at another time, just before his Passion, our Saviour had no sooner done speaking to them of his Crucifixion, and his Rising again the third Day,
but the two Sons of Zebedee petition'd, that one might sit on the right-hand, and the other on the left, in his Kingdom, and the rest of the Disciples were mov'd with Indignation against them, for preferring such a Request; and it appears from our Saviour's Discourse to them upon it, that their Minds were all bent upon the Thoughts of Temporal Glory and Dominion, Matt. xx. 20. After our Saviour had told them, that he must be put to death, and rise again the third day, St. Luke adds, that they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken, Luke xviii. 34. And we find the same Expression before, Luke ix. 40. Even after our Saviour had eaten the Pasover with them, and instituted the Sacrament of his Body, which was just then to be given up and to be crucified, and of his Blood, which was to be shed for them, they were still intent upon temporal things, and had Expectations of being advanced to Places of Authority and Preeminence. And there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest, Luke xxii. 24. At his Passion, as one of them denied him thrice, so all the rest forsook him and fled.

The Apostles and Evangelists write without any Design, or any End to serve, but that of telling the Truth; and therefore they conceal nothing of their own Failings and Faults, though they might prove never so disgraceful to them. They acquainted us that they were ambitious, and had a vain Prospect of temporal Grandeur; that they were timorous, and of little Faith, till the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; which appears in nothing more, than in this point of the Resurrection. They were Men of no great natural Capacity, or quick Apprehension, and they had sometimes found themselves mistaken in understanding that literally, which was spoken to them in Parables; and it is natural for Men to run from one Extreme to another, and usual for ignorant and un-
learned Men to imagine Difficulties where there are none. And this meeting with their Wishes and Longings after temporal Greatness, made them take all that was said to them concerning the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, in some such sense as might answer their Hopes and Desires of temporal Felicity: But when his Crucifixion had undeceiv’d them in this Conceit, they were in such Confusion and Consternation of Mind, as not to be able to recollect themselves, or to promise themselves any thing by his Resurrection, of which they had no Hopes or Expectation. The Spirits of Men are commonly as low as their Education and their Condition and Station in the World is, and are easily sunk and depress’d much lower by any great and sudden Calamity; and Men who were born in so mean a Condition, and had entertain’d a Conceit of great and vain Hopes, and then as unexpectedly fell from them, must be so dejected at it, that it is no wonder that they thought of nothing but their Sorrows, and had little Heart to imagine any possibility of Relief from the Reviving of him, whom they had seen in that infamous and cruel manner put to death. They were so posses’d with an Opinion of a temporal Kingdom, that when they had been convinc’d of the Truth of his Resurrection, and had afterwards convers’d a long time with him, they could not put it out of their Minds, Acts i. 6. And therefore it is no strange thing, that when they saw him dead and in the Grave, they were forsaken of all their former Hopes of the Redemption of Israel by him, (Luke xxiv. 21.) which before they had imagined to themselves, was to be perform’d by his raising himself from that Meaneness to a Throne, not by his restoring himself to Life again, after he had been buried three days. The Notion which the Jews had of a Resurrection, was only that of the last Day, John xi. 24. There was indeed a Rumour rais’d by some, that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and afterwards
terwards wrought those Miracles, which were done by Christ, under the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, as Herod's guilty Fears inclined him to believe, Luke ix. 7. Others said, that one of the Old Prophets is risen again, v 19. But both these Reports the Disciples knew to be false; and therefore had little Reason, from such groundless Mistakes, to entertain a Belief contrary to the general Opinion of the Jews, of an immediate Resurrection of any one from the Dead. They had indeed known Instances of Men rais'd by Christ from the Dead; but this was no Argument to them, that he should raise himself. Elijah they knew, who rais'd a Child to Life again, did not die; but Elisha, who had likewise rais'd a Child, when he was dead himself, never came again to Life. And whatever was said of any other Resurrection, besides that at the Day of Judgment, they looked upon it to be meant only in Allusion to that: they questioned one with another what the rising from the dead should mean; they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him, Mark ix. 10, 32.

The Apostles therefore and other Disciples were so far from being credulous, or forward to believe the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, that they were not only inquisitive and careful not to be imposed upon, but they were exceeding diffident. The Women that went to the Sepulchre, were so far from expecting to find him risen from the dead, that they carried with them a Preparation of Spices to embalm his Corps, Mark xvi. 1. And not finding the Body of the Lord Jesus, they were much perplex'd at it, not remembering the Words which Jesus had spoke to them concerning his Resurrection, till the two Men, who stood by them in shining Garments, had put them in mind of them, Luke xxiv. 4, 8. But when they returned from the Sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest, their words seemed to them as idle tales; and they believed them not, v 9, 11. And Mary
Mary Magdalen herself, though she had seen this Vision, yet went to them with this Complaint, they have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him, John xx. 2. Then Peter ran unto the Sepulchre, and stooping down beheld the linen-clothes laid by themselves, and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass, Luke xxiv. 12. St. John ran to the Sepulchre at the same time, and going into it, saw and believed: but he declares, that as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead, John xx. 8, 9. Mary Magdalen stands without still weeping, and complains to the two Angels, who ask'd her the Cause, they have taken away my Lord, and I know not were they have laid him, v. 13. And again to our Saviour himself, not knowing him, but supposing him to have been the Gardener, Sir, if thou have born him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away, v. 15. And after she was her self convinced of the Resurrection, when she told his Disciples, they believed not, Mark xvi. 11.

When our Saviour appear'd to the two Disciples, in the way to Emmaus, he found them reasoning and talking together of all those things which had happened, and they were sorrowful at the Thoughts of them; and when he enquir'd the Reason, they give him such an Account, as shews the doubtful and desponding Apprehensions they had of their present Condition, insomuch that he answers them, with a severe Rebuke, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken, Luke xxiv. 25. And afterwards, when these two were convinced themselves, and told the rest what had happen'd, neither believed they them, Mark xvi. 13. And when, immediately upon this, Jesus stand in the midst of them, they were not only terrified and frightened, and supposed, that they had seen a Spirit; and when he spoke to them, and discoursed with them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and
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and my feet, that it is I myself, handle me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see me have, and then shewed him his hands and his feet; yet still after all this, they believed not for joy, but wondered, and were not settled in their Belief of what they had seen and heard, till he took meat and did eat it before them, Luke xxiv. 36. And then he opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, and declared them the Witnesses of his Resurrection. And ye are witnesses of these things. v 48.

After all these Proofs, St. Thomas, one of the Twelve, not being with them when Jesus had appeared to them, the other Disciples told him, they had seen the Lord; but he was peremptory and resolute in it, that he would not believe him to be alive again, except he should see in his hands the print of the nails, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. After eight days, Jesus came to them again, and to convince St. Thomas, and take away all possible Pretences of Incredulity for the future, he grants him the Satisfaction he desired, and says unto him, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing: And St. Thomas, who before was so doubtful, is now fully convinced by this infallible Evidence, and breaks out into this Confession, My Lord and my God, Joh. xx. 27, 28.

Thus did Christ shew himself alive to his Apostles, after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, Acts i. 3. And not of them only, but of above five hundred Brethren at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6. But the Apostles were his chosen witnesses, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead, Acts x. 41. And when he ascended into Heaven, he was taken up while they were in his Presence, and conveyed in a Cloud out of their sight; and whilst they were looking up after him steadfastly into Heaven, two Angels stood by them, and assured them, that as he ascended
cended into Heaven, so he shall in like manner come down from thence to judge the World. And he ascended not alone, but with a great Multitude of the Saints and heavenly Host, as we learn from a Passages in a Discourse of the Apostle "St. Thaddæus, preserv’d by Eusebius. The Ascension of Christ into Heaven, was prefigur’d by the High-Priest’s entering yearly into the Holy of Holies, on the Day of Atonement, Heb. ix. 24, 25. and was likewise prophesy’d of by the Psalmt, who represents the Angels, some as attending him in his Ascension, others as opening the Gates of Heaven; and both Companies, at his Entrance, answering one the other in Hymns of Praife, (Psal. xxiv. 7.) The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels, who waited on his Triumph, when he ascended on high, and led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. Eph. iv. 8. miraculous gifts to the Apostles and others, who were eye-witnesses of his Majesty. When his Disciples murmured at his Doctrine of giving them his Flesh to eat, our Saviour allidges his Ascension, which was to be in their view, as that which would confirm them in the Truth of this, and all his other Doctrines: What, and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend where he was before? John vi. 62. It was not needful, that Christ should be seen rising from the Grave; it was sufficient, that he was so often, and so long seen after his Resurrection. But it was necessary, that there should be witnesses of his Ascension, because then he took his final Leave of this World, as to his visible Abode in it. It would have been said, that he was again dead, unless he had ascended in the view of many Witnesses. Christ had foretold to his Disciples, that in a little time he would leave them by his Death,
and that a little after, they should see him again, before his going to the Father, John xvi. 16. But they were sorrowful at the News of his Departure, as well as very much dejected at his Death, and without this Prospect and Assurance of his Ascension into Heaven, his last leaving them must have been to them a second Passion, and another Death; but when they had seen him thus ascending, they were so far from mourning for him as absent, that they worshipped him, as ever present with them in his Divine Nature, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, Luke xxiv. 52.

After his Ascension, he was seen not only by St. Stephen to comfort and support him at his Martyrdom; but by St. Paul, who was thereby stop'd in the full speed of his Persecutions: his Conversion was so sudden and so powerful, that that alone might be thought sufficient; but to give him the compleat Qualifications of an Apostle, to become a Witness of Christ's being risen from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, he was pleased to appear to him from thence.

All Circumstances therefore concur to shew, that the Apostles had sufficient Opportunity fully to inform themselves in all Particulars; that they used all means to do it with their utmost Care and Diligence; that they were suspicious and distrustful; and that nothing but the clear Conviction of all their Senses, could have satisfied them. The Apostles had conversed with our Saviour for some Years, and had seen his Miracles, and had been enabled by him to do the like; and they were never credulous, but always backward and slow of Belief; and the Resurrection of Christ was a surprising thing to them: For tho' he had often plainly foretold it to them, yet they did not rightly apprehend him; and their Disappointment of their Hopes of a temporal Kingdom, and the great Terror and Consternation that his Death had put them into, had quite broke their Spirits, and thrust all Hopes or Thoughts of a Resurrection out of their Minds,
Minds, and they were very hardly brought to a Belief of it. But he overcame their Unbelief, and satisfied all their Scruples, by such ways as must be convincing, or else we can never be convinced, that there is any real Man besides our selves in the World, and that all the rest are not mere Shadows and Ghosts; they did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead; they all beheld the Marks in his Hands and in his Side; and one of them, who would not otherwise be persuaded to the Belief of his Resurrection, did thrust his Fingers, into the Print of the Nails by which he was fastened to the Cross, and his Hand into the Wound of his Side, which was made by the Soldier's Spear, just before he was taken down from it; so that they knew him as certainly to be risen again, as they had ever known him to be alive before his Death.

The Apostles were so diffident, that our Saviour upbraided them with their unbeliefs, and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen, Mark xvi. 14. But it is observable, that as St. Thomas was at first absent, and was suffered afterwards to be so very difficult of Belief; so it is said of the two Disciples that were walking to Emmaus, that their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. It was purposely so order'd by the Divine Providence, that they might not readily know and acknowledge him; but that the manner of his Manifestation of himself to them, might be an invincible Argument against all Opposers, that no Man might have anything to object, when every Circumstance was as narrowly examined, and with as great Caution, and Circumspection, and Diffidence, as it could have been done by himself, if he had been there. For I think, we may challenge the boldest and subtilest Adversary, to say what he could have done more, to discover the Truth, if he had been then living, and amongst the Apostles, than was done by them. *That which*
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we have heard, says St. John, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life, (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness—) that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, 1 Joh. i. 2, 3. Which is all that is possible for any Witness to say, as to any Matter of Fact; and they who could speak and write in this manner, must be competent Witnesses: If no other exception can lie against them, they certainly speak home to the purpose, and all that any Witness can be desired or supposed to speak.

2. As the Apostles could not be deceived themselves, so they would not deceive others, having no temptation to it, but acting against all the Interests and Advantages of this World. And those, who had denied or forsook Christ when he was living, would never have been so zealous, and resolute to suffer for him after he was crucified, if they had not been fully assured of his Resurrection. It is not to be imagin'd, they would have suffer'd all manner of Torments and Deaths, only to bear witness to a thing they had known to be false, if it had been so; and therefore it must be true, that Christ is risen from the Dead, or else we must suppose the Apostles to have been of so different a nature from all the rest of Mankind, as to delight in the things, which all others fear and abhor, even in Bonds and Imprisonments, in Infamy and Torments, and all the Punishments that can be inflicted: He that would endure all these for the sake of what he knew to be false, must surely not be of human Nature; and we may as well doubt, whether the Apostles were Men as we are, as whether Christ did rise from the Dead.

3. They allèdg'd such Circumstances, as made it impossible for them to deceive those to whom they testified the Truth of Christ's Resurrection, tho' they had had never so much mind to it. They declared, that
that that Jesus whom the Jews had caused to be crucified, and had then placed a Guard of Soldiers to secure his Sepulchre, left his Disciples should take him away, was, notwithstanding all their Care, risen from the Dead; and that that Report of the Jews, that the Disciples came by Night, and stole him away while the Watch slept, was utterly false; nay, that it was a suborned Story, and that the Chief Priests had given the Soldiers Money to say it. Now, if Christ had not really been risen, how easily had all this been disproved; and what a Provocation was this to the Chief Priests to disprove it, if they could? Their Honour and Reputation, and their Interest with the People, was highly concerned to vindicate the Truth of the Report, which they had hired the Soldiers to give out: And if there had been no such Report, what Reason could St. Matthew have to pretend there was? And if against all Reason and common Sense, he had pretended such a Report, when there had been none, it must have been the greatest disservice to his Cause that could have been thought of. But when there was such a Report amongst the Jews, that his Disciples had stolen him away by Night, if this could have been made good against them, would his Disciples, so soon after, in the very City where he had been crucified, declare to the face of the Chief Priests assembled in Council, The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, and we are his witnesses of these things, Acts v. 30, 31, 32. Was not this as much as could be said, to challenge them to produce those Soldiers to confront them? But besides the senseless Story, that Men should be able to know what was done, when they confess themselves to have been asleep; the Apostles could soon have confuted that Calumny, by the Miracles which they wrought by virtue
virtue of his Resurrection: If the Soldiers had been asleep, when the Body was taken away; yet the Jews were certainly awake, when they invented and spread the Report, and when they saw the Miracles, and heard the strange Languages, by which the Apostles proved it to be false, and declared, that Christ was risen by the omnipotent Power of God.

Besides St. Matthew writes, that the Graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many, Matth. xxvii. 52, 53. Many saw them, who are appealed to as Witnesses of the *Resurrection. And the miraculous Events at the Death of our Saviour, which were so many certain Presages and Fore-runners of his Resurrection, as the Earthquake, and the Darkness of the Sun for three Hours together in the midst of the Day, contrary to the course of Nature, the Moon being in the Full, the rending the Veil of the Temple, and the like; these were things which must be notorious, and which could not have been pretended to have happened, but the whole People of the Jews must be appealed to as Witnesses of them.

† Phlebon Hadrian’s Libertus, in his Chronicle, mentioned the Eclipse of the Son, and the Earthquake, in the Fourth Year of the CCII. Olympiad, in which Year Christ was crucified. And it being a Custom d for the Deputies and Governors of Provinces to certify the Emperor of whatever happen’d considerable under their Government, the Resurrection of our Saviour, with the Miracles, which accompanied it, were so remarkable, and so notorious, that it had not been safe for Pontius Pilate to send no

* Σώματα τε ἐγείρον τα καρακέβρους ἀκατό, καὶ εὐφανείας τῶν πολλῶν πάντων τὴν ἡδονήν τοὺς νυμφάμοις ἐκατοστοὶ ἐνυπνικτος τὸς γνῶσις. Quæst. ad Orthod. 60. inter Oper. J u f t. Martyr.
d Eufeb. Hist. lib. ii. c. 2.
Information concerning him; but he found himself obliged to give an Account both of his Miracles, and his Death and Resurrection, to the Emperor Tiberius who thereupon proposed it to the Senate, to have him taken into the Number of their Gods, and made it punishable to accuse any Man for being a Christian, during his Reign. And this Information of Pontius Pilate was entred upon Record at Rome. To which Justin Martyr appeals, in his Apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and the Senate; and Tertullian in his Apology, which was likewise presented to the Senate of Rome, or at least to the Governors of the Provinces. They both lived in the next Age, and were both educated in a different Religion, and upon these and such-like Proofs became Christians; and they were Men of excellent Learning and Judgment: but no Man who could write an Apology, can be supposed to have so much Confidence, and so little Understanding, as to appeal to that Account which Pilate sent to Tiberius, concerning the Resurrection of Christ, in Apologies dedicated and presented to the Roman Emperor himself, and to the Senate, or the chief Magistrates of the Empire, if no such Account had ever been sent, or none had been then extant to be produced. But, by the special Providence of God, both the Birth and the Resurrection of our Saviour were inserted into the publick Records of Rome, and were to be seen there for a long time after; and the Heathen, in whose Custody they were, are desired

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by the Primitive Christians to consult them: for they were content to put the matter upon this issue, that if they were resolved not to believe what the Christians said, yet they would at least credit their own Records: Since the Chief Priests and Pharisees had represented to Pilate the Apprehensions which they were under, because Christ had declared, he would rise again the third Day, that his Disciples would come by Night and take away his Corps, and endeavour to persuade the People that he was risen from the Dead: Whereupon, by Pilate's Order, they had secured the Sepulchre from any such Attempt, fastening the Stone, which was fix'd at the entrance into it, putting a Seal, to discover if the Stone should be removed, and placing a Guard of Soldiers to prevent its removal; since his Resurrection was notwithstanding so notorious, that the Soldiers were bribed to take the Blame to themselves, and confess, that they were asleep when his Disciples came and stole him away; since the Chief Priests undertook to excuse the Soldiers for this Remissness or Neglect of their Duty, which was in so high a degree criminal, and of that nature, that the Chief Priests would have been the first to resent it, if the Soldiers had been really guilty; since the pretended Crime of our Saviour was Treason; and by the Confession of the Chief Priests, if he should be believed to be risen, it had been better if he had never been put to death: In this case, which so much concerned the Roman Government, it cannot be supposed but Pilate must make strict Enquiry into the true State of it, in order to send a full Information to Tiberius.

Upon these Proofs and Reasons, by the clear Evidence and Power of Truth, the word of God mightily grew and prevailed, against all that Prejudice and Malice and every Vice could do to oppose it, in Rome and in Jerusalem it self: For in this very City, where our Saviour had been crucified, and where it had been
been impossible to have made Proselytes, if his Resurrection had not been evidently proved beyond all possibility of a confutation, great Numbers were daily added to the Church. A Church was forthwith founded at Jerusalem, and a Bishop appointed by the Apostles; and both the Body of the People, and their Bishops, being Fifteen in number, to the final Destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian, were Jews by Nation.

We see then, as the Testimony of the Apostles is in it self beyond all exception, so it is of such a nature, as to make it impossible for them to deceive, if they had intended it: But indeed, no Man could have proceeded in that manner, or would have endeavoured it, who had had any intentions to deceive; and the Event shew'd, that it was the direct and plain Evidence, and Force of Truth, which supported it self, notwithstanding all the Prejudices and Advantages which its worst Adversaries had against it.

C H A P. XV.

Of the Apostles and Evangelists.

The principal Articles of the Christian Faith being Matters of Fact, as the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, upon which the rest depend; the great thing to be enquired into, is, whether the Apostles had all the Qualifications requisite to become Witnesses of Matters of Fact. This has been already shewn as to the Resurrection; and if in general we examine whether we may safely rely upon that Credibility wherewith they preach'd the Go-
pel to the World, the Enquiry will fall under these Heads; I. Whether they were Men of sufficient Abil-
ities to discern and understand what they testify'd. II. Whether they had sufficient Means and Oppor-
tunities to know it. III. Whether they were Men of Integrity, that without Artifice or Design, truly de-
clared what they knew.

I. That the Apostles were Men of sufficient Un-
derstanding, to become Witnesses of a Matter of Fact, was never doubted by any one, nor can it be que-
tioned by such as peruse their Writings: And indeed Who is there of any common Sense, that is not a com-
petent Witness of what he sees, and hears, and has the Experience of, for so long time together? For,

II. By their Conversation with our Saviour, both before his Passion, and after his Resurrection, the A-
postles had such Opportunities of knowing what they attested, that it was impossible for them to be de-
ceived in any part of it, It was a necessary Qualifi-
cation of all the twelve Apostles, that they should have convers'd with our Saviour before his Death, and have seen him after his Resurrection. For when one was to be ordained in the room of Judas, to be a Witness with the rest of Christ's Resurrection, he was to be one that had companied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from them, Acts i. 21, 22. They saw his Miracles, and heard his Doctrine, and knew his manner of Life, and had all the Opportunities, and used all the Means to inform themselves, that it was possible for Men to do: They were eye-witnesses of his majesty, 2. Pet. i. 16. They had heard, and seen with their eyes, and had looked upon, or beheld and discerned for a long time together, and their hands had handled that which was the Subject of their Te-

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could be; and were as distrustful and as hard of Belief, as any Men could have been, who are most sus-
picious and jealous of being imposed upon. And of these Apostles, two wrote the Life of our Saviour, and all bare witness to the Truth of what these wrote, and preached the same things, where ever they came: Of the two other Evangelists, St. Mark had his Information from St. Peter, whose Disciple and Com-
ppanion he was; and St. Luke wrote his Gospel from the Account he had of those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, Luke i. 2. And he was the Companion and Disciple of St. Paul, who was such an Enemy to Christianity before his Conversion, that nothing less than a miraculous Power could have made that sudden Change in him; he probably must have seen our Saviour before his Passion, and then saw him again at his Conversion, and heard him speaking to him from Heaven, Am not I an Apostle? says he, in vindication of his own Authority; have I not seen the Lord Christ? 1 Cor. ix. 1. So that St. Paul, as well as the other twelve Apostles, had seen and heard our Saviour; and they were all convinced by their own Senses, of what they deliver’d to others; and besides these, he was seen after his Resurrection by many others, both Men and Women, and at one time was seen by above five hundred together, 1 Cor. xv. 6. Of all the Writers of the Books of the New Testament, there are but two who were not Eye-witnesses to what they relate, and these two had their Relations from the Apostles and others who were Eye-witnesses.

III. The Apostles were Men of Integrity, and without any Artifice or Design truly declared what they knew. 1. They had no worldly Interest to advance by their Testimony, but suffered by it, and had a certain Prospect of Suffering. 2. There are peculiar Marks of Sincerity in all their Writings.
They had no worldly Interest to serve by their Testimony, but suffer'd by it, and had a certain prospect of Sufferings. They could propose no Advantage to themselves, of Gain, or Honours, or Pleasures; but on the contrary, underwent a voluntary Poverty, and Infamy, and Torments; which was all that they met with in this World for their Pains, and all that they could expect to meet with. They forsook all which they had; St. Matthew, a gainful Employment; and St. Paul, who wrote the most of any of the Pen-men of the New Testament, lost the Favour of the Chief Priests, and the Preferments which a Person of his Learning and Zeal might promise himself from them: St. Luke, a Physician by his Profession, left an Employment both of Honour and Advantage; and the rest lost all they had; and can any Man lose more? All of them left an honest and secure Lislelihood, and exposed themselves to the Hatred and Contempt of all their nearest Friends and Relations, whose Love and Esteem, both by Nature and Education, they must be inclined most to desire; and they became obnoxious to all the Affronts, and Outrages, and Torments, which a furious Zeal could inflict upon them. All which was no new or unexpected thing to them; they saw what their Master had suffer'd, and could hope to fare no better than he had done. They were often forewarned by Christ long before-hand, what must befall them; they were told, that they must take up their Cross, and follow him, and could be his Disciples upon no easier terms. He had set forth the Reception which they must expect to meet with in the World, just in the same manner as they found it, under the most frightful Appearance that Words could represent. And this they soon found as punctually true, as all the rest that he had foretold to them: But though they found it so, and sometimes were dismiss'd with a severe Charge to desist from preaching the Gospel, and
and at other times escaped, and had an Opportunity given them to avoid any farther Danger by preaching it; they ever persevered in it with the greatest Zeal and Constancy, despising all Dangers, and all sorts of Torments and Deaths, and glorying still and rejoicing that they suffer'd in so good a Cause; and at last they seal'd their Doctrine with their Blood.

St. Paul was in great Reputation with the Chief Priests, and Scribes and Pharisees, before his Conversion, and was employ'd by them in persecuting the Church; and as often as he appear'd before them, they had nothing to accuse him of, but his Profession of a Religion, which obliges all Men to the strictest Justice and Holiness. If the Apostles had not been the best, they must have been the worst of Men, for imposing upon the World, under the pretence of a Divine Mission and Authority; and yet this they must do with no other design but to promote Virtue and Holiness; which no ill Man could design, to his own certain Loss and Destruction in this World and the next: and the less Men believe of the next World, the more fond they are to make sure of this.

Ambition, and a desire of Fame, and a Name after Death, rarely happens to Men of obscure Birth and mean Education; and it was naturally impossible, that it should now befall so many of them, without any ground or reason to expect it, when in all humane Consideration, they had a certain Prospect of nothing but Infamy after Death, as well as of Disgrace, and Want, and Torment, during their Lives. And no Man could resolve upon attaining any thing on such terms, unless he had been absolutely certain of the Truth of it, much less could so many set upon such a Design together: For as they could have no Arguments to persuade one another to enter upon such an Attempt; so if they had once conspir'd in it, they would
would soon have deserted and discovered each other, when they lay under all the Disadvantages and Difficulties imaginable, and had nothing to support and unite them, but the Truth and Reality of what they deliver'd. And it is farther observable, that in the first Ages of the Church, and the nearer Christians were to the Apostles, the more zealous they were to live according to the Gospel of Christ, and to die in Defence of it: for they had then greater Opportunities of informing themselves of the Imposture, if there had been any, that had therefore the greater Means of being certified that there was none. And Men of great Parts and Accomplishments, such as Sergius Paulus, Governor of Cyprus, Dionysius the Areopagite, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others, who were inquisitive Men, and able to make a true Judgment of things, upon a full Examination of all Particulars, became early Converts to the Christian Religion.

2. There are peculiar Marks of Sincerity in all the Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists. They were not ambitious of being known to the World by their Writings, but wrote only as they were by necessity drawn to it, for the farther Propagation of the Gospel. And upon all occasions they declare their own Frailties and Faults, and many times such as could never have been known but from themselves. St. Matthew had spent the former part of his Life in no very creditable Employment, but among Publicans and Sinners, as he says himself: for he leaves recorded to all Posterity, the Censure of his own Life, saying, that he sat at the receipt of custom, Matt. ix. 9, 10. and styling himself Matthew the Publican, Matt. x. 3. Eusebius observes, that none of the other Evangelists, have mention'd a thing so reproachful of him, as his having been a Publican, but St. Matthew only has

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written it of himself: For it was the Opinion not only of Eusebius, b but of Origen, and of Heracleon, that St. Matthew and Levi, mention'd Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27. were two different Persons; and Grotius is of the same Opinion. Or if Matthew and Levi were the same Person, St. Mark writes, that Jesus sat at Meat in Levi's house; and St. Luke, that Levi made him a great feast in his own house; but St. Matthew says only, as Jesus sat at meat in the house; not mentioning in whose house, though he omits nothing that the others set down, but the mention of his own Hospitality. St. Jerome c says, that the other Evangelists, out of respect to St. Matthew, call'd him by that Name, which was less known than Matthew; being of Opinion, that St. Matthew had also the Name of Levi. d Eusebius also takes notice, that St. Matthew places himself after St. Thomas, in the Catalogue of the Apostles, whereas the other Evangelists place him first.

St. Peter gives an ample Testimony to St. Paul's Epistles, 2 Pet. iii. 16. notwithstanding what is written of himself in that to the Galatians. In St. Mark's Gospel, e which was written from the Account, that that Evangelist had from St. Peter, when St. Peter answer'd our Saviour, that he was the Christ, no farther is said of our Saviour's Reply, but that he charged them that they should tell no man of him, Mark viii. 30. St. Peter omitting that honourable Character given him by our Saviour, and the Power of the Keys bestowed upon that occasion, which is at large related by St. Matthew, Matt. xvi. 16. But immediately after, St. Peter's Behaviour towards our Saviour is fully related; which was so unseemly, as that they began even to rebuke Christ for speaking of his Sufferings, and

b Euseb. Demonfr. lib. iii. c. 5. Orig. contra Cels. lib. i. 1. Heracl. apud Clem. Alex. i from. lib 4: Grot. ad Matt. ix. 9.

c Hieron. ad Matt. ix. 9.


e Tertul. adv. Marc. l. 4. c. 5. Iren. l. 3. c. 1. Origen. apud Euseb. l. 6. c. 25.
extorted that severe Rebuke from Meekness it self, Get thee behind me, Satan. This St. Peter has left written of himself by St. Mark, who wrote by the Approbation and Direction of St. Peter; but the honourable part is past over in Silence, though belonging to the same time and place. So again, the Denial of St. Peter is related in all its Circumstances of Aggravation, by St. Mark, as well as by St. Matthew, Matt. xxvi. Mark xiv. He acquaints us, that without any Torments or Menaces, or the least Compulsion, at the bare question of a poor Maid, he denied his Master, and that he deny'd him thrice, and the last time even with Oaths and Imprecations, which are not mention'd by St. Luke and St. John, Luk. xxi. Joh. xxi. A Man, that delivers these things of himself, plainly shews, that he is so far from all Vanity and seeking his own Praise, that he can be supposed to have no other aim or design, but to declare the Truth to the Glory of God and the Benefit of Mankind, though it prove to be never so much to his own Disgrace. And they relate, that as soon as our Saviour was apprehended, all his Disciples forsook him and fled, when they might have been able to have witnessed in his behalf, and to have confronted Judas, who, they might well believe, would have turn'd his Accuser, after he had betray'd him. But St. Peter soon repented, and both he and St. John took courage, and returned to see what became of their Master, and both St. Peter's denial, and their leaving their Master thus in his Distress, might never have been known, unless they had discovered it themselves. St. John never mentions himself, nor his Brother St. James by Name throughout his whole Gospel, but omits their early coming to Christ, when he had as yet but two Disciples; and their self-denial in leaving their Father and all that they had; tho' he relates what St. Matthew and St. Mark write concerning St. Andrews's and St. Petter's coming to Christ but just before; and then speaks of
of Philip and Nathanael, purposely declining to say any thing of himself on so memorable an Occasion, Matt. iii. 21. Mark i. 19. Job. i. 40.

The Reproofs, and sometimes very severe Reprehensions, which were given them by Christ, could never have come to our Knowledge, but by their own Information: As that they were blamed for having little Faith, Matt. xvi. 8. no Faith, Mark ix. 19. That our Saviour upbraided them with Unbelief and Hardness of Heart, Mark vi. 52. viii. 17. xvi. 14. For being foolish and slow of Heart, to believe all that the Prophets have spoken, Luke xxiv. 25. They declare, that they were ambitious and emulous, and fond of Temporal Honours; that they had very wrong Notions of Christ and his Kingdom, and they set forth at large how timorous and how difficult they were of Belief, and how very scrupulous and diffident of Christ's Resurrection.

St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, as St. Peter was the Apostle of the Circumcision, by his Disciple and Companion St. Luke, has likewise left an Account of himself, which none but a sincere honest Man, regardless of his own Praise, would ever have suffer'd to be given of him. St. Luke says, that the Witnesses against St. Stephen laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose Name was Saul, Acts vii. 58. And that he was consenting to St. Stephen's death, which he repeats twice, and once from St. Paul's own Mouth, in his Speech to the Jews, Acts viii. 1. xxii. 20. He says, that St. Paul made havock of the Church, Acts viii. 3. And breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus, Acts ix. 1. These are not the Words of one, that had a design to dissemble or extenuate in favour of any one. And out of a deep sense of his offence, though it were committed ignorantly in unbelief, St. Paul declares himself to be the least of the Apostles, and not meet to be called
led an Apostle, because he had persecuted the Church of God, 1 Cor. xv. 9. And at another time styles himself less than the least of all saints, Eph. iii. 8. and chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. ascribing all to the Power and Grace of God. St. Luke relates, that there was a sharp contention between St. Paul and St. Barnabas, Acts xv. 39. And St. Paul tells the Galatians, that he had withstood St. Peter to the face, Gal. ii. 11, 14. So plain it is, that they did not act by any Confederacy between themselves, and that the Truth was dearer to them than any thing besides. In the mean time the Apostles have left behind them little or no Account of their Journings, and Labours, and Sufferings, only St. Paul mentions some things of himself upon a necessary Occasion; the rest we have from St. Luke, and he speaks chiefly of St. Paul, and of him only till his first coming to Rome, and of St. Peter very little in comparison; of the rest of the Apostles, scarce any thing in particular: so little Design had they of propagating themselves a Name to Posterity.

St. Paul used all lawful Compliances, and he, who when the Honour of Religion was concerned, made so stout Opposition to St. Peter himself, at other times, when he might safely do it, became all things to all men. And he joins others together with himself in the beginning of many of his Epistles, (1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1. Gal. i. 1. Colos. i. 1. 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1. Philemon i.) Which was a great Condescension, and a kind of communicating his Authority to them, whom he took, as it were, into Commission with himself. But when through the Malice and Insinuations of false Apostles, he was forced to speak in his own Defence, he does it with great Unwillingness, and calls it Folly, and confidence of boasting, 2 Cor. xi. 1, 17. And if he must needs glory, he will glory in the things which concern his Infirmities, v 30. He recounts his Sufferings only, and omits the Success, in the many Conversions and numerous Victories obtained by them:

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He mentions here nothing of his preaching, nothing in particular of his Miracles; but insists upon that, which was the least he could say of himself, when something must be said, that he had suffered much for the Gospel of Christ, whatever the Effect had been. He had concealed his being caught up to the third Heaven, (as St. Ambrose observes) for fourteen Years, and had not at last discovered it, but for the Benefit of others; and even then he confessed, that he knew not whether he was out of the Body or in the Body: so far he was from glorying in his Knowledge, that he owned his Ignorance, and speaks of himself in the third Person, with great Humility and Unwillingness, intimating only that he meant himself. His manner of Expression shews, that nothing less than the Occasion upon which he mentions it, could have forc'd from him such a Discovery. And at the same time, he confesses there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, and declares himself to be nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 5, 7, 11. He gives all the Glory to God, magnifying his Office, and the Grace which enabled him in the Administration of it: And as upon all other occasions he speaks of himself with the greatest Abasement, so when the importunate Malice of his Enemies constrained him to it, and the Glory of God and the Salvation of Men required him to speak something less submissively of himself, he discovers his great Humility in that he used so much Caution, and put in so many lessening and abating Clauses, that the Glory might redound to God and not to himself: insomuch that it appears to have been one of the greatest Instances of the Humiliation and Self-denial of so truly humble and holy a Man, to be forced to speak things which may seem boasting, and make him incur the Censure of Pride and Folly. But he was wil-

*Ambr. in Pf. 36.*
ling to be counted vain and proud for the sake of the Golpe; and had so far mortified all Pride and vain Glory, as to be contented upon so just an account, to incur the disgrace of being supposed guilty of it. For there can be no higher Instance of a truly humble and pious Mind, than to forego the esteem and reputation of being thought so, when the Glory of God and Charity to the Souls of Men require it; he is not throughly humble, who in such a case would not be thought proud, but his very Humility is matter of Pride to him; and it is the last degree of Vanity, which an humble Man can part with, to be desirous not to be esteemed proud. The Truth is, if it were not for the Pride of Men, there would be no need of greater caution and reservedness, when we speak of our selves, than when we speak of others, but Men would speak the truth of themselves and others with the same freedom and plainness. So that this was an infallible argument of the integrity and sincerity of the Apostles, that they spoke always what was proper and seasonable to be spoken; the praise or dispraise of themselves, or others, was not their business, but the Glory of God and the Good of Men.

They write no Encomiums upon one another, nor upon their Master himself; and they write no Invectives upon their worst Enemies, Judas and Herod, and Pontius Pilate, but set down plain Truth and Matter of Fact, whoever is concerned, with the same Simplicity, with which they tell their own Faults.

What Qualifications then can be desired in any Witnesses, which do not all concur in the Apostles and Evangelists? The Apostles shew by their Writings, that they were Men of Understanding sufficient to apprehend the things they attested and wrote about; and indeed, what Man of any Understanding is not capable of witnessing that to be true, which he sees and hears, and perceives with every sense? They had all the advantages and opportunities that ever any Witnesses
witnesses could have, to know what they said to be true; and they were plain Men without Art or Disguise, bred up most of them to mean and laborious Callings; and they had no expectations of any thing but Sufferings in this Life, and therefore were as far from any Temptation as from any possibility of imposing upon the World, and they set down their own faults upon all occasions, as particularly as they do whatever else they relate, having no regard to any thing but Truth.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the Prophecies and Miracles of the Apostles, &c.

There had been a long cessation or intermission both of Prophecies and Miracles in the Jewish Church till the coming of Christ, but by the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, the Prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, and the Spirit of God was poured out in greater abundance, than ever it had been before, in bestowing the gifts of Miracles and of Prophecy in a more eminent manner, and to greater numbers of Men, and those of all Nations, than had ever been done at any time before: for these were the latter days, the last distinction of Time, or the last period of the World, in which God had purposed to reveal himself; and this being the last, was in all respects the fullest and most perfect Revelation.

I. A Spirit of Prophecy was bestowed upon the Apostles and others. A Famine taken notice of by Heathen Authors, which happened throughout all the World in the days of Claudius Cæsar, was pro-

a Sueton. & Dion. Cass. in Claudio.
The Reasonableness and Certainty.

Prophecies of by Agabus, Acts xi. 28. And the same Prophet, both by Actions, and in express Words, signified, that St. Paul should be bound at Jerusalem, and delivered to the Gentiles, Acts xxi. 11. which was likewise foretold by others, even in every City where that Apostle came, Acts xx. 23. St. Paul himself foretold his own Afflictions, 1 Thess. iii. 4. He foretold to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus, that Men would soon arise even from among themselves, who would divide and disturb the Church, Acts xx. 29, 30. And he foretold the same, 1 Tim. iv. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 1. In the midst of a Tempest, and in imminent Danger of Death, he foretold, that tho' the Ship would be lost, yet all the Persons in it, who were two hundred three score and sixteen, should escape, but that they must be cast upon a certain Island. He had before, from the tempestuous Weather, and the Season of the Year, (the Fast of Atonement being already past) express'd his Apprehensions, that this Voyage would be with hurt and much damage, not only of the Lading and Ship, but also of their Lives; but when the Danger was most threatening, it was reveal'd to him, that not an hair should fall from the head of any one of them, Acts xxvii. 9, 10, 23, 34. St. Peter declared, that in the last days there would come scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 2 Pet. iii. 3. Which Prophecy St. Jude saw fulfilled in his time, Jude 18. and Gods knows, we see it fulfill'd in ours. For the Scoffers at Religion would do well to consider, that all their Mockery and Affronts are so far from doing any Prejudice to Religion, that they by that very means fulfil a Prophecy, and add a Confirmation to it, when they think themselves most successful against it. St. Paul forewarns the Thessalonians of the lying Wonders, and strong Delusions, and notorious Wickedness, which would break in upon the Church at the coming of Antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 3. And that this accordingly came to pass, St. John wit-
nesseth, saying, that even then there were many Antichrists. 1 John ii. 18. iv. 3. 2 John vii. And tho' it be variously disputed, who is the Antichrist, 1 John ii. 22. 2 John vii. supposed to be the Beast, Rev. xiii. Yet that the Prophecies concerning the Delusions, and the Impieties and Cruelties of Antichrist, express'd in the Texts now mentioned, and more fully described in the Revelation of St. John, have been in great measure already accomplish'd, will admit of no Dispute; and the gradual and repeated Accomplishment of them in divers Ages, and in so many Instances, is that which has caused so much variety of Opinion in this matter; learned Men easily mistaking some of these many Antichrists for the Beast, or the great Antichrist. In the Revelation of St. John, we have the State of the Church, and the Events which were to befall it, described; and many things contained in it we know to be come to pass, as what concerns the Seven Churches of Asia, &c. and the Obscurity of other places is elsewhere to be accounted for. Quadratus had this Gift of Prophecy, and it continued in the Church to the time of Justin Martyr, of Irenæus, of Origæus, and Dionysius Alexandrinus, and of St. Cyprian.

II. The Miracles wrought by the Apostles, were according to an express Promise of Christ to them, That after his Ascension, they should do even greater Works that he had done himself, John xiv. 12. That is, they should do Works that would be more eminent and observable in the Eyes of the World, though not more excellent and divine; for nothing could be greater in that sense, than to raise a Man from the Dead. Which Promise was fulfilled to them at the Feast of Pentecost, when Men from all Parts of the

\[ b \] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. 3. c. 36. lib. 4. c. 18. lib. v. c. 7.
\[ Iren. \ lib. ii. c. 57. \ lib. v. c. 6. \ Cypr. Epist. 57. 66. \]
\[ e \] Orig. contra Cel. l. i. d Euseb. Hist. l. vi. c. 40.
World were made Witnesses to it. For they were commanded by our Saviour, not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for this promise; and he assured them, that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days after his being taken up from them into Heaven; and that they should receive power, after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them, and should be witnesses unto him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth, Acts i. 4, 5, 8. And this miraculous Power was visibly bestowed, not only upon the Apostles themselves, but upon the hundred and twenty, mention'd Acts i. 15.

I have already shewn, that the Apostles were effectually qualified to be Witnesses of what they delivered concerning Christ, and that they could neither be deceived themselves in it, nor propose any Advantage to themselves by deceiving others; and that if they had designed any Deceit, they alleged such Circumstances as made it impossible for them to have pass'd undiscover'd. All which will be exceeding confirmed, by considering the miraculous Gifts which the Apostles received by the Descent of the Holy Ghost, according to this Promise of our Saviour. I shall therefore shew, how the Apostles were enabled, by the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, to become Witnesses to Christ. 1. By the Miracles which they wrought themselves. 2. By that Power which was convey'd by them to others, of working Miracles. 3. By their supernatural Resolution, Courage, and Patience under their Sufferings.

1. The Apostles were enabled to become Witnesses to Christ, by the Miracles which they wrought themselves. This Power of Miracles qualified them most

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effectually to be Witnesses of the Resurrection, and Ascension, and other Articles of our Faith: For they could neither deceive nor be deceived in these miraculous Gifts, which were bestowed upon them, to be an Assurance to themselves, and an Evidence to others, that it was the Cause of God in which they were engaged, and his Truth which they delivered.

They could not be deceived themselves, undoubtedly, in a thing of this nature; they could not be ignorant, whether they were real Miracles which they wrought, or not; they must needs know whether their own Pretences were true or false; and whether they could speak the Languages, and do the Wonders, which the World believed them to do and speak; and they could not but know by what Power and Means they were enabled to perform all their miraculous Works.

And these Works were of that nature, and done in that manner, that they could impose upon no Man by them; they could not make Men believe that they spoke all kinds of Languages, if they did not speak them, nor that they cured all sorts of Diseases, if they had not cured them: Nothing is more easy than for a Man to know a Language that he understands, when he hears it, or than for Men that were sick, to know that they are recovered, when they feel themselves well. And the manner of their performing these Miracles, was the most publick and notorious, in respect of the Time, and Place, and the Persons on whom they were wrought. The general Expectation, that the kingdom of Heaven was immediately to appear, Luke xix. 11. made the resort to the great Festivals of the Passover and Pentecost to be exceeding great.

Our Saviour had been crucified at the Feast of the Passover, in the sight of the Jews and Proselytes, who were met together from all Parts of the World at that Solemnity: And but fifty days after, at the next solemn
Festival of the Jews, in the very same City where he had been crucified, in the presence of Multitudes of People of all Nations and Languages, which came to keep the Feast of Pentecost, the Apostles declared to them in all their several Tongues, that this same Jesus was by the Almighty Power of God rais'd from the Dead, and that they were impower'd by Him to speak all those Languages. The Apostles were at the same time taken notice of to be Gallilæans, Men of low Birth, and of no Education. St. John, in particular, was known to the High Priest himself, and the rest were all known to many that heard them; their Parentage, and Place of Abode, and manner of Life, might easily be enquired into; for they were no Strangers, nor in a far Country: From all these things it appeared, that it was impossible that they should be capable of speaking any of those Languages, but by Inspiration; and to speak all Languages, is a thing which no Man ever could hope to arrive at by Study or Conversation, though he should make it the whole Business of his Life. And therefore this could least of all be suspected of Men of mean Employments, and who got their Livelihood by their daily Labour and Industry.

The Miracles which the Apostles wrought, were likewise in the most publick Places of the City, and in the most publick manner, upon Persons who had been most remarkable, and generally taken notice of for their Infirmities. St. Peter, by pronouncing only these Words, In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk, cured a Man of about forty Years of Age, who was known to have been lame from his Birth, and was carried and laid daily at one of the Gates of the Temple, where there was wont to be the greatest Resort of People, to ask an Alms of them that entered into the Temple: And this Man being immediately cured, went with St. Peter and St. John into the Temple, and all the people saw him walking and praising.
praising God, and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the Temple, Acts iii. 9, 10. And the Rulers of the Jews enquired into the matter; and upon Examination, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus; and beholding the man which was healed standing by them, they could say nothing against it, but confessed among themselves, that indeed a notable Miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it, Acts iv. 13, 14, 16.

By this and other evident and publick Miracles, the miraculous Power of the Apostles became so much admired and magnified by the People, that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them: There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one, Acts v. 15, 16. And in this manner the Apostles continued several Years in Jerusalem, doing Miracles upon all Occasions, and before all People. And the same miraculous Power manifested itself at Ephesus, where God wrought special Miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them, Acts xix. 11, 12. So impossible was it for the Apostles to deceive those, before whom their Miracles were so frequently and publickly wrought. And yet it must be much more impossible, if any thing more impossible can be supposed, to deceive, those, upon whom their Miracles had the Effect of restoring to them the Use of their Feet, their Sight, and their Health, and even of raising them again from the Dead.

And
And indeed, none of the Adversaries of old of the Christian Religion ever denied, but that Miracles were wrought by the Apostles; they only disputed the Power by which they were wrought; they never question'd the Reality of the Miracles themselves. The Books of the New Testament, which give an Account of these wondrous Works, were written soon after the things related had been done, and these Books were in the hands of Heathens and Jews, as well as of Christians; and neither the Jews nor the Heathens could deny but that such Works had been done; they only cavill'd at the Power and Authority by which they were wrought; which, how groundless and unreasonable so ever it were, yet was the only Evasion they could have, when there were so many Christians, if they had denied the Matter of Fact, who did the like Miracles every day to confute them. For,

2. The Apostles not only wrought Miracles themselves, but convey'd to others a Power of Working them. Thus when St. Peter was sent for to Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word, and they spake with Tongues, and magnified God, Acts x. 44, 46. And so at Ephesus, the Holy Ghost came on those whom St. Paul had laid his hands upon, and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied, Acts xix. 6. And this miraculous Power was in that evident manner receiv'd by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles, that Simon Magus offer'd them Money to purchase it, Acts viii. 18. Now as the Apostles could neither be deceived themselves in the Miracles which they did, nor deceive those, before whom they were perform'd, and upon whom they were wrought; so certainly they could never deceive such as they confer'd this Gift upon. When they not only did all sorts of Miracles, and spoke all Languages themselves, but convey'd a Power likewise upon others of speaking and doing, as themselves did; this was still a further Evidence

f Julian. apud Cyril. 1. 3.
that all their Pretences were real beyond all possibility of Deceit.

Deceivers would never have done their Miracles so openly, and so frequently, at such a time and place; they would never have pretended to a Gift of Tongues at a Festival, where Men from all parts of the World were met together; so that they could attempt to speak in no strange languages, but some present would have discover'd them, if they had not been able to speak it. But they would least of all have pretended to enable others in an instant to work the same Wonders, and speak the same Tongues, only by laying their hands upon them. Men that would attempt all this, that they were unable to perform it, must be so far from being capable of discoursing and writing as the Apostles did, that they must be void even of common Sense; and if they could succeed in their designs, and make the World believe that they did act and speak in this manner, when they did not, they must have a Power over the Understandings and Senses of all with whom they convers'd; which is as strange even as this miraculous Power itself. They must work Miracles either upon the Objects of Sense, or upon the Senses themselves: for in this case, they could never have been able so much as to deceive without a Miracle. And since God would never have empowered them to work Miracles to deceive, we are certain that their Miracles were all wrought for that intent and purpose, which they made profession of, and to confirm that Doctrine which they taught.

And this Power of Miracles, which now descended from Heaven upon the Apostles, and was convey'd by them to others, continu'd for some Ages in the Church, and prov'd it self to the worst Enemies of our Religion in such Instances, as must make them most concern'd to examine it. For as h the Christians

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\[ h \text{Iren.} 1. 2. 56. c. 57. 1. 5. c. 6.\]
had the Gift of Tongues, cast out Devils, and thereby converted those, out of whom they had been driven; as they foretold things to come, and cured Diseases, and raised the Dead, who lived many Years afterwards: so several of the Primitive Writers witness, that nothing was more notorious, than that the Devils were wont to cry out for very Anguish and Torment, when they were adjur'd by the true God, and Tertullian made publick Challenges to the Heathens, that if they would but admit them to this Trial, the Christians would undertake to make their most famous Deities acknowledge the Power of Christ, and to make their very Gods confess themselves to be wicked and seducing Spirits, or else they would be contented to be slain upon the Place; and this he wrote under Persecutions, and in Apologies dedicated and presented to their Persecutors themselves.

And indeed, the Oracles in all parts of the World soon began to fail, so as they had been never known to do before: for their Power began to abate and decay upon the approach of our Saviour's Birth into the World, till by degrees they quite ceas'd, which the Heathens wonder'd at, and were much perplex'd about it, as we learn from what they have left written upon that Subject. And tho' Julian the Apostate used all the ways that he could think of, to bring them into credit again, he was never able to effect it, but the most famous of them confess'd to him, when he consulted it, that a miraculous and divine Power residing in the Remains of a Christian Martyr after his Death, would suffer no Answer to be given. And it is so remarkable, that I must mention it once more, that when the same Apostate Emperor, in Hatred and Despite to the Christian Religion, became a great Pa-
tron of the Jews, and encouraged them to re-build their Temple, great Balls of Fire broke forth near the Foundation, and destroy’d both the Work itself and the Persons employ’d in it. And this we have related, not only by several Christian Writers that lived about that time, but by an Heathen Historian, who was then living, and wrote the History of those times, and has shewn himself in no respect over favourable to the Christians but was a Soldier under Julian, and had no Inclination to say any thing that might seem to diminish his Character. The Judgments also which befel several of the greatest Persecutors of the Christian Religion, were so miraculous and so terrible, as to extort a Confession from some of them, of God’s Justice in their Punishment, and to force them to recal their persecuting Edicts, and change them for others in favour of Christianity. ° The Edicts of Maximianus and Maximin, to this purpose, are to be seen in Eusebius; and p the Judgment upon Julian was so sudden and so remarkable, that some of the Heathen cavi’d, that the God of the Christians had not shewn that Mercy and Forbearance, which they reported of him, in it.

And when the Power of Miracles which came down on the Day of Pentecost upon the Apostles, and was continued in the Church after them, thus manifested it self in opposition to the Pretences both of the Jews and Heathens, in such a manner, as must provoke them to make all the Discoveries theypossibly could, concerning it; when it thus triumph’d over all the Gods of the Heathen, whilst its poor and persecuted Professors were under the Feet of the Heathen Emperors, and lay continually exposed to their Cruelties, and at the Peril of their Lives, proffer’d in pub-

n Ammian. Marcellin. lib. xxiii. c. i. citat. sup. p. 239.
p Hieron. in Hab. c. iii.
lick Apologies, by a miraculous Power, or, as the Apostle speaks, by the Power and Demonstration of the Spirit, to prove their own Religion true, and theirs false, and its cruellest Persecutors were by miraculous Judgments forc’d to become its Protectors; this was all that could be desired towards the fulfilling the Promise of our Saviour to his Apostles, that they should become his Witnesses to all Nations. But,

3. The Gospel could not have been thus propagated, unless this Power of the Holy Ghost had been still farther manifest by the Courage and Resolution, and Patience of the Apostles under their Sufferings. Our Saviour tells them, that they should receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them, to become witnesses unto him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria. These were the places where our Saviour himself had wrought his Miracles, and where he had been hated and persecuted, and at last crucified; and there is reason to believe, that the Apostles went not from Jerusalem and the parts adjacent, till twelve years after his Ascension: And when they had testified his Resurrection, and preach’d his Gospel to the Jews, their Work was not yet at an end, but they were to be his Witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth; and even thither several of them went, fearing no Dangers, and being discouraged at no Sufferings.

There is a natural Boldness and Courage in some Men, by which they are often carried both to do and to endure a great deal more than others; But it was not so with the Apostles; they were naturally very timorous and faint-hearted, they all forsook their Master, and fled, when he was first apprehended, and they were very backward to believe his Resurrection: And when they and the rest of the Disciples were convinced of it, they did not preach it to others;

4 Euseb. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 18.
...after he had been seen of them forty days, and discoursed with them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, they still had mistaken Notions and Expectations concerning it: when they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel? And when Christ was taken up from them, into Heaven, they stood gazing up after him, not knowing what to think of it, till two Angels admonish'd them, that it was in vain for them to stand looking thus any longer: And after his Ascension, they stay'd ten days before they ventur'd to publish any thing of what had come to pass, till on the day of Pentecost, in a visible and audible manner, the Holy Ghost descended upon them, and quite changed their Temper, and of the most timorous made them the most courageous and resolute, inspiring them with a Divine Vigour and Presence of Mind.

For of all their Miracles, few seem to have been more wonderful, than that Firmness and Constancy of Mind, which Men so low, and mean, and abject, and before so fearful, as the Apostles were, now shew'd, upon all occasions. When our Saviour spoke to these his poor Disciples, and commanded them to go and teach all nations, Mat. xxviii. 19. it was such a Command as no King nor Law-giver ever presum'd to give, in the Height of all his Power and Greatness: And when God himself sent Moses to the Children of Israel only, Moses fear'd the Success, and would fain have declin'd the Message. And how might the Disciples have reply'd to our Saviour, how shall we preach to the Romans, and dispute with the Graecians, and discourse with the most remote and barbarous Nations, who have been bred up in the Knowledge only of our own Native Tongue? How can we compel all Nations to forfake the Worship of the Gods of their several Countries, and to observe all things whatsoever we are commanded to teach them?
With what force of Eloquence are we fitted for such a Design? What Hope can we have to succeed in an Attempt to set up Laws in opposition to the Laws established for so many Ages, in behalf of their own Gods? What Strength can we have to overcome such Difficulties, and to accomplish such an Enterprize? But they made no Objections; our Saviour had convers'd with them forty Days, after his Resurrection, and now tells them, that all Power is given unto him in Heaven, and in Earth, and he commands them not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, faith he, ye have heard of me, Acts i. 4. And when the Holy Ghost was come, they were endued by him with a Courage and Resolution almost as wonderful, as the Miracles they wrought, to perform the great Work which lay before them. They were not in the least daunted at any Dangers, or Torments, or Deaths, but went on courageously in their Duty, by the Power and Assistance of the Holy Ghost, by whom they were enabled to bring the World to the Obedience of the Gospel of Christ: They opposed themselves to all the Assaults of Men and Devils: Nothing could now discourage them, who before were so timorous and unbelieving; the coming of the Holy Ghost down upon them, wrought a mighty Change in them, who were to work as great an Alteration in all the World besides. St. Peter standing with the Eleven, lift up his Voice, he spoke with wonderful Resolution, and the rest stood by to bear witness to the Truth of what he said. They stood now undaunted by, to testify that their Master was again alive, who had forsaken him as soon as he was apprehended; and he that before so shamefully denied him thrice, being startled and affrighted at the Question of the High Priest's Maid, now speaks aloud in a vast Concours of People, with so much Stedfastness, that this alone was a sufficient Evidence of the Truth of what he delivered. They were not
not in the least concerned at the Mockery and Abuses that were put upon them, the Spirit had descended on them, and raised them above such mean and foolish Apprehensions; they were now full of the Holy Ghost, and no worldly Thoughts could move them, they acted with the Force and Vigour of the Wind and Fire, in which the Holy Ghost came upon them, and with as much Unconcernedness, as if they had no Difficulties to encounter: the World they very well knew and found was against them, but they had the Assurance of his Help, who had over come the World. They were pressed on every side, with Want and Disgrace, and all manner of Hardships; some mock'd and reviled them, others tormented them, the Rage, the Tumults, the Conspiracies of whole Cities and Countries broke loose upon them, all the Malice and Contrivance of Men and Devils was joined against them; and yet with what Freedom doth St. Peter speak? Ye men of Israel hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye your selves also know: him being delivered by the determinate Counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God hath raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this which ye now see and bear,

Acts ii. 22, 23, 24, 32, 33. And in the third Chapter, The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One, and the just, and desired a Murtherer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses, 

§ 13, 14, 15. And before the Council, O ye Rulers of
of the People and Elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought by you Builders, which is become the head of the corner, neither is their Salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, Acts iv. 8, &c. And again, The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins: And we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him, Acts v. 30, &c. With what Freedom and Authority doth he now speak? How unlike is he now to the Man he was before, when he thrice denied his Master whilst alive? And what could make such an alteration in him after his Master's death, but a supernatural Power? What could cause him thus frequently and earnestly to make an open confession of him in the midst of the People, and before their Council, if he had not known him to be risen from the Dead, and had not done all his Miracles by virtue of that Power which was bestowed upon him and the rest of the Apostles, after Christ's Ascension?

And the same Constancy and Greatness of Mind appeared in St. Stephen, and the rest of the Disciples, which yet was accompanied with equal Humility and Meekness: Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard, Acts iv. 19, 20. You may do your Pleasure, but we must do our Duty: Nothing of Fury and Violence, nor of Wildness and Extravagancy, but a constant
constant Composedness and Gravity, and a rational sober Zeal, appeared in all their Behaviour. They told a plain Truth, and then wrought Miracles to confirm it; and afterwards suffered any Torments, rather than they would renounce it, or desist from preaching it. Though they could cure all Diseases, and dispossession Devils, and raise Men from the Dead, or take away their Lives with a word speaking, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; yet they were not exempted from Sufferings, because we must then have wanted one great argument for the Confirmation of our Faith. And the Gospel was to be founded upon Principles of Love and Goodness, not of Fear and Astonishment. There is something in the Sufferings of good Men, which is apt mightily to work upon the Affections, and upon any Seeds of good Nature in us; and therefore, when by their Miracles they had raised the Admiration of the Beholders, and convinced them of the Power by which they were wrought, their Patience under Sufferings not only confirm'd them in the Truth of Religion, but laid the Foundations of a religious Life, in gaining upon the Inclinations and Affections, and in calming the Spirits, and preparing them by so great Examples of Patience to endure all the Calamities incident to Men. Who is there, that is not more affected with the meek and humble Courage, and invincible Patience of the Apostles, than with all the great Acts of the mighty Conquerors and Destroyers of Mankind? A few poor, unarmed, defenceless Men, stand before armed Multitudes, and speak with as much Authority, as if all the Power of the World were in their hands; and indeed, all Power was in their hands, inasmuch as He assisted and inspired them, who is above All: They speak to Multitudes with as much Freedom as to one Man, and to all Nations with as much Ease as to one People.

And the same Holy Spirit who descended upon the
rest of the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, descending upon St. Paul, at his Conversion, and gave that great Apostle so much Confidence and Resolution, so much Patience and Zeal under his Sufferings, which were so severe and terrible, that we can scarce read them with so little Horror as he underwent them; nay, as if he had been above all Sense of Fear or Pain, he took Pleasure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions, in Distresses for Christ's Sake. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

Thus did the Holy Ghost fit and prepare the Apostles to be Witnesses to Christ, by inspiring them with all that Courage and Patience which was necessary for Men that were to declare an ungrateful and despised Truth, amongst those who would think themselves so much concern'd to oppose and suppress it. If they had wrought no Miracles, their Courage and Resolution might have pass'd for a groundless Confidence: and if they had not had the Courage to stand so resolutely to the Truth of what they deliver'd, their Miracles themselves might have become suspected; but acting by a divine Power, and being supported in all their Sufferings by a supernatural Constancy and Greatness of Mind, and being so suddenly changed and raised above themselves in all they did or suffered, and working the same change in others; they gave all the Evidence and Certainty of the Truth of the Doctrines they taught, that it was possible for Men to give.

As a Power of working Miracles was derived from the Apostles down upon their Disciples, so was the Spirit of Meekness and Patience under Afflictions communicated to them. S. Peter, writing to the Converts under much Distress, testifies, That their Faith in Christ made them happy and triumphant in the midst of all their Sufferings; wherein, says he, ye greatly rejoice, thro' now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations; that the Trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, thro' it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise;
and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, tho' now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 8. And as other Histories are chiefly taken up in the Account of Battles of Warriors, with confused Noise, and Garments rolled in Blood: So the History of the Church for divers Ages, principally contains the most cruel Torments undergone, not only with the greatest Patience, but with the greatest Joy. And it is observable, that God was pleased not to raise up any Christian Emperor, 'till above three hundred Years after Christ, that he might shew, that the Religion which came from Heaven could need no human Aid, nor be suppress'd by any human Force; and that he might recommend the great Virtues of Meekness and Patience to the World, by the Examples of Men as eminent for these, as for the Miracles they wrought, and might instruct Mankind in a suffering Religion. For to assure the World of the Truth of it, he would not grant it Protection from Christian Emperors, 'till most of the Empire was become Christian, and Christianity had diffused itself into all the known Parts of the Earth. For before the last Persecution, begun by Dioclesian, o the Church flourished as much, and had the Favour of the Court, and of Great Men, in as high a Degree almost as under Constantine himself; 'till their Prosperity caused their Sins, and these brought Persecution. But at last the Persecuting Emperors were forced by a divine Power, manifested in miraculous Diseases inflicted on them, to restore the Christians to their former Liberty, in their Worship of God; that so it might appear to all the World, that the Christian Religion needed no Patronage of Men; for God would compel its worst Enemies to become

o Euseb. Hist. 1. 8. c. 1.
its Protectors, when he saw it fitting. And when Julian made it his great aim and business to restore Paganism again in the World, he saw, to his Grief, how ineffectual all his Endeavours proved; he observed that the Christian Religion still retained a general esteem and approbation, and that the Wives, and Children and Servants of his own Priests themselves, were most of them Christians.

If any one then, upon a serious consideration of all Circumstances, can withstand the conviction of so great Evidence; I would only ask him, whether he believes any History or Relations of Matters of Fact, which he never saw, and desire him to shew what degrees of Certainty he can discern in any of them, which are not to be found here: And besides, to consider, that if in a vicious and subtile Age, a Doctrine so contrary to Flesh and Blood, by so weak and incompetent Means, could obtain so universally amongst Men of all Tempers, and Professions, and Interests, in all Nations of the World, against so violent opposition, without the help of Miracles; this is as great a Miracle as can be conceived: Either therefore the Christian Religion was propagated by Miracles, or it was not: If it was, then the Miracles by which it was propagated, prove it to be from God; if it was not propagated by Miracles, the Propagation itself is a Miracle, and sufficient to prove it to be from Him.

p Sozom. l. 5. c. 16. & Julian. Epist. 49.
CHAP. XVII.

Of the Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists.

It is justly esteem'd a sufficient reason for the credibility of any History, if it be written by Men of Integrity, Men who have no suspicion upon them of dishonesty, and have no temptation to deceive, and who relate nothing but of their own Times, and within their own Knowledge, tho' the Authors never suffer'd any loss, nor run any hazard, in asserting what they deliver. But the History of Christ has this farther Advantage, that many of the most considerable things in it were done in the sight of his Enemies; and that which is an History to future Ages, was rather an Appeal to that Age, whether the things related were true, or not.

The History of our Saviour's Life, and Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension, as it had been proved, was attested by his Apostles, to the faces of his very Crucifiers; and they all remained upon the Place, where what they witnessed had been done, for several Years afterwards, declaring and preaching to all People, the things which they had seen and heard. And soon after his Ascension, when all the Proceedings against him were fresh in memory, they committed the same to writing in Greek, which was the most common Language, and generally known at that time.

St. Matthew, who first penned his Gospel, living among the Jews, is said to have written it in Hebrew or Syriack, (tho' it was soon after translated into

\[ \text{Quid sibi volvunt in mediis Barbarorum regionibus Graecae urbes?} \]
\[ \text{Quid inter Indos, Persasque Macedonicus fermo? Scythia— civitas Aeboa, Pontis impositas litoribus ostentat— Athenienses in Asia Turba est. Senec. Confolat. ad Helviam. init.} \]
Greek) so that whoever of the Jews did not understand the Greek Tongue, might read the Gospel in their own Language. Nor long after, the other Gospels were penned, and they were all in a short time dispersed into the several parts of the World, and translated into all Languages. It is particularly related, that St. John's Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles, were soon translated into the Hebrew Tongue.

The Evangelists give such an Account both of the Birth and Death of our Saviour, as must suppose them recorded at Rome: For there the Censual Tables were kept, where, by St. Luke's Account, the Name of our Saviour must have been register'd; and his Death and Resurrection were so remarkable, as they relate them, that according to the Custom used in the Government of the Roman Provinces, the Emperor must have a Relation sent him of them; and (as I have shewn) both Justin Martyr and Tertullian appeal to the Roman Records for the Truth both of the Birth and Resurrection of our Saviour. The Memory of the Massacre of the Infants by Herod, is preserved to us by a saying of Augustus concerning Herod upon it, which is mentioned in Macrobius a Heathen Author. For Augustus was told, that among others, Herod had caus'd his own Child to be slain; which, whether true or no, gave occasion to the Emperor to make this Observation, That it was better to be Herod's Swine than his Son. The Reason why Josephus has given no Account of this Slaughter of the Infants, is supposed to be, because when Herod had before been guilty of so many and so great Cruelties, in killing so many of his Friends, of his Sons, and Wives, it seemed no extraordinary thing for him to slay the Male Infants, who were two Years old and under, in a small Town
or Village, and the adjacent Territory. Tacitus mentions our Saviour’s Suffering under Pontius Pilate, and Tertullian, in his Apology, tells the Heathens, that the miraculous Eclipse of the Sun, which was at Christ’s Death, stood upon Record in their own Registers: Whether it were for the Strangeness of the thing, it being contrary to the Course of Nature, or that their Superstition had made it customary to register all the Eclipses which happened. It must be acknowledged, that the Passage in Josephus concerning our Saviour, is not without its Difficulties: But at the same time, it must be own’d, that it is altogether as unaccountable, that he should give no Character of Christ himself, nor of Christians; who as we learn from Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny, were grown too considerable to be overlook’d by a Jewish Historian; who, according to all the Rules of History, ought to have mentioned them, as a numerous and prevailing Sect, at least, if he had no better Opinion of them. However, the Testimony given by Josephus to the Virtue and Piety of St. John Baptist, must be admitted as unquestionable; since nothing can be brought against it, but the like might be rais’d by acute and busy Men, against any other Part of his History. In the Antiquities of Josephus, as we now have them, mention is twice made of our Blessed Saviour; once, in his full Character; and a second time, in styling St. James, the Brother of Jesus, who is called Christ. And next to these express Testimonies, (if they be rejected) his Silence is the best Evidence which could be expected or desired of him. This proves, at least, that he had nothing to write against Christ. For he, who forgot not the Story of Judas of Galilee, and of Theudas, would not have spared our Saviour, if the Accusations of the

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\[\text{footnotes:}
\begin{align*}
\text{f Tertull. Apolog. c. 21.} & \quad \text{g Antiq. lib. 18. c. 4.} \\
\text{h Antiq. lib. 18. c. 7.} & \quad \text{i Ib. c. 4.} \\
\text{i Lib. 18. c. 1.} & \quad \text{k Lib. 20. c. 8.} \\
\text{m Lib. 20. c. 2.} & \quad \text{Jews}
\end{align*}\]
The Reasonableness and Certainty

Jews had been true. And he who gave so high a Character of St. John Baptist, and of St. James, whom he n iles the Brother of Jesus, who is called Christ; and ascribes the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Divine Vengeance inflicted for his Death and Martyrdom; could give no ill Account of Jesus, for whom St. James suffer'd. Josephus then seems to have followed Gamaliel's Advice; And now I say unto you, Refrain from these Men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed, Acts v. 38, 39. What other reason can be assign'd, why when Christ is spoken of by the Roman Historians of that Ages, an Account of him should be omitted by Josephus, who had much more occasion to mention him, and greater opportunities to find out the Truth of all that had been preach'd or written of him? This is said on Supposition, that these Testimonies of Josephus were not genuine, which I see no Reason to suspect. * The Omission of the least mention of the Life and Miracles of Christ is the only Attestation that could be expected from Justus Tiberiensis in his Jewish Chronicle; but Josephus and he differ'd as much in their Writings, as in their Conduct and Part, which they took in the publick Affairs of their Country, during the War, which ended in the Ruin of the Jewish State and Government.

The Dumbness of Zacharias till the Circumcision of his Son John the Baptist, was a notorious, publick thing, and the People who waited for him, and marvell'd that he tarry'd so long in the Temple, perceiv'd at his coming out, that he had seen a Vision; and all things relating to that History, were noised

abroad through all the hill country of Judæa, Luke i. 21. That the Wise-men came from the East at the sight of the Star; that Herod heard of this, and was troubled at it; and all Jerusalem with him; that he gathered all the Chief-Priests and Scribes together, and demanded of them, where Christ should be born; and that they answer'd, At Bethlehem of Judæa; citing the Prophecy of Micah; that Herod, when he had enquired of the Wise-men concerning the Star, and enjoin'd them to bring him word where the young Child was, being disappointed by their returning home another way, slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old, and under. These are things of that publick nature, that it was impossible they should be feign'd, when St. Matthew's Gospel was first publish'd. If they had not been true, thousands must have been able to contradict them, and discover the Falsity of them. When Matters of Fact are related, with so many manifest and publick Circumstances, it is an Appeal to the World for the Truth of what is written; and no Man of common sense would contrive a false Story with such publick Circumstances, as that every Reader may be able to disprove it. If any Man should affirm, that in such a City or Village in England, at the Command of such a King, and at such a time, within our Memory, all the Infants, from two Years old and under, were murdered, he must scarce expect to be believ'd, or to confirm any thing else he has to deliver, by such a Fiction to introduce it.

The triumphant Shouts and Hosanna's of the Multitude at Christ's Entrance into Jerusalem, whereby all the city was moved, Matt. xxi. 10, 11. immediately before the Passover, when there was the greatest Concourse of People, was a thing that could not soon be forgotten: At the same time he drove out all that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the Money-
Money-changers; and when he was in the Temple, the blind and the lame came to him and he healed them; and the Chief-priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the Children crying in the Temple, Hophannah to the Son of David, and they were sore displeased at it. The Evangelists would never have brought in the Chief-Priests and Scribes themselves, with the whole People of Jerusalem, and the vast Numbers of Jews and Proselytes out of all Nations, assembled at the Passover, as Spectators and Witnesses of these things, if they had not been so certain of them as to appeal to them all, for the Truth of what they relate, so lately, and so solemnly and publickly done.

The Darkness of the whole Earth for three Hours together, in the midst of the Day, the Veil of the Temple's being rent from the top to the bottom, the Earthquake, and the rending of the Rocks, and the opening of the Graves, are things that must have been generally known, and could not be feign'd; or if any Man can be so vain as to imagine they might, let him but consider, whether such things could now be imposed upon any People, by the Writings of a few Men, as done in the Metropolis of a Nation, at a solemn Time, within the Memory of thousands yet living, who are able to contradict them, from their own certain Knowledge. If a Man should pretend, that but a few Years ago, in the chief City of any Kingdom or Nation, one part of the principal Church was rent from the bottom to the top, by an Earthquake, which tore asunder the Rocks, and open'd the Graves of the Dead, and that at the same time, the Moon being in that Position that the Sun could suffer no Eclipè, the Sun was darken'd from twelve at Noon, to three in the Afternoon, could he hope to gain any Credit or Belief to any Doctrine he had to propagate, by feigning such Circumstances, as would put it into the Power of every Man that heard of them to disprove him? Would not this be the readiest and the
the most effectual way he could possibly invent, to expose himself and his Cause.

The Death of Judas, and the Cause and Manner of it, which is so clear a Vindication of our Saviour, and so plain a Proof that he is the Christ, was known unto all the dwellers of Jerusalem, insomuch as that Field was called in their proper tongue, Acedama, that is to say, the field of Blood, Acts i. 19. Matt. xxvii. 8. If this Field had not been so called, and this had not been well known at Jerusalem, would any Man have written in this manner?

And besides the Twelve Apostles, and the Seventy Disciples, who all believed and attested the Truths contain'd in the Evangelists, many Persons of Authority and Note among the Jews are mentioned, who would have found themselves concerned to disprove what is related, if it had been false. Nicodemus is said to have come to Christ by Night, who was a Pharisee, and a Ruler of the Jews, John iii. 2. vii. 50. xix. 39. And to put this Mark upon him three several times, That he came to Jesus by Night, and durst not own his coming to him, was no flattering Character, or such as might engage Nicodemus or his Friends to dissemble the Injury, if it had not been true that Nicodemus was his Disciple. The like is said of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich Man, and an honourable Counselor, Matt. xxvii. 57. Mar. xv. 43. that he was a Disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, John xix. 38. Herod and Pontius Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas, and several other Persons particularly named, and most of them with no Commendation, but with that Character, which the Truth of the History required, would be concern'd themselves, or their Friends and Relations for them, after their Decease, to expose any Falseness, that could have been discovered in the History of our Saviour.

The other Books of the New Testament are explicatory and consequential to the Gospel or History of
of Christ; and besides they contain many memorable and publick Facts, as the speaking of all sorts of Languages, and working all kinds of Miracles at the solemn Feast of Pentecost, and the Conversion of many thousands thereby, the frequent Examination of the Apostles before the Council at Jerusalem, their Preachings and Miracles in the most publick places, as in the Temple, in the Streets, &c. these are things that could not be imposed upon the World in that very Place, and in defiance of that very People, before whom they are said to have been done. Gamaliel, Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, Dionysius the Areopagite, Sergius Paulus, Simon Magus, Felix, King Agrippa, Tertullus, Gallio, and others, were Names of too great Note and Fame to be used in a false Story in which they are so much concern'd. And all their Proceedings in the Courts of Judicature were kept upon Record, and therefore could not be pretended, (without being discover'd) by those who always had so many Adversaries.

The miraculous Power bestow'd upon the Apostles was chiefly employ'd in curing Diseases, and for the Health and Preservation of Mankind; but they had a Power of inflicting Diseases likewise, and Death itself, upon just Occasions, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. Of Elymas the Sorcerer, Acts xiii. And the incestuous Corinthian, 1 Cor. v. And when this was done by private Men, and divulg'd to the World, with the Names of the Persons who inflicted Diseases and Death itself, and of those on whom they were inflicted; this is an Evidence both of the Truth of the Matter of Fact, and of the Power by which it was done: for no Author could think to serve his Friend or his Cause, by relating things of this nature, unless they had been evidently done in a miraculous Manner, and by a Divine Commission and Authority.
The Conversion of St. Paul was a thing so memorable, both for the Manner of it, and for the Business he was going about, and the Persons that employed him, and for his known Zeal at other times, in persecuting the Church, that St. Paul appeals to King Agrippa, as one who could not be ignorant of a thing so notorious, Acts xxvi. 26. And it was the great Providence and Wisdom of God, that a Man so well known and esteemed by the Pharisees and Chief Priests before his Conversion, should be the greatest Instrument, both by his Preaching and Writings, for the Propagation of the Gospel; and both his Epistles, and the other Books of Holy Scripture, have the same Proof, from the Observations already mention'd, concerning the Names and Characters of Persons, and other Circumstances. And they were always read in the Assemblies of Christians, and were appointed to be read in them, Coloss. iv. 16. 1 Thess. v. 27. And the Writings both of him, and of the Evangelists, and the other Apostles, are cited by Authors contemporary with the Apostles, by Barnabas an Apostle himself, and by Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, &c. And they have been acknowledged to be the genuine Works of those whose Names they bear, both by Jews and Heathens, and particularly by Tryphon the Jew, in his Dialogue with Justin Martyr; and by Julian the Apostate. It is enough in this place to observe, that (excepting some very few Books, of

P Magna. men Petrus kai Ioanneis magiurica, .... tis w. oikou eis yas ouai. to de perigeven ekbas, usteron de euergasthousan? tis eti amfiboleutheis proes tis aletheias; evasthva genidion in loyn te-thasmaka alithas tis tis ethelos pthymaion oikonemiai pau tis kai tis akron eisologias, Eis olignos othevphpasen aerthmon. Paulos de to periegen diwqos yefavon dekaletotaros eisologh exagwvato. e yas oui yllo 


which
which an Account shall elsewhere be given) the Books of the Scriptures of the New Testament have been received as genuine, from their first Appearance in the World, during the Lives of their several Authors, and have been delivered down for such thro' the several Ages of the Church. In the main, they have been so unanimously received, and so fully attested by Christians, that the Jews and Heathens themselves never denied them to be genuine, nor ever pretended the principal Matters of Fact to be false or doubtful. Many of the Eye-witnesses to the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles, lived to a great Age; St. John himself above an hundred Years, and he preached the Gospel above seventy Years. St. James was Bishop of Jerusalem thirty Years. St. Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch more than forty Years. Simeon, the Son of Cleopas lived to an hundred and twenty Years, and Polycarp the Disciple of St. John, at his 'Martyrdom profess'd, that he had been a Servant of Christ fourscore and six Years; and he was Bishop above sixty Years, as it appears from St. Ignatius's Epistles, whom he surviv'd about that number of Years. And Irenæus, in an Epistle to Florinus, a Heretick, who had considerable Employments in the Emperor's Court, declared, that he remembred exactly what he had heard Polycarp discourse, concerning the Account of the Miracles and Doctrine of our Saviour, which he had receiv'd from St. John, and others, who had convers'd with Christ; and that it differ'd in nothing from the Scriptures.

And besides the inspired Writings, the chief Points of the Christian Religion were testify'd in Apologies written from time to time, to the Heathen Empe-

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r Euseb. i. 3. c. 29. Hieron. adv. Jovin. i. i.
s Hieron. Catal. t Euseb. i. 4. c. 15.
u Iren. i. 3. c. 3. Euseb. i. 5. c. 20.
rors themselves. * Quadratus a Disciple of the A-
postles, and Bishop of Athens, in his Apology to the
Emperor Adrian, declared, that Persons, who had
been healed by our Saviour, and others, who had
been raised from the Dead by him, were still living
in his Time. And his Apology, being delivered to
that Emperor, had such Effect, as to put a Stop to
the Persecution then raging against the Christians.
Aristides presented an Apology to that Emperor * at
the same time at Athens.  

* Justin Martyr wrote two
Apologies, the first dedicated to Antoninus Pius and
his two Sons, and the Roman Senate; the latter to
M. Antoninus and the Senate; and  
he had the good
Success to deliver the Church at that time from Per-
secution. * Melito, Bishop of Sardis, and Apollinaris
Bishop of Hierapolis, likewise wrote a Vindication of
the Christian Religion to M. Antoninus. Athenago-
ras offer'd his Apology to M. Aurelius and Commodus;
b Miltiades to Commodus, or to the Deputies of the
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Miltiades to Commodus, or to the Deputies of the
Provinces.  

Apolлониus, a Roman Senator, made a
publick Defence of the Christian Religion in the Se-

w Euseb. Hist. lib. iv. c. 3. Quadratus Apostolorum Discipulus,
& Atheniensis Pontificex Ecclesiæ nonne Adriano Principi Eleusineæ sa-
era invisiuti librum pro nostrâ Religione tradidit? Et tantæ admi-
rationi omnibus fuit, ut persecutionem gravissimam illius excellens sedaret

x Tæuæ (Hadriano) Kadctre καθολικῶν περιτονυμίων άκαδίωνων,
καθολικῶν νομιμίων των καθ' ημας Εοσθενέων. Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c. 3.
Cumque Hadrianus Athenis exegisset byemem—porræxit ei librum pro
Religione nostrâ compositum (Quadratus). Hieron. Cat. Aristides—
volumen nostrî dogmatis rationem continens, eodem tempore, quo &
Quadratus Hadriano Principi dedit, id. ib. & Euseb. ib.

v Ιαυτίνου δεσποτοῦ μετὰ τῶν καθ' ημας δοματων Βιβλίων αναθέτας τοῖς
δενθλωδοίς αέχων. Euseb. ib. c. 16.

a Euseb. l. 4. c. 26. Antonino Imperatori Melito Asians Sardi-
cenis Episcopus Apologeticum pro Christianis tradidit. Euseb. Chron.
A. D. 131.

b Id. lib. 5. c. 17.

nate of Rome, and Tertullian presented his Apology to the Senate, or to the Governors of the Provinces. * Lucian Presbyter of Antioch exhibited a Defence of his Faith and Doctrine to Maximin at the time of his Martyrdom. And the Apologists did not dwell only upon generals, but descended to such particulars, as to appeal to the publick Records for the truth of what they delivered concerning the place of our Saviour's Birth, and the manner of his Death, and his Resurrection, and to give an account of the Christian Worship, and of the celebration of the Eucharist itself; so that the Principles and Foundations of the Christian Religion, were from the beginning asserted in publick Writings, dedicated and presented to the Heathen themselves, who were most concerned and most capable of disproving it, if it had been false.

And though the Acts which were forged under the Emperor Maximin, and pretended to be Pilate's, but bearing date divers Years before Pilate was Governor of Judea, were by his command sent into all the Provinces of his Empire, and published in all places, and order'd to be taught Children, and to be learnt by heart by them, yet all this malicious Care and Contrivance was ineffectual to the suppressing the Truth of the History of our Saviour, which was so well attested, and so fully published amongst all sorts of Men, that it was impossible to extirpate the Belief of it. And this Emperor himself (as I before shew'd) was, by miraculous Diseases inflicted on him, forced to retract by a publick Edict, his Practices against Christianity, and to acknowledge that his Sins and Blasphemies against Christ, were the just Cause of his Punishment.

*d Justin. Apol. 1. c Euseb. lib. 9. c. 5, & 7.
*e Euseb. l. 1. c. 9.

CHAP.
CHAP. XVIII.
Of the Doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures.

The Scriptures must be acknowledg'd by all considerate Men, to contain excellent Rules and Precepts for the Government of our Lives, and it cannot be denied that it is to these we owe the Peace and Happiness we enjoy, even in this World. It is therefore the Interest of every good and prudent Man to wish the Christian Religion true, though it were not so, and there can be no Cause to wish it false, but our own Sin and Folly. And this of itself is a good Argument that it is true, because it is for the Benefit of Mankind that it should be so, and upon that account it carries the visible Characters of Divine Wisdom and Goodness in it: for it is certain, that the Religion, which God has established in the World, must be of this Nature, that none but wicked Men can dislike it, and that all sober and good Men must be well satisfied with it, and mightily inclined to believe it; nay even the worst Men must be forced to confess, that they owe their own Safety and Protection to the Doctrines of it. And that such is the Nature of the Christian Religion, will be evident, if we consider, that, I. It teaches an universal Righteousness both towards God and Man. II. It layeth down the only true Principles of Holiness. III. It proposeth the most effectual Motives. IV. It affords the greatest Helps and Assurances to an holy Life. V. It expresseth the greatest Compassion and Condensation to our Infirmities. VI. The Propagation of the Gospel has had mighty Effects towards the Reformation and Happiness of Mankind. VII. The highest Mysteries of the Christian Religion are not merely speculative, but have a necessary Relation to Practice, and were revealed for the Advancement of Piety and Virtue amongst Men.

Vol. I. Y I. The
I. The Christian Religion teacheth an universal Righteousness both towards God and Man. It teacheth us the Nature of God, that he is a Spirit, and therefore ought to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth; and gives us an Account of the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God, in the Creation of the World, and in the various Dispensations of his Providence in the Preservation and Government of it, and especially in the wonderful Work of our Redemption. God is represented in the Scriptures, as slow to anger, and great in power, and who will not at all acquit the wicked, Nahum i. 3. And we are required to love and serve him, with all our Abilities both of Body and Mind, Deut. vi. 5. Matth. xxii. 37.

The Duties of Men towards one another, are no less strictly enjoyn'd, than our Duty towards God himself: For the Scriptures oblige all Men to the conscientious Performance of their several Duties, in their respective Capacities and Relations: They teach Wives and Children, and Subjects and Servants, Obedience, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake; and they teach Princes and Husbands, and Fathers and Masters, a proportionable Care, and Kindness, and Affection; they check and restrain the Rich and Powerful from Violence and Oppression, and command them to relieve those that are in Want, and to protect all that are in Distress; and to root up the very Seeds and Principles of Vice in us; they regulate our Desires, and give Laws to our Words, and Looks, and Thoughts; they command an universal Love and Charity towards all Mankind, to hurt no Body so much as in Thought, but to do all the good which is in our Power; they oblige Men to do as they would be done unto in all Cases, to consider others as Men of the same Nature with themselves, and to love and respect them accordingly upon all occasions. I may add (what Grotius has not o-
mitted) that more Favour and Equity is extended to one half of Human Kind by the Christian Religion, than ever had been by any other: For Bills of Divorce were permitted to the Jews, because of the hardness of their hearts; and among Infidels, Women are esteem'd but as Slaves to the Lusts of Men, who may have as many Wives as they please, and change them as often as they think fit.

II. The Scriptures propound to us the only true Principles of Holiness: For they teach us to perform all Duties both towards God and Man, upon Principles of Love and Charity, which are the only Principles that can make Men happy in the performance of their respective Duties, and that can cause them to persevere in it. What Men do upon Principles of Love, they do with delight; and what Men delight in, they will be sure to do: But fear hath Torment; and Men will use all Arts to get rid of their Fears, and of that sense of Duty which proceeds only from an Apprehension of Punishments, and therefore is perpetually grievous and burthensome to them: Rewards themselves may become ineffectual, by Proposals of contrary Rewards; for smaller Advantages, which are present and in hand, may be more prevalent than never so much greater, which are future, and looked upon only at a distance. But a sense of Love, and Gratitude, and Charity, can never fail of its effect, because this brings its Rewards with it, and makes our Duty a Delight. He who loves God, will certainly obey him; and he that does not love him, never can truly obey him as he ought, but will be ever repining at his Duty, and will be for seeking all Pretences to excuse himself from it. He who doth not love his Neighbour, will be for taking all Opportunities of pursuining his own Advantage against him; but he who loves him as himself, will never do him any Injury: He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law: For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou

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shall not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying; namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 8. The Love of God, and of our Neighbour, comprehends the whole Duty of Man; which is a Doctrine no where to be met withal, but in the Holy Scriptures: All the Wisdom of Philosophers could never discover this Doctrine, which sets before us the only infallible Principles of Obedience. And it must be a most gracious and wise Law, which makes Love the Principle and Foundation of our whole Duty both towards God and Man; and has ordained this, as the only fit Means to qualify and prepare us for the Fruition of God himself, and of one another, in Heaven to all Eternity.

III. The Christian Religion proposeth the most effectual Motives to Obedience and Holiness of Life. The moral Reason and Arguments for a virtuous Life are so great and evident, that those who live otherwise, are generally convinced, that they ought not to do it: But because the Arguments from Reason are too faint and lifeless, to oppose to Sense and Passion; therefore the Christian Religion is purposely fitted to every Faculty, and presents us with greater Objects of Fear, and Love, and Desire, than any thing in the World can do. And as God will be served by us, upon no other Principle but that of Love; so the chiefest Motive to our Obedience, expres'd throughout the Scriptures, is the Divine Love. They represent to us all the Methods which God has been pleased to use, as necessary to reclaim the World by, his Mercies and his Judgments, by sending his Prophets at sundry times, and in divers manners, and at last, by sending his own Son. He saw the Fondness that Men have for this World, and for the Pleasures and Sins of it; how subject they are to Temptations, and
and how prone to comply with them; and therefore he has been pleased to pursue us with the Endearments of his Love, and with such Condescensions of Grace and Favour, as must needs mightily affect the most obstinate Sinner, who had but the Sense and Gratitude of a Man left in him to consider them; and then he has denounced his Wrath and Vengeance against all such, as will not be led and persuaded to their own Happiness, by the infinite Love of Christ. He was born, he lived, he died for us; he has procured our Pardon, he proffers us his Grace and Assistance, he promises us eternal Happiness with himself in Heaven, upon our Obedience: and last of all, he threatens us with eternal Misery, if we will not be happy; thus forcing us, as it were, to Happiness, if we will not be persuaded to it; for this is all the Force that free Agents are capable of. And if all that infinite Love could do to excite our Love, if all the Rewards that infinite Mercy and Goodness could propose, and the severest Punishments that Almighty Vengeance can inflict, will not prevail with Men to follow Virtue, and refrain from Vice, nothing can possibly prevail with them. Love is most apt to produce Love, and hopes of Reward have a mighty Effect upon Men of any good Temper and Disposition; but the Fears of Punishment are wont to work upon the very worst Men: And where infinite Loving-kindness, eternal Rewards, and eternal Punishments, do all concur to bring Men to the Practice of Virtue, no Motive can be wanting, by which human Nature is capable of being wrought upon.

IV. The Christian Religion affords the greatest Helps and Assurances to an Holy Life. The Devil and his Angels are not more maliciously watchful and diligent with their Assaults and Temptations, to contrive and promote our Destruction, than the good Angels are careful and active to protect us against their Attempt, and secure our Salvation; which they are concerned
concerned, and employed to do, by God's express Commission and Appointment: Are they not all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvations? Heb. i. 14. And God himself, who is a Spirit, and is the Author of the Being, and of the Life and Motion of all things, doth more especially act upon the Spirits and Minds of Men, by putting into them good Desires, and by inclining their Hearts to keep his Commands, and perform his Will. This Grace and Favour of God towards us, this spiritual Aid and Strength, is sufficient to enable us to conquer Sin, and overcome Temptations. And we are exhorted to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Hebr. iv. 16. which we are assured, shall be bestowed upon us for Christ's sake, through his Merits, and by virtue of his Mediation and Intercession. All the World has been sensible of the great Proneness in human Nature to Evil, and backwardness to what Reason itself seems to dictate as good and fit to be done; but the Christian Religion only has provided a Remedy to cure this great Corruption of our Nature, and assist us in the Performance of our Duty.

V. The Christian Religion expresseth the greatest Compassion and Condescension to our Infirmities. Christ died to make Satisfaction for our Sins, and to procure acceptance with God for us, upon our Repentance. He intercedes for us, and pleads the Merits of his own Death and Passion in our behalf; we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our Sins, though they be never so great and heinous, if we do but truly repent of them, and forsake them. And the Sins of Ignorance, and Surprize, and Infirmity, are not inconsistent with the Terms of Salvation; but a general Humiliation and Repentance, with a constant and sincere Endeavour to serve and please God, will, through Christ's Merits,
be accepted of by him; for such Sins as we have no sufficient Means or Ability of knowing to be Sins, and for such as by reason of the Frailty of our Nature, we cannot live wholly free from, nothing is required of us, but a sincere and honest Diligence to do what we can, and a lively Faith to rely upon Christ's Merits, for the pardon of what Sins we are not able wholly to avoid.

Men are forward to complain of the Uneasiness of the Christian Yoke, without any true Experience and Trial of it, and without considering the Principles, and Motives, and Helps, and the condescending and gracious Terms which the Gospel proposes. Indeed, to lay some Injunctions and Retraints more than are absolutely necessary, is but what all Law-givers have done. For some things are forbidden, as a Prevention and a Preservative from the Commission of Sin, and others commanded as preparatory Qualifications and Dispositions to Virtue, and to make the Practice of it more easy and certain to us. And if Men are allowed in all [Government to have this Authority, certainly God, who has an absolute Power over us, and perfectly knows what is necessary for our good, and for the ends of his Government, and has promised Rewards to the Obedient, infinitely greater than any that human Law-givers can propose; has an undeniable Right to forbid or command us some things, which by the Law of Nature we might have been allowed or excused from. But these are very few, and, all things considered, no Religion ever was so compassionate and easy as the Christian Religion.

VI. The Propagation of the Gospel has ever had great Effects towards the Reformation and Happiness of Mankind. What could be more beneficial to the World, and more for the Peace and Happiness of all Mankind, than to be taught to live under a perpetual Sense and Awe of the Love and Fear of God, and to be constrained
constrained to perform our several Duties to each other, in our respective Capacities and Relations, with the utmost Fidelity and Integrity; and to have this enforced upon the Consciences of Men by the Hopes and Terrors of a future Judgment, and an eternal State of Happiness or Misery, as they shall prove obedient, or disobedient? These then must be acknowledg'd to be Doctrines most worthy of God, and the proper Subject of a Revelation. For however Men may wish, as to themselves in particular, that they had not been abridg'd their sinful Pleasures, yet in respect to the common Good of Society, it must needs be confess'd by the most inveterate Enemies of Christianity, and by those who will believe nothing of another Life, that if the Christian Religion were as generally practis'd, as it is profess'd, it would make Mankind as happy as it is possible for Men to be in this Life, through the Belief and Expectation of a Life to come. And as much as the Practice of the Christian Religion has been neglected, it is so far from being a Speculative Notion only, that it has a real and perpetual Influence for the Good of the World, even in the worst and most degenerate Ages.

We are not, at this distance of time, easily made sensible, how great Blessings the Christian Religion brought to Mankind, in that Reformation which it soon introduced into the World. For upon their Conversion, there became such a visible Alteration in the Tempers and Lives of Men, that they seem'd to have changed their very Natures, and to be born again, and become new Creatures; from whence Conversion is ftyl'd Regeneration. This the Apologists generally insist upon, that the Converts to Christianity became quite other Men, and practis'd all kinds of Virtue with incredible Zeal, tho' they had been never so vicious and profligate before. The Christians are represented as an Innocent, devout and charitable Sort
of the Christian Religion. 329

of Men by *Pliny, Lucian, and Julian the Apostate himself; by those who had most narrowly enquired into their Doctrines and Practices, and were worst affected to them. Hospitals and other Foundations of Charity, now so common in the World, are owing to Christianity; for *Julian the Apostate propos’d the Christians as an Example herein to his Priests, when he would have Structures erected among the Heathen for such purposes. By these means, the Christians became as so many Lights in the World, to guide and direct others in the ways of Virtue: for by their Example and Doctrine, they soon reform’d even the Heathen World to a great degree. Morality was taught by the Philosophers in much greater Perfection than ever it had been before; and they became so much ashamed of the Grossness of their idolatrous Worship, that they sought out all Arts to refine and excuse it. And those Vices, which made up so great a part of their idolatrous Mysteries, appear’d too abominable to pass any longer for Religion. The Oracles soon ceas’d, and the seducing Spirits confess’d, that they were hindred from giving out their Answers by the Power of Christ; and all that Julian the Apostate could do, was ineflectual to bring the Heathen Oracles into Reputation again. These are things before insilfted upon, and so notorious in History, that they cannot be denied to be solely owing to the Power and Influence of the Christian Religion.

I shall mention but one Instance more; and that is, the barbarous Cruelty of the Heathen Religions, from which the Gospel has delivered the World. For they were wont to offer up innocent Men and Children in Sacrifice to their false Gods, and that frequently, and in some places daily, and in times of

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great Danger, and upon extraordinary Occasions, they sacrific'd so great numbers of Men at once, that it would be incredible, if we had not the Authority of the best Historians for the Truth of it. And this Custom of sacrificing Men to their Gods, prevail'd not only here in Britain, and in other Countries, which were accounted barbarous, but all over Greece, and in Rome itself. It may well seem strange to us now, that such a Practice should so generally prevail in the World, yet nothing is more certain from all History, than that it did prevail, and that Men were with difficulty brought off from it. For when Mankind was thus cruelly tyrannized over by bloody Daemons, nothing but the omnipotent Mercy of God could rescue them. And for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil, i Joh. iii. 1, which he soon did. Beasts and Idols were no longer worshipped, and Men were no longer made Sacrifices, when once Christianity began to appear in its full Power and Efficacy in the World. The plain and humble Doctrine of him that was laid in a Manger, and died upon a Cross, was in a short time more effectual to reform Mankind, than all the Precepts of Philosophers, and the Wisdom and Power of Law-givers had ever been.

Those Enemies to their own Souls, who are so fond of little Cavils against the Gospel, as if they were resolv'd not to be saved by it, yet owe the Happiness of this present Life in great measure to its Influence; they would not have been so safe in their Bodies and Estates, nay, perhaps they might have been sacrific'd to some cruel Daemon long before this, if that Religion which they resolve to despise, but will not be at the pains to understand, had not been believed by wiser and better Men: Of so great Advantage has the Gospel been to those, who will not be reclaim'd and converted by it. It has destroy'd the Works of the Devil, and has disposess'd him of that Tyranny
Tyranny which he held over Mankind; it has made the unconverted World less vicious, and has banish'd all the profess'd Patrons and Deities of Wickedness from amongst Men; it has made Idolatry less practis'd and reduced it to narrower Bounds, confining it to the remoter Parts of the Earth; and every where, upon the first Approach of the Gofpel, the evil Spirits are disarmed of their Power, and flee away before it, as we learn from the History of Lapland, and other Countries. So general a Blessing is the Gofpel of Christ, that even Unbelievers are the better for it in this World, tho' they exclude themselves from the Benefit of it in the next. And the Christian is the only Religion against which the common Objection concerning the Prejudices of Education in favour of it, cannot be urged: For as it first prevailed in the World, by conquering all the Prejudices of Education, so it still maintains it self against all the Opposition that corrupt Nature, and a vicious Education, can make to it.

Indeed it may seem a needless thing, to have been thus large in the Proof of the Excellency of the practical Doctrines contain'd in the Scriptures; when God know this is the greatest Exception, that most Men have against them: And if the Precepts were not so strict and holy, but they might be allowed to live in their Sins, half the Evidence we have for the Authority of the Scriptures would satisfy them.

VII. The higheft Mysteries of the Christian Religion are not merely speculative, but have a necessary Relation to Practice, for the Advancement of Piety and Virtue amongst Men. As there is nothing in the practical Duties taught and enjoin'd by the Scriptures, but what is most excellent and worthy of God, and which has rais'd and improv'd the Nature of Man beyond what could have been attain'd to without it; so the speculative Doctrines have as evident Characters of the Wisdom and Goodness of God,
God. They all tend to the Advancement of our Nature, to make us better, more wise, and more happy; and are not designed to gratify a vain and useless Curiosity, but to excite in us the Love of God, and a Care and Concernment for our own Happiness. They set before us the Original and Creation of all things, the Innocence in which Man was first created, and God's Love and Compassion to him after his Fall; how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are concern'd in our Redemption; that the Father sent his Son, that the Son was born, that he liv'd a despised and persecuted Life, and at last underwent for us a most shameful and grievous Death; that he rose again and ascended into Heaven, and there continually intercedes for us, and that he sent the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who supports and assists us under all Temptations and Dangers in our way thither, and will, if we be not wanting to our selves, safely conduct us to Heaven, there to reign with Christ in eternal Bliss and Glory, both of Body and Soul; but if we will be disobedient, and obstinate to our own Ruin, we must be eternally tormented with the Devil and his Angels.

The Apostles, who, without Learning or Philosophy, taught the most sublime and useful Truths more plainly than the wisest Philosophers ever had done, must derive their Knowledge from a higher Principle than they did. It is impossible for the Wit of Man to contrive any thing so admirably fitted to procure the Happiness of Mankind, as their Doctrines are; no Precepts can be more righteous and holy, no Rewards more excellent, nor Punishments more formidable, than those of the Gospel; and, which is above all, no Religion besides ever afforded, nor could all the Reason of Mankind ever have found out, such powerful Motives to the Love of God, which is the only true Principle of Obedience. Our Religion contains no dry and empty Speculations, but all its Mysteries
Myteries of Love and Mercy: Others may fear God, but it is the Christian only that can truly love him, and trust in him, and in all Conditions, in Life and in Death, look up to him, as his Father, his Saviour, and Comforter. This Religion places Men in the presence of God, and entitles them to his peculiar Favour and Care; it declares God to be their Friend and Protector here, and their everlasting Rewarder after Death; it promises and assures us of all the Happiness both in Body and Soul, that we are capable of, which is the utmost that can be expected or wished for from any Revelation, and the proper and peculiar Reason, why God should establish Religion in the World.

It appears from this whole Discourse, that nothing is wanting in the Books of the Old and New Testament, which can be expected in any Revelation. They are of the greatest Antiquity, and have been preach'd throughout the world; and have abundant Evidence both by Prophecies and Miracles, of their Divine Authority; and the Doctrine contained in them is such, as God must be supposed to reveal to Mankind, having visible Characters in it of the Divine Goodness and Holiness, and having exceedingly conduced to the Reformation of the World.
THE
REASONABLENESS AND CERTAINTY
OF THE
Christian Religion.

PART III.

That there is no other Divine Revelation, but that contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

That there is no other Institution of Religion besides that delivered in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which has all things necessary to a Divine Revelation may be shewn in the several Particulars necessary to a Divine Revelation, as that no other Religion ever was of like Antiquity, or had equal Promulgation; that no other ever had sufficient Evidence of Miracles and Prophecies in proof of it; and lastly, that there never was any other, which did not teach many Doctrines that are unworthy of God, and contrary to the Divine Attributes, and therefore impossible to come from Heaven. This I shall prove, first, of the Religions of the Heathen; secondly, of the Mahometan Religion.
CHAP. I.

The Novelty of the Heathen Religions.

The Novelty of the Religions amongst the Heathen, (of whom we have any certain Account from their Writings) in respect of the Scriptures, is so notorious, having been so often proved by learned Men, and is so generally acknowledg'd, that it is needless to insist much upon it. The Heathen generally were Strangers to every thing of Antiquity, and therefore must be unable to give any Proof of the Antiquity of their Religions.

The Pretences which the Egyptians made to Antiquity so much beyond the times recorded in the Scriptures, proceeded from their reckoning by Lunar Years, or Months; or from reckoning the Dynasties in Succession, which were contemporary. For Herodotus mentions Twelve Egyptian Kings reigning at once. But they had so different Accounts, however, of Chronology, that, as Diodorus Siculus says, some of them computed about thirteen thousand Years more than others, from the Original of their Dynasties, to the time of Alexander the Great. And the Solar Year, in use among the Egyptians, who were most famous for Astronomy, was so imperfect, that they said the Sun had several times changed his Course, since the Beginning of their Dynasties; imputing the Defect of their own Computation, for want of intercalary Days, to the Sun's Variation; or else affecting to speak something wonderful and extravagant. An Author, whose main Design seems

b Lib. 2. cap. 151.
c Herod. l. 2. c. 142.
to have been, to say all that could with any Colour
of probability be said, to the Advantage both of the
Learning and the Antiquity of the Ægyptians; found
that he could give no tolerable Account of their Chrono-
nology, but by casting it into our concurrent Dyna-
sty, and placed Menes, whom he supposes to be
Cham, and who is agreed by all, to have been the
first King of Ægypt, at the Head of each Dynasty,
and inserting the Kings in Succession from him, out
of Eratosthenes and Manetho, from Eusebius and Syn-
cellus. Yet this learned and laborious Advocate of the
Ægyptians acknowledges, that d till the DcccccLxth
Year of his Ægyptian Æra, which falls about xxx
after the Death of Joshua, the Ægyptian Year con-
sisted of CcLx Days only; and that for this reason,
they had no certainty in their Astronomy. But he
observes farther, that in the Sepulchre of e Osymandas
a Theban King, who lived in the sixteenth Century
of this Ægyptian Æra, a Golden Cycle was found,
of the thickness of one Cubit, and CcLxy Cubits in
compass, having the Days of the Year written di-
sinctly in the several Cubits, with the Risings and
Settings of the Stars, and Astrological Observations
upon them. Here he says, that since the Additional
Hours are not in this Cycle, it might be doubted,
whether they were taken into the Ægyptian Year,
'till after that Age: But to this he answers, that the
Risings and Settings of the Stars could not be right-
ly assigned without them. But how could he know
that they were rightly assigned? He farther proves,
that even after it was known that an Intercalation
was necessary every fourth Year, yet the f Ægyptian
Priests refused to use it, that their Festivals might not
always fall on the same Days, but might run through
the Year; and that their Êpoptæ took an Oath, never

^e \text{ Diodor. Sic. l. i.} \\
^f \text{ Gemini Elementa Astronom. c. 6.} \]
to make any Intercalation either of Months or Days. He shews likewise from Censorinus, that in their Civil as well as in their Sacred Year, they had no Intercalation; yet their Natural Year, he says, had the Intercalary Day. But to what end did this Natural Year serve, if it were used neither in their Sacred, nor in their Civil Affairs? It seems, that the Intercalation was not taken into the Egyptian Year but was only in Notion and Idea among the Astronomers; as the Old Stile is to all purposes used among us, though our Astronomers very well understand the Defects of it. But the Case is very different with the Egyptians, from what it is with us; for in the space of mcccclx! Years, the variation there was not of a few Days, but of a whole Year: And where there was a continual change of the Days and Months, there must needs have been great Confusion in the Calculation of Chronology. The Egyptians, says the same learned Author have transmitted nothing besides the Names of their Kings and their vast Pyramids, to Posterity, 'more ancient than Sephiira or Shishak, who sack'd Jerusalem in the fifth Year of Rehoboam's Reign, 1 Kings xvi. 25. And Caffini has found the Account of Eclipses, at the beginning of Diogenes Laertius, to be false; which is a farther confutation of the fabulous pretences of the Egyptians to Antiquity. The earliest Astronomical Observations to be met with, which were made in Egypt, are those performed by the Greeks of Alexandria, less than ccc Years before Chrisf, as Dr. Halley has observed. The Chaldeans, according to Berosus, supposed the Moon to be a luminous Body, and therefore could have no great skill in Astronomy; besides, they wanted Instruments to make exact Observations. 

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Siculus writes, that the Chaldaens suppos'd the Moon's Light to be from the Sun; but he says, that they had various Opinions concerning the Sun's Eclipse, and could not determine any thing about it, nor foretell when it was to be. "All we have of them, says " the same learned Astronomer, is only seven Eclipses of the Moon, and even those but very coarsely set down, and the oldest not above DCCC Years before Christ; so that after all the Fame of these " Chaldaens, we may be sure they had not gone far " in this Science: And tho' Callisthenes be said, by " Porphyry, to have brought from Babylon to Greece " Observations above MDCCCC Years older than " Alexander; yet the proper Authors making no mention or use of any such, renders it justly suspected " for a Fable." This agrees with the Account that has been given of the Chaldaick Philosophy, by a very " learned and accurate Author; from whence we likewise understand, how little Credit is to be allowed " to these Observations, which Porphyry (as he is cited " by P. Simplicius) says, that Callisthenes sent to Aristotle " from Babylon; since there is nothing extant in the Chaldaick Astrology more ancient than the Æra of Nabonassar, which begins but DCCXVII Years before Christ. By this Æra, the Chaldaens computed their Astronomical Observations, the first of which falls " about the twenty seventh Year of Nabonassar; and if " there had been any more ancient, Ptolemy would not " have omitted them. So little Ground is there for us " to depend upon the Accounts of Time, and the vain " Boasts of Antiquity which these Nations have made. " The Greeks had their Astronomy from Babylon; and the " Athenians had but CCLX Days in their Year, in

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n In Mr. Wotton's Reflexions, ibid. o Mr. Stanley's Chaldaic, Philof. c. 1. P Simplic. ad Ariftot. de Celo, l. 2. s Ptol. l. 4. c. 6. 7. ² Herodot. l. 2. c. 109. * Plin. l. 34. c. 6.
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the time of Demetrius Phalereus; yet Dr. Halley farther observes, "that the Greeks were the first practical " Astronomers, who endeavoured in earnest to make " themselves Masters of the Science; and that Thales was the first who could predict an Eclipse in " Greece, not 50 Years before Christ; and that Hip- " parbus made the first Catalogue of the fixed Stars " not above 120 Years before Christ."

According to that known Observation of Varro, " there was nothing that can deserve the Name of Hi- " story to be found among the Greeks before the Olympiads, which were but about twenty Years before the building of Rome. And Plutarch informs us, how little the Tables of the Olympiads are to be relied up- " on. But whatever Learning or Knowledge of ancient Times the Romans had, they borrowed it from the " Greeks. For they were so little capable of transmitting their own Affairs down to Posterity, with any Ex- " actness in point of time, that for some Ages, they had neither Dials nor Hour-glasses to measure their Days and Nights by for common use, and for three " hundred Years they knew no such thing as Hours, or the like Distinctions; but computed their Time only from Noon to Noon. The Distinction of Time was afterwards laid aside; for in the Twelve Tables, mention was made only of the Sun's Rising and Setting, 'till after some Years Noon was added; but they had no exact Sun-Dial 'till about three hundred Years after, nor any Clepsydra to use by Night, and in gloomy Days, 'till A. U. C. DXCV, Taindiu Populo " Romano indiscreta Lux fuit. And there was still much " Negligence and Abuse in their Intercalations; so that it is no wonder that their Calendar was in such Confusion 'till Caesar regulated it.

1 Censorin. de Die Natali, c. 21.  
2 Censorin. ibid c. 23.  
3 Censorin. ibid c. 23.  
4 Plin. Hift. 1. 7. c. 60.  
5 Plin. Hift. 1. 7. c. 60.  
6 Sueton. in Jul. Cæs. c. 40. in August. c. 31.  

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The pretensions of the Chinese to Antiquity appear equally vain, and upon the same grounds: For they understood little or nothing of Astronomy, or else the Missionaries, by their skill in that Art, would not have been able so much to insinuate themselves into favour with the Emperors of China. Indeed, the Chinese themselves confess, that their Antiquities are in great part fabulous, and they acknowledge that their most ancient Books were in Hieroglyphicks, which were not expounded by any who lived nearer than MDCG Years to the first Author of them, that the Numbers in computation are sometimes mistaken, or that Months are put for Years. But of what Antiquity or Authoritysoever their first Writers were, there is little or no credit to be given to the Books now remaining, since that general destruction of all ancient Books by the Emperor XI Hoam ti, who lived but about two hundred Years before Christ: He commanded, upon pain of Death, all the Monuments of Antiquity to be destroyed, relating either to History or Philosophy, especially the Books of Confucius, and killed many of their learned Men; so that from this time, they have only some fragments of old Authors left. The Chinese are a People vain enough to say any thing that may countenance their pretences to Antiquity, and love to magnifie themselves to the Europeans, which makes them endeavour to have it believed that their Antiquities are sufficiently entire, notwithstanding this destruction of their Books; and for the same reason they described the Emperor's Observatory as the most compleat, and the best fitted for the uses of Astronomy, that could be imagined; but upon the view, it appeared very inconsiderable, and the Instruments were found useles, and new ones were placed.

in their room, made by the direction of Father Ver- bieft. This people, after all their boast of Skill in Astronomy, were not able to make an exact Calendar, and their Tables of Eclipses were so incorrect, that they could scarce foretel about what time that of the Sun should happen. In a Petition, which the Emperor of China, in favour, it seems, to the Missionaries, had privately drawn up to be presented by them to himself in publick, it is said, that Father Adam Schaal made it known to all the Court, that the Rules of the Celestial Motions established by the ancient Astronomers of China, were all false. And not only the common People of China, but the chief Mandarines are so ignorant and superstitious, that when they see the Sun or Moon under an Eclipse, with Sacrifices and other Rites, and with great noise and clamour they apply themselves to rescue them from the Dog or Dragon, which they imagine is like to devour them. The learned Caffini b says, that it is unquestionable, that a great part of the Eclipses, and of the other Conjunctions, which the Chinese alledge, cannot, according to their own Calendar, as it is at present, have happen’d at the Times that they pretend; as he found by the Calculation of a great number of these Eclipses and even by examining only the intervals of Time between them; some being set too near, and others at too great a distance. He observes, that F. Couplet himself doubts of some of these Eclipses, by reason of a Compliment which the Chinese Astronomers made to one of their Kings, whom they congratulated, when an Eclipse, which they had foretold did not happen, saying, that since it portended Mischief, the Heavens, in favour to him, had put it by. c He says, that notwithstanding their boast of ancient and magnificent Observatories furnish’d with all sorts of

b Regl. de L’Astron. Siam. Lobere, Tom. 2. p. 266.
The Reasonableness and Certainty

Instruments, and their ample Colleges for the Studies of Astronomy; yet this Nation, so jealous of its own Glory, and such an Enemy to Strangers, was forced, for the Correction of their Calendar, to place the Jesuits over their own Astronomers, tho' they came to teach a Religion contrary to their own; and to do the greatest Honour to Ricci, Schall, Verbiest, and Grimaldi, who, during his absence in Italy, was by the Emperor of China chosen President of the Astronomers. From the Agreement in the Calculations of the Chinese Tables of Constellations, and those of Tycho Brahe, almost always in the same Minute, Caffini concludes, that the Chinese Tables were calculated by the Jesuits, who first went into China. For our Astronomers of this Age find it difficult to agree in the same Minute, as to the Place of the Fixed Stars; and between the Tables of Tycho, and those of the Landgrave of Hesse, made at the same time by excellent Astronomers, there is a Difference of several Minutes; which shews, that the Chinese Tables were taken from Tycho's, or else they could not so exactly agree with them. Besides, the Longitudes in the Chinese Tables are set down according to Tycho's Method, which reduces the Stars to the Ecliptick, and not to the æquinoctial, as the Chinese Method does. This excellent Astronomer, by examining a Conjunction of the Planets, under their Fifth Emperor, has discovered a difference, by the Antedate of five hundred Years between the Time noted in the Chinese Chronology, and the true time. And he proves a Mistake of four hundred ninety seven Years in their Account of another Astronomical Observation, concerning the Winter Solstice, under their seventh Emperor. So that he has proved by one Instance, that the Chinese carry their Antiquities.

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\(\text{Instruments, and their ample Colleges for the Studies of Astronomy; yet this Nation, so jealous of its own Glory, and such an Enemy to Strangers, was forced, for the Correction of their Calendar, to place the Jesuits over their own Astronomers, tho' they came to teach a Religion contrary to their own; and to do the greatest Honour to Ricci, Schall, Verbiest, and Grimaldi, who, during his absence in Italy, was by the Emperor of China chosen President of the Astronomers. From the Agreement in the Calculations of the Chinese Tables of Constellations, and those of Tycho Brahe, almost always in the same Minute, Caffini concludes, that the Chinese Tables were calculated by the Jesuits, who first went into China. For our Astronomers of this Age find it difficult to agree in the same Minute, as to the Place of the Fixed Stars; and between the Tables of Tycho, and those of the Landgrave of Hesse, made at the same time by excellent Astronomers, there is a Difference of several Minutes; which shews, that the Chinese Tables were taken from Tycho's, or else they could not so exactly agree with them. Besides, the Longitudes in the Chinese Tables are set down according to Tycho's Method, which reduces the Stars to the Ecliptick, and not to the æquinoctial, as the Chinese Method does. This excellent Astronomer, by examining a Conjunction of the Planets, under their Fifth Emperor, has discovered a difference, by the Antedate of five hundred Years between the Time noted in the Chinese Chronology, and the true time. And he proves a Mistake of four hundred ninety seven Years in their Account of another Astronomical Observation, concerning the Winter Solstice, under their seventh Emperor. So that he has proved by one Instance, that the Chinese carry their Antiquities.}\)
too high by five hundred Years, and has discovered another Error in their Chronology of about five hundred Years more. M. de la Loubere, who, in his History of Siam, has communicated these Observations of Cassini to the World, is himself of Opinion, that the Chinese in their List of Kings, have inserted the contemporary Kings of the Provinces of China, when it was divided into several lesser Kingdoms under one Monarch, as if they had reigned in Succession.

So little Credit is to be given to the Pretences, which the several Nations among the Heathens have made to Antiquity, without any ground from History, but upon wandering Discourses of Observations in Astronomy, in which they had little or no skill. It is confessed by Diodorus Siculus, and other Heathen Writers, that Jupiter, and the rest of their Gods were Men who had been deified after their Death. And it has been made evident by divers learned Men, that the most ancient, and the very best of the Heathen Gods, were but Men, whom the Scriptures mention as Worshippers of the True God, such as Noab, Joseph, Moses, &c. *Anatolius Alexandrinus, in his Treatise of the Paschal Canons, cites the Book of Enoch. The Egyptians are said to have learned of Abraham, the Knowledge which they had in Astronomy. However, the Hebrew Calendar seems to have been fixed before Moses's time: for he makes no Alteration in it, but only appoints the Month Abib to be the first in the Ecclesiastical Year, leaving the Civil Year as he found it, in the Method probably, which was used in Noab's time; or according to that, at least, by which Moses computes the Months

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of the Deluge. Burnt-offerings were appointed for the New Moons; and besides the Rules which Moses gave them relating to their Months, Books of Astronomy were written by learned Jews of the Tribe of Issachar, in the time of the Prophets: For that the care of their Calendar belong'd to that Tribe, we learn * from I Chron. xii. 32. And the Observation of the Feasts required to be kept by the Law of Moses, being fixt to set Days of certain Months, proves an Intercalation in the Hebrew Kalendar, which was necessary to preserve a Distinction of Seasons, and hinder that Confusion in the Worship appointed by the Law, which otherwise must have ensued. The beginning of each Month was Festival, and a Burnt-offering appointed to be offered to the Lord, which made the Jews very careful in their observation of every New Moon, Numb. xx. 8, 11. I Sam. xx. 5. 2 King. iv. 23. On the Fourteenth Day of the First Month was the Passover; Fifty Days after the Passover was the Feast of Pentecost. On the First Day of the Seventh Month was the Feast of Trumpets; in the Tenth Day of the same Month was the Attonement; and on the Fifteenth Day was the Feast of Tabernacles, Lev. xxiii. 5, 15, 24, 27, 34. And these Months must constantly have fallen at the same Time in the Year, because these Feasts had Relation to the Seasons, in which the Fruits of the Earth were ripened and gather'd. The Months among the Hebrews were not variable, as those of the Egyptians, but as unchangeable as Spring and

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*n* Ib. c. 17. 
* Ex Issacharitis erant Scientiae Temporum periti, & docti in figendis initijis annorum atque mensium, in intercalandis. quoq; mente & annis sapientes, in Novilunio inaagando ad definienda bine felifa temporibus suis celebranda, exercitati quoque in cognoscendo revolutione solis fuerunt, Astrologique in signorum et stellarum scientia praeflantes. Chal. Paraphr. in i Chron. xii. 32. Vid. Chald. Paraphr. in Est. i. 23.
Autumn, in which their stated Festivals were kept. For though the Rabbinical Jews, in this, as in other things, transgressed the Commandment of God by their traditions, and appointed a second Adar upon divers Reasons of their own, without any Warrant or Foundation from Scripture; yet the Kareti, or Scripturers, still retain'd the ancient Practice, never making an Intercession upon any other account, but that the Passover might fall at the time of the Vernal Equinox. But nothing conduced more to ascertain the Chronology of the Jews, than their Sabbatical Years, and their Years of Jubilee: For since every Seventh Year was a Year of Release of Debts contracted, and every Fiftieth Year was a Year of Restitution, (when every Man was to return to his own possession, Deut. xv. 1. Lev. xxv. 10.) it was necessary, that the Sabbatical Years, and the Years of Jubilee, should be express'd in their Bargains and Contracts. According to the number of years after the Jubilee, thou shalt buy of thy neighbour. According to the multitude of years, thou shalt increase the price thereof; and according to the fewness of years, thou shalt diminish the price of it; (Levit. xxv. 15.) which obliged them to take all imaginary Care to prevent all Mistakes and Confusion in their Computations of Time: For their Law required it, and had made every Man’s Interest concerned in it. Such is the Advantage, which the True Religion has over all others, in all points of Antiquity. 

That Rules of Astronomical Calculations were very ancient among the Jews may appear, besides what has been already said, from hence, That the Samaritans have Books of Astrology in which they use the same Word with the

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Jews to express the Intercalations, tho' the Jews have had no Dealings with the Samaritans, for above two thousand Years.

C H A P. II.

Of the Defect in the Promulgation of the Heathen Religions.

The Propagation of the several Religions professed among the Heathens has been very inconsiderable. For they were never extant in Books to be publickly read and examined, but their Mysteries were kept secret and concealed from the World; and all the Knowledge the People had of them, was from their Priests. Every Country had its peculiar Deities and Ways of Worship, which were seldom received or known, but in those Places where they were first set up. The Romans rejected many foreign Religions as abominable; and none of their Religions ever prevailed, but where they had the Temporal Power to uphold them. And they lost ground daily by the Propagation of the Gospel, whilst the greatest Part of the Empire made it their business to oppress it, and to maintain the Heathen Religions against it.

None but the Teachers of the True Religion, reveal'd in the Old and New Testament, have gone about to instruct other Nations, and to propagate their Religion in strange and remote Countries. And it is to be observed, that the Christian Religion is at this Day, preach'd in all Parts of the Heathen World, and

there have been still remaining many Memorials of it ever since its first Propagation, as there were of the Jewish Religion before: But where Christianity has prevailed, Heathenism has been never able to maintain its Ground; and there are hardly any but Christians (excepting some few Jews) to be found in Christian Countries; which makes a great Abatement in the Disproportion, that Heathenism in general may seem to have in its Numbers above Christianity. But if we examine the particular Religions of the Heathen, there is no Comparison; and the only thing here to be enquir'd into is, whether any particular Religion of the Heathen exceed or equal the Christian Religion in point of Promulgation; for who ever can imagine, that all, or any great number of the Heathen Religions are of Divine Revelation, must suppose God to reveal Contradictions. The Question before us is not, whether Heathens are more numerous than Christians, but whether any of their Religions has been as fully promulged as the Christian. One Herald is enough to promulge a Law to many thousands; the City of Nineve was converted by one Prophet; and there is, perhaps, no Nation in the World but has more Christians in it, than the first Preachers of the Gospel were.

C H A P. III.

The Defect of the Prophecies and Miracles of the Heathen Religions.

It cannot be denied by any Man, who is not resolved to reject the Authority of all History, but that many Wonders have been done by Magicians and that many things have been foreshewn and foretold
told among Heathens, by Dreams, and Prodigies, and Oracles, which did actually come to pass: but then all that can be gather'd from hence is, that there are invisible Powers, and that Devils and wicked Spirits are able to do more than Men can do, and to know more than Men can know. The Philosophy of the Chaldeans and Persians, and other Eastern Nations, was founded upon a Belief of Spirits, and of their Influence and Concernment in the Affairs of Mankind. Pythagoras and Plato established their Philosophy upon the same Principles. And in former Ages, there was no more doubt made, whether there be Spirits, than whether there be Men in the World: for they were continually sensible of the Operations and Effects of invisible Beings, which made them exceedingly prone to Idolatry, but not inclined to Atheism. And the Case is the same now in Heathen Countries, where Apparitions and Delusions of evil Spirits, are affirmed by all Writers to be very frequent.

But if at any time evil Spirits, by their Subtilty and Experience, and Knowledge of Affairs in the World, did foretell things which accordingly came to pass, they were things that happened not long after, and commonly such as themselves did excite and prompt Men to: Thus when the Conspiracy against Cæsar was come just to be put in Execution, and the Devil had his Agents concerned in it, he could foretell the Time and Place of his Death. But it had been foretold to Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar himself before, as Tully informs us from his own Knowledge, that they should all die in their Beds, and in an honourable old Age, who yet all died violent Deaths. 

a Tull. de Divin. lib. 2.

strange Predictions concerning the State of Affairs; and therefore Spirits may be much more able to do it. Evil Spirits could foretell what they were permitted to inflict or procure: They might have foretold the Calamities of Job, or the Death of Abab at Ramoth-gilead. * Julian says, that the Oracles of Æsculapius return'd Answers to those that consulted them; and he calls Jupiter to witness, that himself had often been cured by Medicines and Remedies which Æsculapius directed him to use; tho' * Porphyry had declared, that since Jesus was worshipped, Æsculapius and all the Gods had forsaken them, as to any Publick Help or Benefit, and their private Favours were more liable to Imposture. But this, which Julian says, supposing the Truth of the Fact, doth not prove that false God to have had more Skill than a Physician might have had; but only shews, that Devils may have such Knowledge of the Nature of things, as to be able to give Prescriptions in Physick. * And in former times, for one or two that were cured, thousands that came to Æsculapius's Temple, were never the better, but rather grew worse. The false Prophets were wont to steal the words of the true, Jerem. xxiii. 30. * Some Oracles might possibly take their Answers from the Scriptures, as that of Jupiter Hammon concerning Alexander's Victories, if it were not merely a piece of Flattery, which proved true by chance. Evil Spirits might likewise be able to inform Men, at a great distance, of Victories the same day they were won, as it is related * of several, and in particular of the Conquest of Perseus King of Mace-

* Apud Cyril. 1. 7. p. 235;  
* l. v. c. 1.  
* Arnob. lib. 1.  
* c. 22.  
* Cic. de Nat. Deor. 1. 27;
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by Paulus Æmilius, when P. Vatienus, to whom this was discover'd the same Day, was imprison'd, till the News of the Victory was confirm'd, and then he was rewarded with an Estate, settled upon him by the Senate. But they could not foretell things that depended upon the Choice of free Agents, and which were not to be fulfilled till many hundred Years after the Prediction; this is peculiar to God himself, who would never suffer the World to be imposed upon by Oracles of this nature, if it had been possible for the Devil to give them out. And though their Predictions of future Events did sometimes prove true, yet they very often failed; for which no reason can be given, but the want of Knowledge or Power in the evil Spirits, and the over-ruling Providence of God to disappoint and discover the Delusions. He frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; he turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish, Isai. xliv. 25. Their Gods would sometimes confess, that they foretold Events by the Stars; that they were unable to resist the Decrees of Fate; that the Temperature of the Air was the Cause why they could not always make true Predictions; and therefore they would often forewarn, that what they answered was not to be credited, and that what they declared, was by Force and Constraint. Force me to speak no more, says Apollo, for I shall tell you lies. All which is prov'd by Eusebius and Theodoret, from Porphyry, who had made a Collection of all the Oracles, and took great pains to frame a System of Philosophy out of them. Diogenianus appeal'd to daily Experience, and even to those, who profess'd Divination, whether the Answers returned were not commonly false; and from thence argued, that when they proved true,
it must be by Chance. And their most famous Oracles were glad to conceal their Meaning in so ambiguous Terms, that they wanted another Oracle to explain them; for by this means they endeavoured to avoid the being discover'd to be false. Yet this Device would not keep up their Reputation, but most of the Sects of Philosophers had little or no Regard for them; and OEnomaus a Cynick Philosopher, finding himself deceived by the Oracle of Apollo, wrote a particular Treatise to discover the Imposture of Oracles. Demosthenes observed, that the Delphian Oracle was bribed by Philip of Macedon; and divers Instances of the Corruption and Subornation of Oracles, are to be found in Herodotus, Plutarch, and other Authors. In Tully's time, nothing grew more contemptible than the Oracles; for, as Men became wiser, they were less regarded, and began to cease, 'till by the Power of the Gospel they were quite silenced; which put the Heathen upon great Enquiries, to find out what Reason could be given why they should fail. The Cessation of Oracles was not all at once, but by degrees, as the Cessation likewise of true Prophecies and Miracles was, which were to oppose and abolish them. Their false and ambiguous Answers had brought them into Contempt before, as we learn from Tully deDivin. l. ii. in many Places; and upon the Revelation of the Gospel, their Power was still less, and they in every Day became more despicable; and then they were upheld chiefly by human Artifice and Imposture, 'till they were wholly subdu'd and decry'd: They were silenced in the same Proportion as Christianity prevailed, and became established in the World.

† Euseb. de Præp. l. 4. c. 2.

Cited by Eusebius de Præpar. l. 5. c. 19, 20, &c.

k Vid. Van Dale de Oraculis Ethnicoorum.


m Τοῖς ἄφρασοις μελλον ὦ ὑψίτη καὶ ὁ Μανιζή καθολυ, καὶ τὰ ἕρ-

eξελα, ἐνδε ὡλγωξία καλικὴ πολλὴ. Strabo. l. 17.
The Devil could not always foretell what was to come to pass, and therefore his Agents had need of their Vaults and hollow Statues, and other Artifices, to conceal their Ignorance, and help them out, when their Arts of Conjuration failed. But we have no Reason to think that the Devil, who is so industrious to promote his evil Ends, by all possible means, would omit such an Opportunity as was given him by the Opinion which the Heathens had of their Oracles. And the Trials which Cæsarius and Trajan made, are sufficient to prove, that there was something Supernatural and Diabolical in them. Cæsarius sent to have many Oracles consulted at a set time, and the Question to be put to them, was, what Cæsarius himself at that time was doing; and he resolv'd to be employ'd about the most improbable thing that could be imagin'd; for he was boiling a Tortoise, and a Lamb together in a Brass Pot: and yet the Oracle of Delphi discovered to the Messengers what the King was then about. Trajan, when he was going into Parthia, sent a blank Paper sealed up, to an Oracle of Assyria for an Answer; the Oracle returned him another blank Paper, to shew that it was not so to be imposed upon. Plutarch gives an Account of a Governor of Sicilia, who, for Experiment, sent a seal'd Note to the Oracle of Mopsus; and had so direct an Answer to it, as made him ever after reverence that Oracle. And there is no doubt to be made, but that the Emperor and that Governor would contrive their Seals as skilfully as Lucian could do, who says, That he had sometimes seal'd his Notes, which he sent, so carefully that all the Ways and Tricks which he mentions in his Pseudomantis could not open them, without his discovering it, when they were to be again return'd to him, with the Answer to

n Herodot. 1. i. c. 47.  o Macrobi. Saturn. 1. i. c. 23.
p De Orac. Defectu.
of the Christian Religion.

his Questions. But though things of present Concernment were discover'd, both to Cæsus and Trajan, beyond all humane Power to know, yet both were imposed upon by ambiguous Answers, when they consulted about things future, of which the Devil could not attain the knowledge.

Many of the Heathen Priests themselves, upon examination, publickly confessed several of their Oracles to be Impostures, and discover'd the whole contrivance and management of the Deceit, which was entered upon Record. And in the rest, the Power of the Devil was always so limited and restrained, as to afford sufficient means to undeceive Men though many of his Predictions might come to pass. The whole Mystery of Soothsaying was of no effect to those who profes's'd to disregard it; which was declared by an Author never suspected of Superstition, to be a known and a very great Instance of the Divine Goodness.

The presence of Christians at the Heathen Sacrifices, when they signed themselves with the sign of the Crofs, in token of their Chriftianity, though this were unknown to the Priests that sacrificed, would hinder the Dæmons from making those Discoveries of the Events, by the Entrails of Beasts, which they were wont to do. Every ordinary Christian could dispossess them, by his Prayers, and bare Adjurations. Apollo declared, that the Just upon Earth hindred him from returning true Answers. And as the Devil

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5 In Augurum certe disciplinâ constat, neque Diras, neque ulla Auspicia pertinere ad eos, qui quamque rem ingredientes, obser-

vare se ea negaverint: quo munere divinae indulgentiae majus nul-

lum est. Plin. Hist. l. 28. c. 2.
6 Laetant. l. 4. c. 27. de mort. Persecut. c. 10. Justin. Dial.
p. 50.
7 Οτα αν διωξαμεν πεφταγειν απλειης-ανδρως-αλ επι-

πων γενειο ιδιω το τοιαυτον πραγματεια. Origen. contra Cels l. 7.

v Euseb. Vit. Constant. l. 2. c. 50, 51.

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was forced to declare our Saviour to be the Son of God, by the Mouths of those whom he had possess’d; so he was constrain’d to confess and commend him by his most noted Oracles, as one of the greatest Enemies of the Gospel Porphyry himself has inform’d us. And when Julian the Apostate hoped to bring Oracles into Request again, Apollo told him, (as I have mention’d before,) That he could return no Answer to any thing which was ask’d him, till the Bones of the Martyr Babylas were removed; and when that was done, God was pleas’d to suffer the Oracle of Daphne, and others to give out their Answers; but so notoriously false, that they expos’d them as much as their Silence had done before: for when all the Oracles were consult’d, to know whether Julian, Uncle to the Apostate, should recover of his Sickness, and they all agreed that he would recover, he died while the Answers were reading that foretold his Recovery.

St. Augustine observes, that none of the false Gods ever durst deny by any Oracle, that the God of Israel is the True God: And we have the Testimony of Porphyry, that the Oracle of Apollo confess’d him to be so. But for the Sins of Men against natural Conscience, and the Contempt of the Divine Revelations made to Mankind, and so often promulged amongst all Nations, God might permit the Devil to delude the World with such Signs and Predictions, as either were indeed true, or could not be discern’d to be false, but by the Doctrines and Practices which they were brought to countenance and establish. There is no doubt, but that evil Spirits may be able to delude and impose upon Men, and to do many things

\* Soz. l. 5. c. 19. Chrysf. de S. Babyl.
y Philoiorg. lib. 7. c. 12.
of the Christian Religion.

by their Sagacity and Cunning, which may be above the Power of Man not only to perform, but to understand or find out: but their Miracles were never wrought to confirm any sound and useful Doctrine; nor had they been plainly foretold by ancient Prophecies, as the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles had been: And the Power by which our Religion was attested and established, was so much superior to any Power in the Heathen Gods, that when they were adjured by Christians, they were forced to confess themselves to be wicked and seducing Spirits; as the Primitive Christians declare in their Writings, and appeal to the Heathens of their own times for the Truth of it, and undertake, upon pain of Death, to prove it before them. This Tertulllian undertakes, in his Apology, (as I have before observed) addressed to the Emperor and Senate of Rome, or at least to the Proconsul of Africk, and the Governors of the several Cities and Provinces, written in Latin, and translated into Greek. And St. Cyprian affirms the like, in his Treatise to Demetrianus a Judge of Carthage, or, as some think, the Pro-consul: To the same purpose likewise speak Origen, Minucius Felix, and others of the Primitive Christians. And we cannot imagine, that Men of common Sense would ever have made such publick and repeated Appeals, if their Pretences had been false, to the hazard of their own Lives, and the utter Disgrace and Extirpation of their Religion, for which they endeavoured to plead, by such confident and bold Discourses, so easy to be disproved, if they had not been true. Men, who have the Wealth and Power of the World on their side, may perhaps
sometimes make large boasts and high pretences, when they can easily hinder others from bringing them to the Test; but Men that had all the power and policy of the Empire against them, would never have offer'd any thing of this nature in defence of their Religion, unless they had been able to make it good to the faces of their worst Enemies, to whom their Apologies were directed.

C H A P. IV.

The Defect in point of Doctrine in the Heathen Religions.

It is undeniable, that the Doctrines of all the Heathen Religions have been wicked, and contrary to the Unity and Goodness, and Purity of God, and to the Virtue and Happiness of Mankind. This might be made out at large by Particulars, as,

1. The Theology of the Heathens was so confused and absurd, that the only Evasion which the Philosophers could find, who undertook the defence of Paganism against Christianity, was to expound their Theology by Allegories; but this Philo Byblius censures as absurd, and maintains that it was a mere abuse and innovation in their Divinity; in proof of which, he alleges the Authority of Sanchoniatho; and Eusebius besides makes good the charge. b Zeno first begun this way of Allegorizing, in which he was followed by Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and other Stoicks. c Plu-

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\[a\] Euseb. Præpar. l. i. c. 9, 10.
\[b\] Magnam molefiiam suscepit & minimè necessarium primus Zeno, post Cleanthes, deinde Chrysippus, commentiturum fabularum red-dere rationem. Cic. de Nat. Deor lib. 3.
\[c\] Plut. Quomodo juven. audiend. sint Poém.
tarch says, that Cleantbes seem'd to be in jest, in some of his interpretations, and that those of Chrysippus were strangely forc'd; and he gives Instances of both kinds. But this pretence to Allegories is by none more fully confuted, than by d Arnobius. It is well observed e by Dionysius Halicarnassaeus, that those Expositions were known to very few; but that the People understood the Fables of their Theology in the grossest sense, and either despis'd all Religion, or encouraged themselves in Wickedness, by the Example of their Gods.

The Chaldeans had twelve principal Deities, according to the number of Months in the Year. And Zoroafter taught Men to Sacrifice to Arimanus the Dæmon, or Evil Being, as well as to God, or the good Being, whom he styled Oromazes. h Varro makes three sorts of Heathen Theology; the Fabulous invented by the Poets; the Physical, or that of the Philosophers; and the Civil or Popular, being such as the several Cities and Countries had set up. The Greek Theology was thus distinguished: 1. God who rules over all. 2. The Gods, who were supposed to govern above the Moon. 3. The Dæmons, whose Jurisdiction was in the Air below it. And, 4. The Heroes or Souls of dead Men, who were imagined to preside over Terrestrial Affairs. And besides all these, the evil Dæmons were worshipp'd, out of fear of mischief from them, which gives some account of the prodigious multitudes of their Gods; whereof k Hesiod computes thirty thousand hovering about the Earth in the Air, (unless he be to be understood of an indefinite number.) 1 Orpheus reckon'd but three hundred sixty

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d Advers. Gent. lib. 5. e Dion. Hist. lib. 2.
f Diod. Sic l. 1. g Plut. de Ifid. & Osir.
h Tertull. ad Nat. lib. 2, c. 1. Aug. Civ. Dei, lib. 6, c. 5.
i Eusfb. Præpar. l. 4, c. 5. jk Hesiod. Oper. & Dier. lib. 1. y 250. k Theop. ad Autol. lib. 3.

A à 3 five;
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five; and at his Death, in his Will, asserterd only one. m Varro reckon'd up three hundred Jupiters; and the † Gods of Mexico (as the Indians reported to the Spaniards) were two thousand in number. Varro, Tully, and Seneca, and the most sober and discreet Men, were ashamed of the Heathen Gods, and believed that there is but one God; to which purpose, the Verses of n Valerius Soranus are produced and expounded by Varro. Theophilus Bishop of Alexandria ordered one Image of Serapis to be preserved, when all the other Idols were demolished, that the Gentiles might not be able to deny, that they had worshipped such Gods. At which Æmonius the Grammarian, a Heathen Priest, who was Master of Socrates the Ecclesiastical Historian, was much concerned; saying, It was hard, that their Religion should be exposed by the preserving of that one Statue, when the rest were destroyed.

The Worship of their Gods, and of their Images or Idols, was so gross among the ancient Heathen, and is to this Day in China, and both in the Indies, that one would almost think it impossible for Men to be so far deluded by the Devil: They worshipped not only the Ghosts of dead Men, but Birds and Beasts, and creeping Things, and the Devil himself under Images of such hideous Forms and Shapes as are frightful to look upon. The wiser Heathens were ashamed of these Idolatries; and Varro particularly commends the Jews for using no Images in their divine Worship, which, he says, were not in use at Rome till above one hundred and seventy Years after the Foundation of the City; for s Numa, the Contriver

of their Religion, forbade Images: Which makes it the most strange, that the Romans should afterwards erect Temples and Altars to the most unlikely things, to a Fever, and to ill Fortune, to *Palestine and Fear, as the Athenians did to Contumely and Impudence: But it is still more amazing, that they should, by the Decrees of the Senate, deify the worst of Men, the very Monsters and Reproaches of Mankind: And whilst the Christians suffer'd for refusing Adoration to their Emperors, they had divine Honours paid them by the graver Heathens, such as Quintilian, not only through Fear of Death, but of Complement and base Flattery.

2. All manner of Debauchery and Lewdness made up so great a part of the Heathen Religion, that it is too shameful and too notorious to relate. The Romans *sometimes rejected foreign Deities; and when they received the Gods of other Nations, they did not worship them after their manner; and yet the Rites of the Romans themselves, in the Worship of Cybele, Flora, Bacchus, &c. were very scandalous and wicked. And all their Sports and Spectacles (which had nothing surely in them that could be proper for divine Worship) were invented and performed in honour of their Gods, *and had the Presence of the Pontifex:


Maximus, and of the other Priests and chief Magistrates to celebrate them; whence Quintilian says, the Theatre might be styled a kind of Temple. It was a custom to perform Funeral Rites to the Dead, by killing Men at their Sepulchres; and for this reason, Captives were wont to be slain at the Funeral of a General, till at last the Gladiators, call’d Bufo-arij, were appointed instead of them. * Another account of the original of Gladiators, is from an ancient custom, for Men to devote themselves to Death, to appease the Wrath of some Deity towards their Country. But this was a sort of Devotion, which was more especially paid to b Saturn, whose Image was placed in a Cavity contrived under-ground to receive the Blood of the slain. And as c some of their Gods delighted in Punishments and Blood, so others were supposed to be pleased with Sports.

3. But besides their bloody Spectacles, where Men were exposed to be killed by Beasts, or by one another, their Altars themselves were not free from humane Blood: For the barbarous Cruelty of the Religions amongst the Heathen was such, that they were obliged to offer up innocent Men and Children in Sacrifice to their Deities. Some of the Rabbins have been of opinion that Jeptha sacrificed his Daughter,

\footnotesize{\textit{\textsuperscript{v} Quintil. Institut, lib. 3. c. 8, 
\textit{\textsuperscript{2} Serv. ad Virg. Æn. 10. 
\textit{\textsuperscript{a} Capitolin. Vit. Max. & Albin. 
\textit{\textsuperscript{c} Labeo numina mala viūnimis cruentis atque bussimodi suppllicationibus placari eximiam: bona vero ludis & talibus, quasi ad Latitiam pertinentibus rebus. Aug. Civ. Dei, lib. 8. c. 13. \textsuperscript{but}}}
but others deny it, and all are agreed, that if he did sacrifice her, he sinned in doing it: and we know, that Abraham was hindered by a Miracle and a Voice from Heaven, when he was about to slay Isaac. But the chief Oracles among the Heathen, appointed humane Sacrifices, that of Delphi, that of Dodona, and of Jupiter Sautes. * The Romans were induced to offer their Sacrifices, by consulting the Sybilline Books. † It was the Custom of all the Greeks, to sacrifice a Man, before they went out to war. It was a Custom among the Phænicians and Canaanites, for their Kings, in times of great Calamity, to sacrifice one of their Sons, whom they loved best; and it was common both with them, and the Moabites, and Ammonites, to sacrifice their Children. The Egyptians, the Athenians and Lacedæmonians, and generally all the Grecians; the Romans and Carthaginians, the Germans and Gauls and Britains, and in brief, all the Heathen Nations throughout the World offered humane Sacrifices upon their Altars; and this not on certain Emergencies, and in imminent Dangers only, but constantly, and in some places every day; but upon extraordinary Accidents, multitudes were sacrificed at once to their bloody Deities; as Diodorus Siculus and others relate, that in Africk

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d Utunque autem se res ea habuerit id certum putò esse, non repertiri apud Magistros, qui ex jure alique immolandam esse affirmaverit. Selden. de Jure Nat. & Gent. lib. iv. c. 2. The Daughters of Israel went yearly to lament, or to talk with her, as it is in the Margin Judg. xi. 40. The word is translated rehearse, or speak. Judg. v. 11.

f Id. Achaïc. § Id. Bœot.

* Ex fatalibus libris sacrificia aliquot extraordinaria saeva, inter quæ Gallus & Galla, Graecus & Graeca in foro Boario sub terra vivi demìssì sunt in locum saxo conseatum, ibi ante hōstis humanis minime Romano sacro imbutum. Liv. lib. 22. c. 57. Plut. Quæst. Rom. Δια τι τος καλλίμενος βλεποντις, &c.


★ Grot. ad Deut. xviii. 10.

h Diod. Sic. l. 20. Laftant. lib. i. c. 21. ex Piscennio Festo.
Two hundred Children of the principal Nobility were sacrificed to Saturn at one time. And Aristomenes sacrificed Three hundred Men together to Jupiter Ithomctes, one of whom was Theopompus, King of the Lacedaemonians. And the same Custom is found practised amongst the Idolatrous Indians, of offering whole Hecatombs of humane Sacrifices to their false Gods. In Peru, when their new Incba was crown'd, they sacrificed two hundred Children from four to ten Years of Age: And the Son was wont to be sacrific'd for the Life of the Father, when he was in Danger of Death. Sometimes the Mexicans have sacrific'd above five thousand of their Captives in a Day, and in divers places above twenty thousand, as Acofta writes out of the Informations he had from the Indians. Livy makes mention of humane Sacrifices at Rome. Dion Cassius relates, that Two Men were sacrific'd in the Campus Martius, under Julius Caesar. He says, it was a Custom begun under Augustus, for Men to be devoted to Death for the Safety of the Emperor. From ancient times, it had been customary among the People of Italy, in case of great Danger, to make a solemn Vow, that whatever should be brought forth in the following Spring, should be sacrific'd; and Apollo being consulted, what was to be done in order to be freed from the Pestilence, answer'd, That the Vow had not been performed in Sacrificing Children; but it should suffice, if those who would have been kill'd, were now banished. This is the Meaning of Ver Sacrum, which is mention'd in Livy. And nothing less than Banishment would be accepted by the Gods, instead of the Death

n Dion. Cass. l. 43.
o Lib. 53.
p Feltus in Martin. & in Ver. Sacr.
of such Children, as were then born. \(^9\) Suetonius mentions, that some Writers affirmed, that Augustus offer'd a great number of Enemies, who had surrend'er'd themselves, to be slain on the Ides of March, in Devotion to the Manes of Julius Cæsar. We are inform'd by \(^r\) Pliny, that, A. U. C. DCLVIII. a Decree of the Senate passed, that no Man should be sacrific-ed, and that till then such Sacrifices were publick. This Prohibition seems to concern only the common and frequent use of them: for besides what has been already observ'd, \(^s\) Plutarch says, they continued in his time; and it was not till about the time of Con-stantine's Reign, that a final Stop was put to so strange and abominable a Practice, for tho' it was forbidden by Adrian, and very much abated in his Reign; yet \(^u\) Antinous was made a Sacrifice by Adrian himself. \(^n\) Tactian declares, that the human Sacrifices offer'd to Jupiter at Rome, and to Diana not far from thence, were one chief Cause of his leaving the Heathen Religion, and becoming a Christian. \(^x\) Pliny acquaints us, that they were practis'd in the Age in which he liv'd; and Minucius Felix, that they were used, when he wrote. \(^y\) Porphyry mentions them as notoriously practis'd at Rome in his time; and \(^z\) Lactantius speaks of them as not laid aside in his. Notwithstanding this Usage is so much against humane Nature, as well as contrary to the Divine Mercy and Goodness, yet it made up so great a Part of the Heathen Religio-n, and was become so customary, that it was hard to bring Men off from it; which at the same time demonstrates both how false such Religions

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\(^9\) In Aug. c. 15. \(^r\) Nat. Hist. l. 30. c. 1. § 3.
\(^s\) Plutarch. in Marcello, initio.
\(^t\) Etic xic iesepforhe, òs ò áληθεαι ἵκεσι, Dion. Cass. l. 69.
\(^u\) Orat. adv. Gentes.
\(^x\) Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 2.
\(^y\) 'Αλλ' εἰσινα ἤν τις ἀληθείας τοῦ μεγάλου σωλην τῆς τῆς Ἀλπιας Δίκες ἐσφή σφαιρήματον ἀνέφλεξεν. Porph. de Abstin. l. 2. c. 56.
were, and that Men had a most undoubted Experience of invisible Powers; or else in so many Nations both the Kings and People would never have sacrific’d their own Children to their false Gods, to avert the Evils which they were threatened withal. But what Sins could the Death of these Innocents be design’d to expiate, when the very Acts of their Religion consist’d in the Commission of Wickedness? Or what Reward in another World, for a Life lost in this, could be expected from a Religion, which placed all Happiness in the Enjoyment of the Pleasures and Vices of this World? Must the Sins against Venus or Flora, against Bacchus or Mercury, be expiated by the Death of innocent Children? Or could any Reward in another Life be expected from such Deities, when Innocence and Virtue are the things, which give them the most Offence, and nothing can delight them so much, as the Sin and Misery of Mankind; Julian us’d all imaginable Arts to restore the Heathen Worship, and to recommend it to the World, by reducing it to such a System, as that it might neither be expos’d to the Contempt, nor raise the Horror of Mankind. But Discoveries were, after his Death, made by the Remains of Bodies found both at Carrhæ where he kept his Court, in his Persian Expedition, and in his Palace at Antioch, that he had offer’d Humane Sacrifices. So inseparable were such Sacrifices from the Religion of the Heathen.

The Persons that introduced the Heathen Religions, were either Men of Design, who establish’d themselves in their Power and Authority by it, as Numa; or Men of Fancy and Fiction, as the Poets, whom Plato would have banish’d out of his Commonwealth. And the Gods of the Heathen, who must be suppos’d to reveal these Mysteries and Ways

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of Worship, were always more wicked than their Votaries, whose greatest Immoralities consisted in the Worship of them; the gross Enormities not only of Venus and Bacchus, but of Saturn and Jupiter, are too well known to need any particular Relation.

When the Athenians consulted Apollo Pythis, what Religious Worship they should establish, the Oracle answer'd; That, to which their Ancestors had been accustomed; and when, since their Ancestors had often changed their Ways of Worship, they came again to enquire, which of their Customs was to be followed: he answer'd, The best. Which was in effect to give no Answer at all; for their Desire was to know, which was to be settled as the best. But what could be best, when all was so bad? There was no Body of Laws, or Rules of good Life, proposed by their Oracles; but on the contrary, they were in Commendation of lascivious Poets, or they flatter'd Tyrants, or they appointed Divine Worship to be paid to such as won the Mastery at the Olymick Games, or to inanimate things; or they promoted some other ill, or vain and unprofitable Design, as Oenomaus the Philosopher observ'd, and proved by particular Instances recited out of him by Eusebius. The Laws of Lycurgus were approv'd of, and confirmed by the Delphick Oracle, and yet Theft, and a Community of Wives, and the Murder of Infants, was allowed by these Laws. And the same Oracle not only ordered Divine Honours

\[\text{Plin. Hist. 1. 7. c. 47.}\]
\[\text{Euseb. Præpar. lib. 5. c. 34, 35.}\]
\[\text{Plutarch. in Lycurg.}\]
\[\text{Arrian. de Expedit. Alex. l. 4.}\]
to be paid to Hercules and Alexander, but appointed Cleomedes a Madman and a Murtherer, to be worshipp'd with Sacrifice. Propbyry prov'd, from Oracles, that Magick was the Gift of the Gods. And I have already observ'd, that they commanded Humane Sacrifices. This is enough to shew, that the Heathen Religions could not be from God, since they taught the Worship of Idols and of Devils; and the Mysteries and Rites of them were utterly inconsistent with the Goodness and Purity of Almighty God. And whoever doth but look into the Religions at this Day amongst the Idolatrous Indians, by their ridiculous and cruel Penances, and other Superfluities (besides the sacrificing of Men, and sometimes of themselves, as the Women who offer themselves to be burnt with the Bodies of their dead Husbands, and the like) will soon be convinced that they cannot be of God's Institution. The Chinese themselves, who have so great a Reputation for Wisdom, are like the rest, both in their Idolatries, and in many of their Opinions and Practises.

It is evident therefore, that none of the Heathen Religions can make any probable Claim to Divine Revelation, having none of the Requisites to such a Revelation, and being but of a late Original, not far divulgd, supported neither by Prophecies nor Miracles from God, and containing Doctrines that are idolatrous, impure, cruel, and every way wicked and absurd.

\* Socrat. Hist. l. 3. c. 23.  
\* Pausan. Eliac.  
BUT besides the Religions of the Heathens, divers of the Philosophers pretended to something supernatural, as Pythagoras, Socrates, and some others; and therefore it will be proper here to examine likewise the Justice of their Pretensions. And indeed, whatever the Original of the Heathen Philosophy were, whether from their Gods, or from themselves, if the Precepts of Philosophy amongst the Heathens were a sufficient Rule of good Life, there may seem to have been little or no necessity for a Divine Revelation. But I shall prove, 1. That the Heathen Philosophy was very defective and erroneous. 2. That whatever was excellent in it, was owing to the Revelations contain'd in the Scriptures. 3. That if it had been as excellent, and as certain, as it can be pretended to be, yet there had been great need of a Divine Revelation.

I. The Heathen Philosophy was very defective and erroneous. It was defective in point of Authority. Socrates, though he would be thought to be inspired, or supernaturally assisted, gave Men only his own Word for it. Pythagoras indeed pretended both to Prophecies and Miracles, but he was a great Magician, in the opinion of Xenophon, Pliny, and Plutarch, and therefore whatever he did or foretold, must be ascribed to that Power, which, as it has been before declared, the Devils may have, to do strange things, and to know things done at a distance, or some time after; and his Predictions and Miracles (even as they are related by Porphyry and Jamblicus)

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a Xenoph. Epift. ad Æschin. Plutarch. in Numâ.
were such as that a bare Recital of them were enough to confute any Authority, which could be claimed by them. His Impostures may be seen in Diogenes Laërtius. c Pliny writes, that not only Pythagoras, but Empedocles, Democritus, and Plato himself, made long Voyages to learn Magick. d Aristotle says, Epimenides foretold nothing, whatever others relate of him. And as the Philosophers had no Divine Authority for what they delivered, so their own was but of small Account; they were generally rather Men of Wit and Humour, than of sound Doctrine or good Morals. And whoever reads the Lives of the Philosophers, written by Diogenes Laërtius, and the Lives of the Caesars by Suetonius, would believe the World might have been as soon reform’d by the one sort of Men as by the other. As to the Philosophers, who, after the Christian Religion appear’d in the World, pretended to Miracles, it is a hard matter to think the Writers of their Lives in earnest, when they relate them; For a Man may as well believe the Fables of Aesop or Lucian, to be true History, as the Stories in the Life of Apollonius Tyaneus written by Philostratus, or those in the Life of Isidorus written by Damascius, an Abstract whereof we have left preferred e in Photius.

The Heathen Philosophy was defective likewise in point of Antiquity and Promulgation. Philosophy, as far as we have any Account of it, was but a late thing; so it is styled in Tully, e neque ante philosophiam patefaam, quæ nuper inventa est. f Seneca computes the Rise of it to be less than a thousand Years before his own time: about that distance of time g Pliny places

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c Plin. Hist. l. 30. c § 2.  
d Arist. Rhet. l. 3. c. 17.  
e Phot. Cod. ccxiii.  
f Tul. de Divin. l. 1.  
g Apud Laëntant. l. 3.  
h Plin. Hist. l. 7. c. 16. l. 25. c. 7. Cüm Artes omnes dicantur in Graciā intra mille annorum tempora repertae, &c. Var. de Re Rust. l. 3. c. 1.
Homer, whom he styles the first Parent of all Learning and Antiquity. But the moral and useful Part of Philosophy, consider'd as a Science, had no ancienter Original than Socrates. Before, it lay in loose and incoherent Sayings, such as those of Solon and Thales, and the rest of the Seven Wise Men, who liv'd but in the time of Cyrus. Philosophy of all kinds, has always been a matter of Learning, and confined to learned Men: There never was any one Nation of Pythagoraens, or Platonists, or Stoicks, or Aristotelians; the greatest part of the Nations of the World, never heard so much as of the Names of the most celebrated Philosophers, and know nothing at all of their Doctrine.

That Philosophy was defective in its Doctrines is notorious: For, as Laëntius observes, the very Name of Philosophy (invented by Pythagoras, who yet would be thought to have had some supernatural Assistance) implies a Confession of Ignorance, or Imperfection of their Knowledge, and a Profession only to search after Wisdom. And Pythagoras gave this very reason why he styled himself a Philosopher, because no Man can be Wise but God only; and yet this vain Man sometimes pretended himself to be a God. Socrates was the first of all the Philosophers that apply'd himself to the Study of Morality; and he, who first undertook to render Philosophy useful and beneficial to Mankind, profess'd to know nothing at all certainly, but to disprove the Errors of others, not to establish or discover Truth: In which he was followed by Plato; and before him, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and almost all the ancient Philosophers, agreed in this, though they agreed in few things else, that they could attain to no

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2 Tull. Acad. Q lib. i.
3 Vid. Dio. Laërt. in Pyrrhon.
4 certain
The Reasonableness and Certainty

certain Knowledge of things. So that, as Tully says, Arcephilas was not the Founder of a new Academy, or Sect of Philosophers, who professed to doubt of all things; for he taught no more than what the ancient Philosophers had generally taught before him, unless it were that Socrates professed to know his own Ignorance of things, but Arcephilas would not own himself certain of so much as that. Indeed, the Notions of Philosophy were so little convincing, even in the plainest Matters, that many of the greatest Wits took up in Scepticism, or little better. No Man had studied all the Hypotheses of Philosophy more, or understood them better, or had better explained them than Tully; and yet at last all concluded in Uncertainty, as he often professed: the like may be said of Varro, Cotta, and others. It would be endless to insist upon the contrary Notions of their Philosophers; Justin Martyr and others of the Fathers shew at large the very different and contrary Opinions of the principal of them, not only in things of less Moment, but in the Doctrines of Religion and Morality: Whereas the Writers of the Old Testament are both of greater Antiquity than the Philosophers, and of so entire agreement among themselves, \( m \) that they all speak the same things, and teach the same Doctrines, tho' living in different Ages and Countries; because they were but the Instruments and Ministers in declaring the Divine Truth. God is the Author, who inspired them in all they wrote; and therefore the Creation of the World, the Formation of Man, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future Judgment, with whatever else is necessary to be known, are delivered by them in such a manner, as if all had been utter'd by the same Mouth.

The Doctrine of Philosophy concerning God and Providence, and a future State, was very imperfect

\( m \) Just. Martyr. Cohort. ad Græc.
and uncertain, as Socrates himself declared just before his Death: but what could be certain to him, that professed to doubt of every thing? The Errors of the Philosophers concerning Providence, are discovered and confuted by Nemesius, in an admirable Discourse upon that Subject. Varro computed near three hundred Opinions concerning the Sumnum Bonum; they were so far from being able to give any certain Rules and Directions for the Government of our Lives, that they could by no means agree in what the chief Happinefs of Man consists, or what the Aim and Design of our Actions ought to be. Plato taught the Lawfulness and Expediency of Mens having their Wives in common; and both Socrates and Cato must hold a Community of Wives lawful, as we learn from their Practice: for they lent out their Wives to others, as if it had been a very generous and friendly Act, and the very height and perfection of their Philosophy. It was a Practice both among the Greeks and Romans, to part with their Wives to other Men; though Mercer thinks the Romans were divorced from their Wives before others took them; because Cato is blamed for taking his Wife again after the Death of Hortensius, without the Solemnity of a new Marriage. Fornication was so far from being disallowed by the Heathen, that it was rather recommended as a Remedy against Adulteries by Cato himself, whose Intemperance in Drinking was likewise notorious: Pliny represents it as his greatest Praise, that Men retained their regard and reverence for him, even when they found him in Drink. Many of the Philosophers

n Nemes.de Nat Hom. c. 44.
\textsuperscript{o} Aug. de Civ. l. xix. c. 1.
\textsuperscript{p} Demoth. pro Phormione. Strabo, l. xi. Alex. ab Alex. l. i. c. 24.
\textsuperscript{q} Horat. Serm. l. i. Sat. 2. Cic. pro M. Cæliio.
\textsuperscript{r} Plin. lib. iii. Ep. 12.
held Self-murther lawful, and did themselves set an Example of it to their Followers. The exposing of Children to be starved, or otherwise destroyed, was practised amongst the most civilized Heathen Nations; and it being foretold some time before the Birth of Augustus, that a King of the Romans would be born that Year, the Senate made a Decree, * Nequis illo anno genitus educaretur. \textsuperscript{1} Plutarch himself says, that he could find nothing unjust or dishonest in the Laws of Lycurgus, though Theft, Community of Wives, and the muttering such Infants as they saw weak and sickly, and therefore thought they would prove unfit to serve the Commonwealth, were a part of those Laws.

This was\textsuperscript{v} one of the Precepts of those who were honoured with the Title of the Seven Wife Men of Greece, 	extit{Be kind to your Friends, and revenge yourself upon your Enemies}. Revenge was esteemed not only lawful, but honourable; and a Desire of Popular Fame and Vain Glory were reckon'd among the Virtues of the Heathen, and were the greatest Motive and Encitement they had to any other Virtue. \textsuperscript{x} Plutarch tells us of Aristides, so famed for Justice, that tho' he were strictly just in private Affairs, yet in things of publick Concernment he made no scruple to act according as the present Condition of the Commonwealth seemed to require. For it was his Maxim, that in such cases Justice must give way to Expediency; and he gives an Instance, how Aristides advised the Athenians to act contrary to their most solemn Contract and Oath, imprecating upon himself the Punishment of the Perjury, to avert it from the Commonwealth. Tully, in the Third Book of his Offices, where he treats of the strictest Rules of Justice, and proposes so many admirable Examples of

\* Sueton. Auguft. c. 94. \textsuperscript{1} Plutarch. in Lycurg. \\
\textsuperscript{v} Soliad. apud Stobæum. Serm. 3. \textsuperscript{x} Plut. in Ariflide.
it, yet resolves the Notion of Justice only into a Principle of Honour; upon which he concludes, that no Man should do a dishonest Action, though he could conceal it both from God and Men; and determines, that an Oath is but an Appeal to a Man's own Mind or Conscience. *Cum vero jurato dicenda sententia sit, meminerit Deum se adhibere testem, id est, (ut arbitrator) mentem suam, quam nil habmini dedit ipse Deus divinarius.*

The Indians themselves, whatever may be thought to the contrary, have naturally as good Sense and Parts as other People: which *Acosta* sets himself to prove in divers Instances: but they had less Communication with those who retained Revealed Religion: and by their own Vices and the Subtility of the Devil, the Notions, which they had received from it, were lost or perverted.

The *Egyptians*, who were so famous for their Learning, are a great Instance how poor a thing humane Reason is without the Assistance of Divine Revelation: For all their profound Learning did but lead them to the grossest Idolatry, whilst they conceived God to be only an *Anima Mundi*, and therefore to be worshipped in the several Parts and Species of the Universe. Yet whilst they deified not only the *Nile*, but the vilest Creatures, and almost every part of the inferior World, they paid no such Veneration to the Heavens. They *offered humane Sacrifices, and observed obscene Rites*: But † *Amasis*, if we may credit *Manetho*, cited by *Porphyry*, abolished humane Sacrifice at *Heliopolis*: For what could be more unnatural, and against all common Reason, than to worship Beasts, and at the same time to sacrifice

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7 Jos. Acosta. Hist. lib iv. c. i.
2 Phil. Jud. vit. Mos. l. iii.
* Athenæus, l. iv. c. 27. Diod. Sic. l. i. c. 2. Dion. Cass. l. 42.
† Porph. de Abst. l. ii. § 55.
Men? They had more sorts of Religion among them than other People, and accused each other of Impiety, because in different Places they worshipped different Animals, which was the Occasion of frequent Wars. Plutarch says, that the People of Thebais only, of all the Egyptians worshipped but one God, whom they called Knephon. This is contrary to what the more ancient Authors say of them, and might therefore probably be the effect of the Propagation of Christianity, which soon made a great Progress in Egypt; and many, who were not fully converted, were reduced from the gross Idolatries, which they before had practised. Whoever killed any of the Beasts which by the Egyptians were esteemed sacred, was punished with Death; and in a Famine they abstained from these, tho' they made no scruple to eat humane Flesh. In general, the Egyptian Rites were so scandalous, that they were forbidden at Rome. Theft was allowed by them, under certain Restraints; and by a strange and unnatural Disposition, they taught that Sons were not bound to provide for their Parents, unless they pleased; but Daughters were necessarily obliged to it.

But when the Excellency of the Christian Morals began to be so generally observed and taken notice of, the last Refuge of Philosophy was in the Moral Doctrines of the Stoicks. For almost all the latter Philosophers were of this Sect, which they refined and improved as well as they were able, that they might have something to oppose to the Morality taught (and practised too) by the Christians. But the ancient Stoicks had been the Patrons and Advo-
cates of the worst Vices, and had filled the Libraries with their obscene Books.

The Stoicks first sprang from the Cynicks, that impudent and beastly Sect of Philosophers; and they refining themselves but by degrees. Zeno, who had as great Honour done him by the Athenians, as ever any Philosopher had, under the Notion of his Virtue, taught, that Men ought to have their Wives in common; and would have been put to Death by the Laws of most Nations, for Sins against Nature. Chrysippus taught the worst of Incest, as that of Fathers with their Daughters, and of Sons with their Mothers; and besides his Opinion for eating humane Flesh, and the like, both his Books, and those of Zeno were filled with such obscene Discourses, as no modest Man could read. Athenodorus a Stoick, being Library-keeper at Pergamus, cut all such ill Passages out of the Books of the Stoicks; but he was discovered, and those Passages were inserted again. It is no advantage to Cato's Character, that he should appear at the Ludi Florales, which he could not but know to be abominably Lascivious. *But when the People had such Reverence for his Person, that they were ashamed to require the Mimes to be naked, as they were wont; he being acquainted with it, left the Theatre, that he might no longer by his Presence hinder an old Custom: For which he had the Thanks and Applause of the Rabble. Such was the Philosophy of Cato himself! He must have had a poor Opinion of Virtue, who would not use his great Authority with the People, to reclaim them from Vice, rather than to indulge them in it. But these Philosophers might do as they pleased; for they pretended to be exempted from Sin; and the Stoical Philo-

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The Reasonableness and Certainty of it, is nothing, as Tully observed, but a vain Pomp and Boast of Words, which at first raise Admiration, but when throughly considered are ridiculous; as, that Men must live without Love, or Hatred, or Anger, or any other Passion; that all Sins are equal; and that it is the same Crime whether a Man murther his Father, or kill a Cock, as Tully says, if there be no Occasion for it. And it is no Wonder, that Plutarch and others wrote purposely to expose the Stoical Philosophy, upon its old and genuine Principles. The m Stoicks boasted, that Chrysippus had written with more Acuteness against the Truth of our Senses, than the Academicks themselves: But Plutarch observes, that when he would answer his own Arguments, he failed in the Attempt, which was "confess'd and complained of by the Stoicks themselves. The Truth is, a vain Subtilty seems to have been the Character of Chrysippus, as when he would maintain, that Virtue and Vice, and Arts and Sciences, were corporeal and rational Animals; which not only Plutarch censures, but Seneca exposes as ridiculous. The latter Stoicks being very sensible of the many defective and indefensible Parts of their Philosophy, endeavou'r'd to mollifie what seemed too harsh and absurd, that they might bring their own as near the Christian Doctrine as they could. Quintilian will not allow that Seneca was any great Philosopher, but says, that his main Talent lay in declaiming against Vice. In philosophia parum diligens, egregius tamen vitiorum instrigator fuit. It was rather the Art and Design of Seneca, who knew wherein the Strength and Defect of his Philosophy lay, to endeavour to give it all the Advantage he could, and to recommend it to

1 Tull. pro Muræna.  
2 Cic. Acad. Qu. 1. 2.  
3 Senec. Epist. 113.  
4 Plut. de Repugnantia Stoic.  
5 Plut. adv. Stoic.  
6 Quint. Infl. lib. 10. c. 18.
the World by exposing the Follies and Vices of Men, rather than by instructing them in the Notions of his own Sect. But this notwithstanding, was one of his Rules, nonnumquam & usque ad christianum veniendum; and when he had exposed the Cruelties, the Filthiness, and the Absurdities of the Religions in use amongst the Heathen, in a Book written upon that Subject; yet, says he, quae omniasapiens servabit, tanquam Legibus jussa, non tanquam Diis grata. And Tully likewise in divers places, when he has reason'd against the Absurdities of their Religion, resolves the Obligation to observe it into the Duty which Men are bound to pay to the Laws of the Government under which they live; their Philosophy, it seems, taught them, that we must obey Men rather than God. But they held no more than Socrates had taught and practisèd before them. The Stoicks taught, that there is nothing incorporeal, and that God and Nature are the same thing. Plutarch shews, that Chrysippus wrote irreverently of God and Providence, and he charges both him and Zeno with Obsceneness. But Xylander declares of one of Plutarch's Tracts, that he could scarce endure to read it; and was so far from correcting the Faults of the MSS. that out of Modesty he purposely made some Passages obscure in his Translation; and in this Tract Plutarch cites Solon's Verses, which make one of the worst parts of it: And in another place would justify that, by the Example of Socrates, which he there recommends from the Authority of Solon. Epitetus himself, who

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Sen. de Tranqu. Animi. c. 15.

Aug. Civ. Del. i. vi. c. 10. Xenophon, Memorab. lib. i.

Tull. Acad. Qu i. 1.


A n. & Symposi. i. 2. probi. 6.


De Fortun. Alex. i. i. has
has set off the Heathen Morality to the best advantage, cannot be excused from great Errors and Defects. He teaches also, that Men should follow the Religion of their Country, whatever it be, \textit{Enchirid.\ cap. xxxviii.} He allows too great Indulgence to Lust, \textit{cap. xlvii.} And when he proposes Rules of Virtue, and cautions to arm Men against Vice and Temptation, how much short doth he fall of the Christian Doctrine? "If any Man, says he, tell you that "such a one has spoken ill of you; make no Apology for yourself, but answer, He did not know "my other Faults, or else he would not have charged "me with these only, \textit{cap. xlviii.} This is a fine Saying, a pretty Turn of Thought; but what is there in it comparable to that awful and sacred Promise, \textit{Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you: --- rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. Matt. v. 11, 12. Again, "When a "Man values himself, says \textit{Epistelus,} for being able "to understand and explain the Books of \textit{Chrysippus; "say you to yourself, Unles \textit{Chrysippus} had written "obscurely, this Man would have had nothing to "boast of. But what do I design? to study Nature, "and follow it? \textit{cap. lxxiii.} This is no ill Satyr up-on the Vanity of Men: But is there any thing in it like that Piety and Authority with which St. \textit{Paul} re-proves the same Vice? \textit{i Cor. viii. 1, 2, 3.} So great were the Defects and Errors, not only of the \textit{Learned Vulgar,} and the \textit{Ignorant Vulgar,} (as \textit{Pliny} distinguishes) but of the Philosophers of highest Renown for Wisdom. The best thing that can be said of the Heathen Philosophers, is, that most of them fre-quently confess'd the great Imperfection of their Phi-loso phy, and placed their greatest Wisdom in this, That they were more sensible than others of their Ig-norance;
of the Christian Religion.

379 norance: And Socrates professed that to be the reason, why the Oracle of Apollo declared him to be the wisest Man, because he knew how ignorant he was, better than other Men did.

As to the Chinese Philosophy, we know little of it, their Books of Philosophy being all destroyed, at the Command of a Tyrant, who reigned about two hundred Years before Christ: From the Fragments which were afterwards gathered up, and yet remain among them, we can only perceive, that Confucius, and the rest of their best Philosophers, taught no more than what they had learnt by Tradition from their Ancestors; and when they forsook this Tradition, they fell into the grossest Errors, which are maintained by the learned Men among them at this Day.

II. Whatever there is of Excellency in the Philosophy of the Heathen, is owing to Revelation. It is generally supposed, that human Reason could have discovered the more common and obvious Precepts of Morality, contained in the Scriptures; but it is more probable, that it could not have discovered most of them, if we may judge by the gross Absurdities which we find, as to some Particulars, in the best Systems of Heathen Philosophy, and from the general Practice of offering up Men for Sacrifices to their Gods, and of casting away and exposing their Children, in the most civiliz'd Nations. The "Sayings of the Wise Men, that contain Rules, which to us seem very plain and obvious, were esteemed as Oracles, and in Golden Letters dedicated to Apollo in the Temple at Delphi. But it is evident, from what has been already proved at large, that the Heathen were not left destitute of many Helps and Advantages from the Scriptures, which divers of the Philosophers had read; and many things which seem now to be Deductions

c Confuc. lib. iii. par. 4. p. 36. & Philippi Couplet Proem Declar.

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from natural Reason, might have their Original from Revelation: for things once discovered, seem easie and obvious to Men, which they would never have been able to discover of themselves. We wonder now how Men should ever suppose there could be no Antipodases, and are apt to admire how America could lie so long conceal'd, rather than how it came at last to be discovered: The Case is the same in many other Discoveries, especially in moral Truths, which are so agreeable to Reason, that they may seem the natural Productions of it; though a contrary Custom and Inclination, and the Subtilty of Satan working upon our depraved Nature, might perhaps have made it very difficult, if not impossible, without a Revelation, to discern many Doctrines even of Morality, which now are most common and familiar to us. What Maxim is more agreeable, and therefore, as one would think, more obvious to human Reason, than that no Man should do to others, as he would not have them do to him? And yet Spartanlus an Heathen Historian says, that Alexander Severus had this excellent Rule of Natural Justice and Equity, either from the Jews or Christians. There is no Book of Scripture which seems to contain plainer and more obvious things, than the Proverbs of Solomon; and yet an "Author of great Learning and Judgment has given an Essay, how a considerable Defect of Learning may be supplied out of this very Book, producing such Cautions, Instructions, and Axioms from thence, relating to the Business and Government of human Life, in all varieties of occasion, as are no where else to be met withal. No Man can tell, how far human Reason could have proceeded without Revelation; since it never was without it, but always argued from those Principles which were at first delivered by God
himself to Noah, and were propagated amongst his Posterity throughout all Ages and Nations, though they were more corrupted and depraved in some Ages and Nations than in others.

Plato derives the Original of all Laws from Revelation; and the Doctrines of Morality of the most ancient Philosophers were a kind of Cabala, consisting of general Maxims and Proverbs, without Argument or Deduction from Principles; as we see by the\textsuperscript{8} Apophthegms of the Seven Wise Men, collected by Demetrius Phalereus. And it is the same thing at this day in those Countries where Aristotle’s Philosophy has not prevailed, who was one of the first that undertook to argue closely from Principles in Morality. But Aristotle testified, that Proverbs were the Remains of the ancient Philosophical Precepts. And in other Parts of Philosophy, I shall prove, by some remarkable Instances, that human Reason failed them in the Explication of things which were generally received and acknowledged. The Existence of God is clearly and unanswerably demonstrat
d by \textsuperscript{i} Tully, and the Unity of the Godhead is as plainly asserted by him. With what strength of Reason, with what plainness, with what assurance, doth \textsuperscript{k} Balbus the Stoick speak concerning the Existence of the Deity? But when he would explain the Divine Nature, he describes a mere Animamundi, and exposes himself to the scorn and laughter of his Adversary; which shews, that human Reason could go no farther, than to discover the Existence of God, and that we can know little of his Nature but by Revelation; and that whatsoever true and just Notions the Heathen had of the Divine Nature, must be chiefly ascribed to that.

That the World was created, the Philosophers be-

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{f} Plat. de Legib. dialog. 1. \\
\textsuperscript{g} Stobæus, fragmentum iii. \\
\textsuperscript{h} Synec. Calvit. Encom. sub fin. \\
\textsuperscript{i} Tull. de Legib. l. i. \\
\textsuperscript{k} Tull. de Natur. Deor. lib. ii.
\end{footnotesize}
The Rea/bnabenfs and Certainty

fore Aristotle generally asserted; and that Water was the first Matter out of which it was formed, is acknowledged by Aristotle, to be esteemed the most ancient Opinion; but when he set himself to argue the point, he concluded the World to be eternal; which, according to modern Philosophy, is as absurd and impossible as any thing that can be imagined.

The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, was delivered down from all Antiquity, as Tully assures us: but the Ancients gave no Reasons to prove it by; they only received it by Tradition. Plato was the first who attempted to prove it by Argument; for though Pherecydes Syrus and Pythagoras had asserted it, yet they acquiesced in Tradition, by which they had received it from the Eastern Nations; but Plato, either learning the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality in Egypt, where it is generally supposed he conversed with the Jews, or being, at his coming into Italy, acquainted with that, amongst other Notions of the Pythagoreans, began to argue upon it; but not being able to make it fully out, has only shewn how far Reason could proceed upon those Grounds, which were then known in the World from Revelation. Seneca, though he sometimes afferts the Immortality of the Soul, yet at other times doubts of it, and even denies that the Soul has any Subsistence in a separate State. M. Antonius speaks doubtfully of the Soul's Existence after Death. And yet this Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, which the greatest of the Heathen Philosophers could not certainly prove from Reason, was firmly believed even amongst Barbarians.

Confucius,
Confucius, * the famous Chinese Philosopher, profess'd himself not the Author, but the Relater only of the Doctrine which he taught, as he had received it delivered down from all Antiquity; and * Aristotle has declared, that the Ancients left many Traditions, which their Posterity had corrupted; but from the remains of those Traditions, we know that they were originally derived from Revelation. Pherecydes was the first of the Italick Sect of Philosophers; and Thales was the Author of the Ionick Sect: from which Two Sects all the rest came, being only Divisions and Subdivisions from them. The first of the Philosophers that taught the Immortality of the Soul, was Pherecydes; and he left his Writings to Thales, * who taught, that all things were produced by God out of Water. Pythagoras was a Scholar of Pherecydes; and Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, conversed with the Learned Jews. * Socrates disputed of a future State from Tradition, and * profess'd, that he always followed the Tradition which had descended from Antiquity, and that he was at a loss whenever that failed him. And this * Tradition could not have its Rise from the Greeks, who were confess'd to understand little or nothing of Antiquity. The * Egyptian Priests affirmed, that they found it in their sacred Books, that Orpheus, Musæus, Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, Pythagoras, Plato, Democritus, and divers others of the wisest and most learned Men of Greece had travelled thither, and something they shewed as a Memorial of every one that had been among them; the Statues of

...
Some and, certain Places denominated from others, or from the Studies which they followed were a token of it: *Justin Martyr* says that they were there improved by the Booksof Moses. All things fully proving, by *Diodorus Siculus*’s Account that they had learn’d in *Egypt* whatever made them famous in Greece, as he shews not only of their Religion, but of their Laws and Philosophy. *Plutarch* mentions, that *SOLON, Thales, Plato, Eudoxus*, and (according to some) *Lycurgus* went into *Egypt* to converse with the Priests there. It was *by some affirmed, that Plato and Eudoxus conversed with the Priests in *Egypt* for thirteen Years. And *Theodoret* acquaints us, that not only Plutarch, but *Porphyry*, and *Numenius* the *Pythagoreans* wrote, that *Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Thales, Solon* and *Plato*, were instructed in *Egypt* by the *Hebrews* dwelling there, as well as by the *Egyptians*. And the *Egyptians* being in their Principles both of Divine Worship and Moral Duties so corrupted, as I have shewn, it is reasonable to conclude, with the Generality of learned Men whether ancient or modern, that whatever the Philosophers learnt in *Egypt*, which recommends their Writings to us, must be from the *Jews*, and not from the *Egyptians*. *Pausanias* says, that the *Chaldeans* and the *Indian Magi* first taught the Immortality of the Soul, and that from them the *Greeks*, and particularly *Plato*, received it; and yet he informs us, that *Plato* learnt this Doctrine in *Egypt*. He seems to have understood, that *Plato* was instructed in *Egypt* by the *Hebrews*, (for by this Name *Pausanias* always calls the *Jews*) and that the *Hebrews* came originally out of *Chaldea*. Indeed *Abraham* was the first that was call’d a *Hebrew*, from his passing over the River *Euphrates*, when he left Chal-
This learned Author, from his great Search into Antiquities, must have had some particular Reason for calling the Jews Hebrews, and J udaæa the Land of the Hebrews; such Expressions could not fall by chance from a Greek Antiquary, but must be design'd to denote their Original from Abraham the Hebrew, a Chaldaean; from whence it follows, that when he writes that Plato received this Doctrine from the Chaldaans, and yet that he learn'd it in Egypt, he must mean, that he had it from the Hebrews dwelling there. Clearchus, one of Aristotle's own Scholars, and a famous Peripatetick Philosopher, in a Book cited by Josephus, introduced Aristotle saying, that the Jews were descended from the Indian Philosophers, and that as Philosophers were by the Indians call'd Calani, (deriv’d perhaps from Chalane, or Calneh, Gen. x. 10. a City of Chaldea) so by the Syrians they were call’d Jews from Judæa, the Place of their Habitation. It is not mention'd, that this Information came from the learned Jew of Cælesyria, with whom Aristotle there declares that he had convers’d; but he might probably have it from some in Alexander's Army, who might find divers of the Ten Tribes dispers'd as far as India, and whether they went under the Name of Calani, or the Calani came out of Chaldea, the Jews and the Calani must have had the same Extraction. * The Indian Philosopher that conversed with Alexander, was called Calanus.

But a certain Critick has lately been pleased to remark, that the Old Testament contains nothing so clear, concerning another Life and a future Judgment, as is to be found in the Greek Authors; and he

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8 Contr. Ap. 1. i. Eusebius has the same Citation out of Clearchus, but omits that Calani, that Philosophers were call'd Calani by the Indians, and Jews by the Syrians, Euf. Prep. Evang. 1. ix. c. 5. Καλανίων Ἰνδον οἱ τῶν Βαρθωμαίων ἦτοι εἰς παντὸς τοῦτοι Ινδον περιαλαμβάνον. Suid. in Καλανίων.

* Suid. ibid.

Vol. I. Cc Inftances
instances in Homer and Hesiod. How unjust this Reflexion is, I appeal to that Book of Solomon, from which the Enemies of Religion have thought, they could take most Advantage. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, that goeth downward to the earth? Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy spirit cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil, Eccl. iii. 21. xi. 9. xii. 14. What can be more plain and express? The Notions in Philosophy * of the latter Heathens, were much improv'd by Ammonius, a Christian and a Teacher of Philosophy in highest Esteem at Alexandria; insomuch that those who succeeded him in his School, were said to be εἰς ἰσός ἕφεξα, of the Sacred Descent. And we find that upon the Propagation of the Gospel, Moral Philosophy in a few Years attained to greater Perfection, than ever it had done before, as we may see in the Works of Seneca, Epictetus, Plutarch, M. Antoninus, Maximus Tyrinus, and others.

We may therefore reasonably conclude, that the Precepts and Rules of Morality, which Philosophers all along taught, had their Original from Revelation, rather than from the Strength and Sagacity of their own Reason, because they err in things no less obvi-


h Μετά γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἐκ Σωτήρ τῶν ἑμῶν ἐπιφάνειαν, ήτοι (Plutarchus Numanus, & alii) ἑδραίοι τῆς Χαιρετικῆς Θεολογίας πώλα τοίς οἰκεῖοις αἶμαζόν λογοῖ, Theodoret. Tom. 4. Serm. 2. de Principio. Καὶ μεν ἀπεκτάνetai τῶν ἑως Ἐνασγελίων ὀνεὶ Πλατωνϊχος καὶ οἱ Πλατωνῖδες ὑποκράτασι. Δηλοὶ δὲ τιτο σαφῶς ὁ Ἀυελίδης τῆς Πορφυρίας Πρωτοτοκίας ὑμνίοις, &c. ib. Ἀρκετοὶ τὰ παρὰ Ἀμώαν τοις ἐδακάλκῃ Πλατωνὶς, καὶ Νεκροὶ το Πυθαγόραζ χγωρός, Nemes. de Nat. Hom. c. 2.
ous to Natural Reason; and it appears that they had Opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Scriptures, and that they spared no pains either by reading or Conversation, in their own, or in foreign Countries, in their Search and Enquiries after Truth.

III. If the Heathen Philosophy had been as certain and excellent, as it can be pretended to be, yet there had been great need of a Divine Revelation. For,

1. The Rules of Philosophy lie scatter'd up and down in large and learned Works, mix'd with many wrong and absurd Notions, and therefore must be in great measure useless; how certain and excellent soever they may be in themselves, they can be no Rule of Life to us. No perfect Rule of Manners is to be found in any one Author; and if it were possible to compile such a Rule out of them all, yet what Man is able to collect them? ⅰLaëntius is of opinion, that if all the Truths dispers'd up and down among the several Sects of Philosophers could be collected together into one System, they would make up a Body of Philosophy agreeable to the Christian Doctrine; but then he concludes it to be impossible for any Man to make such a Collection, without a supernatural Assistance. And if there were no other reason for it but this, it is no wonder that we find the ⅺTwelve Tables preferred before all the Writings of the Philosophers. If there be nothing so absurd, as Tully says, but the Philosophers have taught it, then it is necessary that Men should not be left to the Uncertainties and Absurdities of Philosophy: for though some few of them might be free from such Extravagancies, yet their Notions were no Rule or Standard to the rest, and the best were not without many great Errors.

2. The Rules of Philosophy were no better than good Advice, and carried no Authority with them to oblige Men in Conscience; they had not the Force of

ⅰLaënt. i vii. c. 7.  ⅺTull. de Orac. lib. 1.
a Law, and failing in this necessary Point, whatever their intrinsic Worth had been, they never could have had that Effect upon the Lives of Men, which Reveal'd Religion has. Virtue was propounded by Philosophers rather as a Matter of Honour and Decency, than of strict Duty; those were esteemed and admired indeed that observed it, but such as did not, only wanted that Commendation. Some Philosophers spoke great and excellent things, but they past rather for wise Sayings, than for Laws of Nature: Their own Reputation, which was greater or less with different sorts of Men, was the only Authority they had: it might be prudence to do as they taught, but there appear'd no absolute necessity for it. They commonly represented Virtue as very lovely, with many very great and powerful Charms; and all that were of another mind, did not know a true Beauty, and that was an intolerable Disgrace: the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments in the next Life was little insisted upon by them. They recommended Virtue for its own sake, not as it is enjoin'd by God, and will be rewarded by him, and the contrary punish'd; and those, who could not soar to their Heights, were rather the worse than the better for such Doctrines, which they look'd upon as the impracticable Speculations of some, who had a mind to speak great things. And they often spoke the Truth indeed, which they had from Tradition, or from the Excellency of their own Wit and Genius, but they were not able to make it out by any such Principles, as are wont to influence and govern humane Actions. Accordingly we find, that as the several Sects of Philosophy suited to the Tempers and Humours of particular Men, so far they prevail'd, and no farther. The curious and inquisitive betook themselves to the Academicks, the soft and effeminate to the Epicureans, and the morose to the Stoicks; Men apply'd themselves to whatever Opinion they liked best, and found most agreeable to their Nature and
and Disposition. Thus a severe and haughty Gravity made up the Composition of Cato; it had been hard for him to avoid being a Stoick, and he might probably have founded that Sect, if it had not been known in the World before. The Philosophers had no Authority to promise Rewards, or to threaten Punishments upon the Observation or Neglect of their Precepts, and therefore every Man was at his Liberty to choose or to reject what they taught; and divers of them were sensible of this unavoidable defect in all humane Doctrines, and therefore pretended to Revelation.

There is no Inconvenience therefore in supposing, that many of the Precepts contained in the Proverbs, and other Books of Scripture, might be known without a Revelation: for there is notwithstanding very good Reason, why they should be inserted into the Scripture: Because the Scriptures have the Authority of a Divine Law, and are to be look'd upon, not as a System of Ethicks, or a Collection of Moral Precepts, but as a Body of Laws given out upon divers Occasions, and as Rules of Instruction, which at the same time both shew us our Duty and command our Obeydience. It is not expected, that Kings in their Laws should argue more profoundly than other Men do, but they should command more effectually than others can teach; they do not dispute, but pronounce and dictate, what their Subjects must take notice of at their peril. It is no Diminution to a Prince's Authority to command the most known and obvious things, though it may be a Fault in the Subject to need such Commands. And God in his Word did not design to furnish us with a Treatise of Philosophy, to gratify our Curiosity with strange and new Notions, and make us profound Scholars; but to speak to the Necessities of Men, and put them in mind of known Duties, to appeal to their own Consciences, and to enforce those Notions of Good and Evil, which
natural Reason perhaps might suggest to them, by the Authority of a Reveal'd Religion, and a Divine Law, established upon Rewards and Punishments.

3. Though the Philosophers were able to discern something more than other Men, yet they durst not openly declare what they knew, but were over-born with the Errors and Vices of the Times and Countries in which they liv'd, even to the Commission of Idolatry, and the worst of Vices; and therefore their Doctrines, whatever they were, could do but little Good towards the Reformation of the World. I shall not enquire into the Reports concerning Socrates and Plato, Seneca and Cato himself, but only observe, that Socrates, who was the only Martyr among the Philosophers for the Truth, yet when he comes to die, speaks with no Assurance of a future State, and order'd a Cock to be sacrific'd to Æsculapius, which can hardly be reconciled to that Doctrine, for which he is supposed to die. And after his Death, how did his Friends and Disciples behave themselves? Did they openly and courageously vindicate his Innocence, and teach the Doctrine for which he suffered? Did they not use all means to conceal and dissemble it? Did not Xenophon dedicate a Temple to Diana Ephesia? Did not he and Plato envy and oppose each other? But Mankind stood in need of a perfect Example of Virtue, and of such Instructors, as should both teach and practice the Doctrines of it at their utmost peril, and of a Succession of such Men, as should bear Testimony to their Doctrine, both by the Miracles wrought during their Lives, and by the Constancy of their Deaths.

4. As the Heathen Philosophy wanted the Authority of a Law, and the Example of those who taught it; so it wanted the principal Motives to recommend the Practice of it to the Lives of Men. The Phi-

\[\text{Paullan. Eliac. 1. \quad \text{Athenæus, Deipn. l. xx. c. 15.}}\]
fophers teach nothing of the exceeding Love of God towards us; of his Desire of our Happiness, and his Readines to assist and Conduct us in the ways of Virtue. They own'd no such thing as Divine Grace and Assistance towards the Attainment of Virtue, and the Perseverance in it. — *Virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit, nimium reetit: propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, & in virtute reetit gloriarmur, quod non contingere, si id donum à Deo, non a nobis habereamus — nam quis, quod bonus vir effet, gratias Diis egit unquam — Jovemque optimum maximum ob eas res appellant, non quod nos susos, temperatos, sapientes officiat, sed quod salvos, incolumes, opulentos, copiosos. This occasion'd those *insolent Boasts of the Stoicks, equalling themselves to the Gods, and sometimes even preferring themselves before them, because they had Difficulties to encounter, which made their Conquests of Vice, and their Improvements in Virtue, more glorious than they supposed the like Excellencies to be in their Gods, who were good by the Necessity of their own Nature. Yet these very Stoicks could at other times borrow from the Scriptures, this Doctrine of Divine Grace and Assistance, as well as other Doctrines, the better to recommend their Philosophy, after the Propagation of the Gospel, tho' * in plain Contradiction to themselves.

n Tull. de Nat. Deor. 1. 3.
 p Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est. An potest aliquid supra fortunam nisst ab illo adjunctus exurgere; ille dat consilia magnifica & creata, Sen. Epift. 41.
 q Est aliquid quo sapientes antecepat Deum: ille Natura beneficio, non suo sapientes est?, Id. Epift. 31. 53. Quis vos opus est? juc te ipse felicem, Epift. 31. par Deo suares, in. Deus non vinceit sapientem felicitate, etiam si vinceit aetate. Epift. 73. Sed si cui virtuas antemusque in corpore præsens, hic Deus æquat Epift. 92.
Wherefore, tho' the Rules of Philosophy had been never so perfect, yet they must needs be ineffectual, being so difficult to find out, and so unactive and dead, when they were discover'd, without that Authority, and Life, and Energy, that may be had from Divine Revelation, for which there was a Necessity, not only to supply the Imperfections, and correct the Errors of Philosophy, but to enforce the Doctrines of it, tho' they had been never so true and perfect.

C H A P. VI.

The Novelty and Defect in the Promulgation of the Mahometan Religion.

The Novelty of the Mahometan Religion, in respect both of the Old and New Testament, is past all Dispute. And this Religion, notwithstanding all its sensuous Allurement, owes its Propagation solely to the Power of the Sword. For though the Alcoran has been translated into most of the Languages in use amongst Christians, yet it has never been known to make any Proselytes, but by force of Arms, and the Success of those Victories, which have tempted profligate and desperate Men to seek for Shelter under them. At first, this Religion had many Circumstances for its Advantage, which might, in humane probability, gain it Success in the World. It was begun in Rebellion, and in a final Revolt from the Emperor Heraclius; and besides this popular and seducing Temptation of Licence and Violence, Mahomet added the Enticements of Lust and Sensuality. He forbade Men indeed some things, but such as he could easily see they would part with in those Climates for the free and unbounded Enjoyment of others: he pretended likewise to found his Doctrine on the Authority
ritiy of Moses and of Christ, saying, that Christ had promised to send him; all which, made his Religion find the more easy Entertainment amongst both Jews and Christians. The corrupt Lives, and the many Schisms and Herefies of the Christians of that Age, in those Parts of the World, gave great Opportunity to the Rife and Progress of it. 'Twas but like the Herefy of the Gnosticks at the first, and not altogether so gross; and this must needs encline all of seditious and lewd Principles to come in to him, being glad of such a colour for their Wickedness; and it had the advantage of Power and Force to make it more lasting than other such Blasphemies have been.

Christ, on the contrary, forbad Resistance of the supreme Power, upon any terms whatsoever; he asserted the Authority of Moses, but so, as to abolish the ceremonial Part of the Law, which was what the Jews were most fond of: so that this very thing made the Jews the most implacable Enemies of Christianity, and brought Christians into contempt among the Heathen; for nothing could make the Gospel of less Account in their Esteem, than to deduce its Authority from the Books of the Jews, who, soon after the Crucifixion of Christ, became vile and contemptible in the Eyes of all the World. It can be no great Wonder, to see Men drawn into those Vices, under the pretence of Religion, from which no Laws nor Punishments can restrain them; but for Religion that forbids all Vice, under the severest Penalties, to prevail in a vicious World, is truly miraculous. Besides, it is Death, by the Law of Mahomet, to contradict the Alcoran; Men are forbid all Disputation and Discourse about Religion, they are charged to believe none but Mahometans, and to look upon all others as unworthy of all manner of Conversation. So that the Sword in the hands of furious and ignorant Zealots, is the only way by which that Religion was designed to be propagated.

But
But notwithstanding all these Compliances with the Lufts and Passions of Men, if we take in all Ages since the Incarnation of Christ, the Christian Religion (not to mention the Jewish) has had a much larger propagation than ever Mahometanism has had; and has at all times been taught in more Parts of the World, and even amongst Mahometans themselves. And the Alcoran itself ascertaining the Divine Authority and Mission both of Moses and Christ, serves in some measure to propagate the Faith of the Old and New Testament; so far, I mean, as to give an Advantage and Opportunity for Men to make enquiry into them, and become acquainted with them. Divers Books of Scripture are received by Mahometans, the reading whereof has been the means of bringing over many Persons of great Note to the Christian Faith, especially among the Persians, where Disputes in Matters of Religion are permitted; and it has not been without the like effect in Turkey, where such Disputes are forbidden, on Pain of Death.

**C H A P. VII.**

*The want both of Prophecies and Miracles in the Mahometan Religion.*

Mahometanism is grounded neither upon Prophecies nor Miracles. Mahomet indeed calls himself Prophet very solemnly, but we have but this one Instance of his Prophetick Spirit: *When the Prophet went to visit one of his Wives, God revealed*

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*Ricaut’s *Hist. of the Ottom. Emp.* lib. ii. c. 11, 12.
*Alcoran, c. 66.*
of the Christian Religion. 395

to him, what she desired to say to him; he approved one part, and rejected the other: When he told his Wife what was in her will to speak to him, she demanded of him, who had revealed it to him? He that knoweth all things hath revealed to me, that he may be converted: your hearts are inclined to do what is forbidden; if ye act any thing against the Prophet, know that God is his Protector. Here is not one Circumstance to make the Story credible.

Mahomet pretended to no Miracles: But when he has raised that Objection, (as he often doth) That the World would not believe in him, unless they saw some Miracle; he answers, "I am not sent but to preach the Word of God. Tho' afterwards he mentions that ridiculous Story of the Moon’s being divided, in these Words; "The Day of Judgment approaches, the Moon was divided into two parts; nevertheless, Infidels believe not Miracles when they see them; they say that this is Magick; they lie, and follow but their Passion, but all is written. Here is no proof, nor any pretence to it, but only a confident Assertion of a thing ridiculous. And yet unless we will believe this Prophecy, and this Miracle, there is nothing in the whole Alcoran, either of Miracle or Prophecy, to gave it any Authority, except that must be accounted one, which he so often boasts of, viz. its wonderful Doctrine and Eloquence; for he challenges all the World to produce any thing like it, protesting that he could neither write nor read, and therefore must needs have it by Revelation. He tells a fabulous, monstrous Story, of a Journey which he took one Night into Heaven; and he introduces God, swearing to the Truth of the Alcoran, almost in every Chapter: And this is all he offers, in answer to the Suspicions which he so

b Alcor. c. 13.  
c Ibid. c. 54.  
d Ib. c. 10, 11, 16.  
e Ib. c. 7.  
f Ibid. c. 17.  

frequently
frequently suggests Men then had of his being an Impostor.

CHAP. VIII.

The Alcoran is false, absurd, and immoral.

I. THE Alcoran is false; as when it makes the Virgin Mary Sitter to Aaron; when it afferts, that Christ was not crucified, but one like him, in contradiction to the Testimony of the Jews, Christians, and Heathens; and that Christ prophesied of Mahomet by name, without the least proof or ground for it, but against all the Evidence that can be to the contrary.

II. The Alcoran contains things absurd and ridiculous; as in that Story of the Sleepers, the Infidels say they were five, and that their Dog was the sixth, they speak by opinion; but the true Believers affirm them to be seven, and their Dog to be the eighth. And in the Story of Solomon's Army, composed of Men, Devils and Birds; of the Queen of the Pfimires; and Solomon's Discourse with the Bird call'd the Whoop, who brought him Tidings of the Queen of Sheba.

III. The Doctrines of the Alcoran are impious and immoral. Mahomet makes all the Angels worship Adam, in several parts of his Alcoran; and his sensual Paradise is well known, and his Allowance of many Wives; but perhaps his Injustice is not so generally taken notice of, in permitting the Professors of his Religion to take away their Slaves Wives from them.

a Alcor. c. 19.  b Ib. c. 4.  c Ib. c. 61. 
d lb. c. 18.  e Ib. c 27.  f Ib. c. 4. & 23.
The Law of Mahomet proceeds from a savage and cruel Spirit, obliging those that embrace it, to destroy all that are not of it; however, the Mahometans have not always acted according to the cruelty of their Religion, human Nature not being always able to act so much contrary to itself. But this is Mahomet's Doctrine, *God loveth not the unjust, he forgiveth sins to those that believe and extirpate Infidels.* If they forsake it, (the Law of God, pretended to be set down in the Alcoran) kill them where you find them. Be not negligent to pursue the Infidels. Of this the *Faquirs,* at their return from Mecca, are very mindful, with a furious zeal killing all they can that they meet, who are not Mahometans, till they are kill'd themselves, and then they are reputed Saints, and Prayers are made at their Graves.

Such is the Alcoran as we now have it, and yet it is not now as it was at first written by Mahomet, many Alterations have been made in it, by inserting some things, and striking out others, and taking some of the Absurdities away: Mahomet, the Second particularly, is said to have made great Alterations and Additions. *But the Persians,* the Followers of Hali, charge Abu-Beker, Omar, and Ozman, whom the Turks follow, with falsifying the Alcoran.

All Religions are tolerated in the Turkish Empire but the Persian, which is absolutely forbid, as a Corruption of Mahometism. *I* could never yet see, says the learned Dr. Smith*, any Turkish Translation of the Alcoran, Persick Translations are frequent, not being prohibited. I cannot but here observe, that some learned Men have of late suspected, that the Christians of former Ages have misrepresented the Maho-
metans, with whom they liv'd, and against whom they wrote, and have charged them with Errors which they never maintained. But I refer it to the Consideration of any impartial and judicious Man; whether it be not more probable that some Sect of Mahometans did maintain the Tenets alledg'd against them, tho' they may now have long been laid aside and forgotten, than that Christians have objected imaginary and feigned Absurdities, when there are visibly so many real ones, even in the Alcoran it self. Christians applied themselves to the Confutation and Conviction of those with whom they conversed, or against whom they disputed; and they might sometimes perhaps mistake that for a received and common Tenet, which was peculiar to some one Sect or Party.

And thus the Gospel of Hieronymus Xaverius might probably pass, among Mahometans, for the Gospel fes'd by all Christians, and they might reply to it under that Notion. Xaverius indeed wrote and publish'd it, at the Command of an Emperor of Persia: But if his Book had been privately dispersed, whoever had gone to confute it as the Gospel of Christ, would have been thought very ignorant, or very malicious. Tho' now, whatever Mahometan has alledged the Gospel of Xaverius as containing the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, should not be thought to deal insincerely; but by mistake to apply that to Christians in general, which concerned only an erroneous and very corrupt part of them.

The learned Writer of the Life of Mahomet informs us, that Al Gazali, a famous Philosopher of Tufs in Persia, wrote many Books in defence of the Mahometan Religion; and one of more especial Note, intituled, The Destruction of Philosophers, against Alfarabius and Avicenna, and some others of the Arab Philosophers; who, to solve the mon-

m Dr. Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 170.
of the Christian Religion.

"Frous Absurdities of the Mahometan Religion, were for turning many things into Figure and Allegory, which were commonly understood in the literal Sense." And he before observes, that "As the Interest and Designs of the Impostor varied, so was he forced to make his pretended Revelations to vary also. Which is a thing (says he) so well known to those of his Sect, that they acknowledge it; and therefore, where the Contradictions are such, as they cannot solve them, there they will have one of the contradicting places to be revoked. And they reckon in the whole Alcoran above an hundred and fifty Verses which are thus revoked, which is the best shift they can make to solve the Contradictions and Inconsistencies of it."

Now it may well be imagined, that when Figures and Allegories were introduced to serve a desperate Cause, many Zealots, rather than give up so much of the Revelations of their pretended Prophet, would strain their Inventions to find out Glosses however absurd, which were afterwards dropt, and are found mentioned only by Christians, who wrote in contutation of them.

The Contradictions commonly observ'd in the Accounts of Travellers, are principally to be ascribed to this; That they who travel into the same Countries, converse with Men of different Customs and Places of Habitation, and that which seems a Contradiction is very well consistent with Truth; but the mistake of each Relator in delivering that for general, through the whole Country, which is peculiar to one or some few Districts, is that which makes them contradict each other. And it is the same thing as to the History of Doctrines and Opinions: Tenets less known or observable might fall under the Censure and Contutation of particular Men, and may remain to Posterity in their Writings, tho' not yet discovered in

*Dr. Prideaux ib. p. 155.*
any Remains of Mahometan Authors. But it is probable, that great Discoveries may in time be made by Men learned in the Arabick Tongue, which may free the Greek Writers from the Imputation of Ignorance or In sincerity. It must be confess'd, that no Controversy in any kind of long continuance, has been always managed with a like Accuracy; but weak Arguments and false Allegations, may, through Ignorance or Inadvertency, sometimes have been used. Notwithstanding, what has generally been insisted upon by many Authors of Reputation, probably must have some Foundation of Truth. And it is much more credible, that barbarous Nations should forego Opinions, which they were not able to maintain, than that they should be charged with what none of them ever held, when the Tenets, which their Religion certainly advanced, afforded as great advantage to their Adversaries.

C H A P. IX.

Of Mahomet.

A fter this Account of Mahomet's Alcoran, there will be no need to say much of his Person. The general Doctrines of the Alcoran shew him to have been lustful, proud, fierce and cruel; but as if that were not enough, he has taken care to insert such Particulars concerning himself, as to suffer no Man to be ignorant of the Spirit and Temper, by which he was guided in penning it. He blasphemously introduces God thus speaking to him, "O Prophet, we permit thee to know the Women, to whom thou hast given Dowry, the Women-Slaves, which God hath given thee, the Daughters of thine Uncles, and of thine Aunts,"

e Alcor. c. 33.
Aunts, that have abandoned with thee the company of the wicked, and the true believing Wife, that shall be given thee, if thou wilt marry her, and that she be not the Wife of a true Believer. It seems he gave himself the Liberty to take away the Wives of any that were not of his Religion. Thou shalt retain whom of thy Wives thou shalt desire to retain, and shalt repudiate such as thou shalt desire to repudiate, and shalt lie with them that shall please thee. By this means his Family of Wives became pretty numerous; some say they were fifteen, others say one and twenty, beside Concubines; and therefore it was fit he should take some care to keep them true to him, and so he be-speaks them after this manner: "Oh! ye Wives of the Prophet! such of you as shall be unchaste, shall be punished doubly more than other Women; this is a thing easy to God: such among you as shall obey God and his Prophet, and shall do good Works, shall be rewarded more than other Women, an exceeding great Reward is prepared for you. Oh, ye Wives of the Prophet! ye are not like other Women of the World; fear God, and believe not in the discourse of such as have a Design to seduce you; speak with Civility, abide in your Houses, go not forth to make your Beauty appear, and to make a Shew, as did the ignorant of old. This explains what was mention'd before of a Revelation Mahomet pretended to have concerning something that one of his Wives was to say to him: he had a mind to make them believe that he knew whatever they did or said, that so he might keep them in awe, that they might not dare to prove false to him.

His Pride is evident in this which follows, "Ye that believe, enter not into the Houses of the Prophet without permission, except at the Hour of Repast, and that by chance, and without design; if ye are invited, enter with freedom, when ye shall have taken your Re-

\[\text{Vol. I.}\]

\[\text{Alcor. c. 33.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{past.}\]
past, depart out of the House, and tarry not to discourse one with another, this molesteth the Prophet, he is ashamed to tell you the Truth. But this is not all, his Number of Wives made him incurably jealous, and therefore he adds, you ought not to importune the Prophet of God, neither to know his Wives, this would be a most enormous Sin.

The Fiercenes of Mahomet's Spirit may be seen by this one Saying, 'He that is angry that God giveth Succour and Protection to Mahomet in this World, let him tie a cord to the Beam of his House, and hang himself, he shall see if his Choler will be allay'd. It is notorious, that he set up his New Doctrine first in oppressing his own Country-men, who would not submit to his Imposture, and afterwards in Rebellion against the Emperor Heraclius, then at War with the Persians; and his Alcoran is fit only for a Saracen Camp, preaching Lust to his Followers, but Blood and Destruction towards all others.

This may satisfy any Man, that there is nothing in the Author of the Mahometan Religion, nor in the Religion itself, which may incline him to believe it to be of Divine Revelation. But whoever would know more of this vile Imposture, may see it fully display'd in the Life of Mahomet, lately publish'd by the Learned Dr. Prideaux.

d Alcor. c. 22.
THE REASONABLENESS AND CERTAINTY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

That there is as great Certainty of the Truth of the Christian Religion, as there is of the Being of God.

From what has been discours'd, the Truth of the Christian Religion is evident, by all the Arguments, by which any Religion can possibly be proved to be Divine; and if there be any such thing as true Religion, the Christian Religion must be it: And if this be made appear, it is all that need be said in defence of the Christian Religion, to any one but an Atheist.

The Scriptures are defective in nothing that is requisite in a Divine Revelation, but have all that can be required in the highest degree. To instance here only in Miracles, and in those only of our Saviour and his Apostles: Our Saviour wrought his Miracles
in the midst of his Enemies, and extorted a Confession from the Devils themselves, of his Divine Power. And if the Apostles had not been well assured, and absolutely certain of his Resurrection, they would never have had the Confidence, and the Folly (for it could have been no less) to maintain so soon after his Death in Jerusalem, the City where he was crucify'd that he was risen from the Dead; they would never have chosen that, above all places, to preach this Doctrine, and work their Miracles in, if they had not been true: at least, they would never have done it, at the great and solemn Feast of Pentecost, to provoke the Jews to expose them to all the World for Impostors; no they would have taken time to have laid their Design with some better Appearance and Contrivance: to be sure, they would have avoided Jerusalem as much as they could, and above all times, at so solemn a Festival as that of Pentecost; they would have gone rather to the remotest Corners of the Earth to have told their Story, than have run the Hazard of such a Discovery. But when they stood the test of all that the Jews could say or do to them, when in that very City, where he had been so lately crucify'd, they told the Jews to their Face, and before that numerous Concourse of People, which was then met together at Jerusalem, that they were Murthers; that they murdered their Messias, but that he was risen from the Dead, and that by virtue of his Resurrection they spoke those Languages, and did those Works, which they then saw and heard: This was plain and open Dealing, and there could be no Deceit in it. If any thing of this could have been disproved, they had been for ever silenced: but their worst Enemies were so far from being able to disprove what they said, that about three thousand Converts were made on the Day of Pentecost.
of the Christian Religion.

The innocent and divine Life of our Saviour, the Holiness and Excellency of his Doctrine, the Simplicity and Meekness, and Constancy of his Disciples, the Continuance of Miracles for several Ages in the Church, the wonderful Propagation of the Gospel by a few poor, ignorant, despised, and persecuted Men, every Passage, every Circumstance, in the whole Dispensation of the Gospel, is full of Evidence in proof of it. But thus much in this place shall suffice, all Particulars having been largely insisted upon in their proper places.

That no manner of Confirmation might be wanting to our Religion, Apostates themselves have given to all the Arguments above-mention'd, an additional, accidental Strength and Force, which they so little need. Judas had been the Disciple and constant Attendant of Christ, and knew all that an Accuser would desire to know of one, whom he had betray'd. But what could he lay to his Master's Charge? Could he discover, or durst he invent, any thing against him? Did he not die in the Confession of Christ's Innocence, and of his own Guilt in betraying him? Porphyry had taken great pains in studying all the Sects of Philosophy, and in examining all Religions; but he became such an Enthusiast, that no Philosophy, no Religion, could please him: He represented Socrates under a very ill Character, but gave this Testimony of Christ, after he had renounced the Christian Religion; that he was a most pious Person, and is gone to Heaven, and ought not to be reviled. The Emperor Julian had been a Reader in the Church, and had exact Knowledge of the manner of Life and Discipline and Doctrine among Christians; he had all the Opportunities of acquainting himself with whatever the Jews or Heathens, for-

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*b* *Apud* Euseb. *Demonstr.* *i.* *3.* *c.* *6.*

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merly or in his own time, had suggested, and knew how to make the most Advantage of any thing, that fell under his own Observation, or which he had learnt by the Information of others, against a Religion, which all his Power, and Learning, and Subtilty, were employ'd to destroy. Yet this Apostate Emperor, recommended the Charity, Piety, and good Conversation of the Christian Bishops to the Imitation of his own Priests: He could not deny the Miracles of Moses and Elias, and of Christ himself. For what reason, but because he found it impossible to disprove them? He had the Roman Archives in his possession; Why did he not confute what Justin Martyr and Tertullian had publish'd from them, concerning the Birth of Christ, and the Acts of Pilate relating to his Miracles and Resurrection? Would he have had Recourse to remote Arguments, and tedious Reasonings, if the Jews, whom he so highly favour'd in Opposition to the Gospel, or any other Enemies of Christianity, could have furnish'd him with Evidence against the Matters of Fact, upon which our Religion entirely depends?

And since, as sure as there is a God, there must be a Reveal'd Religion; if any Man will dispute the Truth of the Christian Religion, let him inftance in any other Religion that can make a better Plea, and has more Certainty that it came from God; let him produce any other Religion that has more visible Characters of Divinity in it, and we will not scruple to be of it. But if it be impossible for him to shew any such (as has been proved) then he ought to be of this, since there must be some Reveal'd Religion; and if this Religion, which has more Evidence for it, than any other Religion can be pretended to have, and all that it could be requisite for it to have, suppo-

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fing it true, and which it is therefore impossible to
discover to be false, if it were so; if this Religion be
not true, God must be wanting to Mankind, in what
cconcerns their eternal Interest and Happiness; he
must be wanting to himself, and to his own Attri-
butes of Goodness, Justice and Truth. And there-
fore he, that upon a due Examination of all the Rea-
sons and Motives to it, will not be a Christian, can
be no better than an Atheist, if he discern the Con-
sequence of things, and will hold to his own Princi-
ples; for there can be no Medium, if we rightly
consider the Nature of God, and of the Christian
Religion; but as sure as there is a God, (and no-
thing can be more certain) the Gospel was reveal'd
by him.

CHAP. II.
The Resolution of Faith.

Having proved the Truth and Certainty of our
Religion, I shall in the last place, upon these
Principles, give a Resolution of our Faith, which is
a Subject that has caused such unnecessary and un-
happy Disputes amongst Christians in these latter A-
ges; for in the Primitive Times, this was no matter of
Controversy, as indeed it could not then, and ought
not now to be.

I. Considering the Scriptures only as an History,
containing the Actions and Doctrines of Moses and
the Prophets, and of our Saviour and his Apostles,
we have the greatest humane Testimony, that can
be, of Men, who had all the Opportunities of know-
ing the Truth of those Miracles, &c. which gave E-
vidence and Authority to the Doctrines, as Reveal'd
from God, and who could have no Interest to deceive
others
others, but exposed themselves to all manner of Dangers, and Infamy, and Torments, by bearing Testimony to the Truth of what is contain'd in the Scriptures; whereas Impostures are wont to be invented, not to incur such Sufferings, but to avoid them; or to obtain the Advantages and Pleasures of this World. This Testimony amounts to a moral Certainty, or as it is properly enough called by some, to a moral Infallibility, because it implies a moral Impossibility of our being deceived by it: such a Certainty it is, as that nothing with any reason can be objected against it. We can have as little reason to doubt, that Christ and his Apostles did, and suffered, and taught, what the Scriptures relate of them, in Jerusalem, Antioch, &c. as that there ever were such Places in the World; nay, we have that much better attested than this, for many Men have died in Testimony of the Truth of it.

II. This Testimony being considered with respect to the Nature of the thing testified, as it concerns eternal Salvation, which is of the Greatest Concernment to all Mankind, it appears that God's Veracity and Goodness are engaged, that we should not be deceived inevitably in a Matter of this Consequence: So that this moral Infallibility becomes hereby absolute Infallibility: and that which was before but Humane Faith, becomes Divine, being grounded not upon Humane Testimony, but upon the Divine Attributes, which do attest and confirm that Humane Testimony; and so Divine Testimony is the ultimate Ground, why I believe the Will of God to be delivered in the Scriptures; it is no particular Revealed Testimony indeed, but that which is equivalent to it, viz. the constant Attestation of God by his Providence. For it is repugnant to the very notion of a God, to let Men be deceived, without any possible help or remedy, in a matter of such importance. And thus we have the ground of our Faith absolutely infal-
infallible, because it is evident from the Divine Attributes, that God doth confirm this Humane Testimony by his own.

III. The Argument then proceeds thus: If the Scriptures were false, it would be impossible to discover them to be so; and it is inconsistent with the Truth and Goodness of Almighty God, to suffer a Deceit of this nature to pass upon Mankind, without any possibility of a Discovery; therefore it follows, that they are not false. Here is, 1. The Object, or Thing to be believed, viz. that the Revelation delivered to us in the Scriptures, is from God. 2. The Motive or Evidence to induce our Belief, viz. Humane Testimony. 3. A Confirmation of that Testimony, or the Formal Principle and Reason of our Belief, viz. The Divine Goodness and Truth.

The Object therefore, or Thing believed, is the same to us that it was to those who saw the Miracles by which the Scriptures stand confirmed, viz. the revealed Will of God: and the Ground or Foundation of our Belief, is the same that theirs was, viz. the Divine Goodness and Truth, whereby we are assured, that God would not suffer Miracles to be wrought in his own Name, according to Prophecies formerly delivered, and with all other Circumstances of credibility, only to confirm a Lie. The only difference then between the resolution of Faith in us, and in the Christians who were converted by the Apostles themselves, is this, that tho' we believe the same things, and upon the same grounds and reasons with them, yet we have not the same immediate Motives or Evidence to induce our Belief; or to satisfy us in these Reasons, and convince us, that the Revealed Will of God, contained in the Scriptures, is to be believed upon these grounds; that is, to satisfy and convince us, that the Belief of the Scriptures being the Word of God, is finally resolved into the Authority of God himself; and is as well certified to us,
as his Divine Attributes can render it. For they were assured of this from what their own Senses perceived; but we have our Assurance of it from the Testimony of others.

The Question therefore will be, whether the Motives and Arguments for this Belief in us, or the means whereby we become assured, that the Revealed Will of God is contained in the Scriptures, be not as sufficient to produce a Divine Faith in us, and to establish our Faith upon the Divine Authority, as the Motives and Arguments which those had, who lived with the Apostles, and saw their Miracles, could be to produce that Faith in them, which resolved it self into the Divine Authority. And this Enquiry will depend upon these two Things: 1. Whether we may not be assured of some things as certainly from the Testimony of others, as from our own Senses. 2. Whether this be not the present Case, relating to the Resolution of Faith. I shall therefore consider in the first place, the Certainty which we have for the Matters of Fact, by which the Authority of the Scriptures is proved and confirmed to us, compared with the Evidence of Sense, and will then apply it to the Resolution of Faith.

I. In many cases Men seem generally agreed, that there is as much cause to believe what they know from others, as what they see and experience themselves: For there may be such Circumstances of Credibility, as equal the Evidence even of Sense it self. No Evidence can satisfy Sense so much indeed, nor perhaps so much affect the Passions, as that of Sense; but there may be other Evidence, which may give as clear Conviction, and altogether as good Satisfaction to our Reason, as that which is immediately deriv'd from our Senses, concerning the Being of Objects, or the Truth of Matters of Fact. Thus those who never travelled to the Indies, do as little doubt that there is such a Place, as those who have been never so oft
ten there; and all Men believe, there was such a Man as Julius Caesar, with as little scruple as if they had lived in his time, and had seen and spoke with him. I suppose no Man in his Wits makes any more doubt, but there are such Places as Judea and Jerusalem, from the constant Report of Historians and Travellers, than if he had been in those Places himself, and had lived the greatest part of his Life there: and the greatest Infidel that I know of, never pretended yet to disbelieve, that there was such a Person as our Saviour Christ. But all Men think themselves as well assured of things of this nature upon the Credit of others, as if they had seen them themselves. For how doubtful and intricate forevery some things may be, for want of Knowledge or Credit in the Relaters, yet there are other things delivered with that Agreement and Certainty on all hands, that to doubt of them would be as unreasonable, as to doubt of what we our selves see and hear.

And if our Saviour's Resurrection, for instance, be of this nature, we can with as little reason doubt of it, as if we had lived at that time, and had conversed with him after his Resurrection from the Dead. But we have as great Assurance that he was alive again after his Crucifixion, as that he ever lived at all; and we have at least all the Assurance that there was such a Person as Christ, that we can have, that there once lived any other Man at that distance of time from us. We can no more doubt, that our Saviour was born in the Reign of Augustus Caesar, and was crucified under Tiberius, than that there were once such Emperors in the World; nay, we have it much better attested, that Christ was born, and was crucified, and rose again, than that there ever were such Princes as these two Emperors: for no Man ever made it his Business to go about the World to certifie this, and to testifie the Truth of it at his Death. But the Apostles themselves, and their Disciples
ciples and Converts, and innumerable others ever since, from the beginning of Christianity, have asserted the Particulars of the Life, and Death, and Resurrection of our Saviour, under all Dangers, and Torments, and Deaths; and have made it their great aim and design, both living and dying, to bear Testimony to the Truth of the Gospel. So that a Man may as well doubt of any Matter of Fact that ever was done before his own time, or at a great distance from him, as doubt of these Fundamentals of the Christian Religion; and yet there is no Man, but thinks himself as certain of some things at least, which were done a long time ago, or a great way off, as if he had been at the doing of them himself.

Indeed, in some respects we seem to have more evidence than those could have that lived in the beginning of Christianity; for they could see but some Miracles, we have the benefit of all; they relied upon their own Senses, and upon the Senses of such as they knew and conversed with; we upon the Senses of innumerable People, who successively beheld them for the space of divers hundred Years together: So that whoever will not believe the Scriptures, neither would he believe, though one rose from the Dead; that is, though the greatest Miracle were wrought for his Conviction. This was said of the Old Testament, and therefore may with greater reason be said of That and the New both.

And we have besides, one sort of Evidence, which those that lived at the first planting of Christianity, could not have; for we see many of those Prophecies fulfilled, which our Saviour foretold concerning his Church; we know how it sprang up and flourished, and from what small and unlikely Beginnings it has spread itself into all Corners of the Earth, and continues to this day, notwithstanding all the malice of Men and Devils to root it out, and destroy it. The Continuance and Success of the Gospel under so impre-
improbable Circumstances, was matter of Faith chiefly to the first Christians, but to us is matter of Fact, and the Object of Sense: they saw the Work indeed prosper in their hands; but their Faith only could tell them that it should flourish for so many Ages, as we know it has already done: This is a standing and invincible Proof to us, at this distance of time, and has the force of a two-fold Argument, the one of a Power of Miracles, the other of Prophecies: we know that a miraculous Power has been manifested in conquering all Opposition, and in a wonderful manner bringing those things to pass, which to human Wisdom and Power are altogether impossible. And the fulfilling hereby of Prophecies, is a visible Confirmation to us of the Truth of those Miracles, which, by the Testimony of others, we believe to have been done by the Prophets, whose Prophecies we see fulfilled. And since it must be acknowledged that things may be so well attested, that we may with as much reason doubt of the Truth of our own Senses, as of the Authority, by which we are assured of the Truth of them, and must turn Scepticks, or worse, if we will not believe them; we may conclude, as well upon the account of these Prophecies, which we our selves see fulfilled, as upon all other accounts, that the Historical Evidence in proof of the Christian Religion, amounts to all the Certainty that a Matter of Fact is capable of, not excepting even that of Sense it self.

II. Let us now apply all this to the Resolution of Faith, and give an Account how a divine and infallible Faith may be produced in us. Human Testimony is the Motive by which we believe the Scriptures to contain God's Reveal'd Will: This certifies us, that such Miracles were wrought, and such Prophecies delivered, as give to the Scriptures the full Evidence and Authority of a Divine Revelation. If therefore it be enquired, why we believe the Scriptures to be the
the Word of God? The Answer is, upon the account of the Miracles and Prophecies, which concurring with all other requisite Circumstances in a Revelation, confirm the Truth of them. If it be ask'd, how we know that these Prophecies and Miracles are true and effectual, and not feigned or insufficient? I answer, because we have them so related and attested, that considered barely as Matter of Fact, they have all the Credibility that any Matter of Fact is capable of, and therefore may as safely be relied upon, as any thing which we do ourselves see or hear. If it be farther urged, that for all this I may be deceived, since all Men are fallible, and no Man is infallibly assured that there is such a Place as Rome who never saw it; tho' no Man neither can any more doubt of it, than he can doubt whether there be any such Place as London, who lives in it. I acknowledge, that there is a bare Possibility of being deceived in all human Evidence; but yet I deny that we can possibly be deceived in this case, because, though the Evidence itself be human, yet the things which it concerns are of that nature, that God would never suffer the World to be thus long imposed upon in them, without all possibility of finding out the Truth. So that here we resolve our Faith into the Divine Authority, by reason of the same Miracles, by reason whereof the Eye-witnesses of them did resolve theirs into it; but they believed these Miracles as seen by themselves, and we believe them as seen and witnessed by others; but both they and we believe them as the Works of God himself.

It might have been allledged, if we had seen those Miracles, that we might possibly be deceived; and so indeed we might, if we could not have securely relied upon God's Truth and Goodness, that they were designed by him to confirm the Doctrine, for the sake of which they were wrought: And we may with equal Security rely upon the same Truth and Goodness.
of the Christian Religion.

Goodness for the Certainty of the History of them, as we could have done for the Sufficiency of them to the purpose for which they were wrought, though they had been performed in our Sight; since it is as impossible to find out any Deceit in the Account given of them, as it would have been for us to find any in the Miracles themselves at the time of their performance.

Human Testimony is the Conveyance and the Means of delivering the Truth contained in the Holy Scriptures down to us; and we, who could neither see the Miracles nor hear the Doctrines at the first hand, have at this distance of time the Truth of them ascertained by a continued successive Testimony, 'till we arrive at such as were immediate Witnesses of them. Now, those that saw and heard all things which are delivered to us in the Scriptures, could not esteem their Senses infallible; but they, notwithstanding, believed our Saviour and his Disciples to be so, of whom yet their Senses only could give them means of assurance, that they were infallible. They knew their Senses might deceive them, (or that they might be mistaken concerning the Objects of Sense) but nevertheless, they believed that our Saviour and the Apostles could not deceive them, upon this only ground, that their Senses or their Reason, by Deduction from Sense, told them so. There was not one Man of them, perhaps, but had often observed his Senses misrepresent Objects to him; and yet, in this case, upon the sole Testimony of their Senses, they grounded an infallible Faith: Because, though their Senses had misrepresented Objects, yet it was in a wrong medium, at an undue distance, or by reason of some Indisposition of the Sense itself; and still their Senses, or rather their Reason by the help of their Senses, discovered that their Senses had led them into Mistakes. But in the present Case, when the Object was placed in open and frequent
frequent view, to the greatest advantage, when it was publick and exposed to Multitudes, when all agreed in the same Opinion concerning it, and when the Matter was of infinite Importance; here they had reason to conclude, that the God who framed their Senses, would not suffer them to be so hurtful to them, as they must needs have been, if they had been deceived by them. In like manner, in the Testimony, which descends to us from former Ages, we see with other Mens Eyes, and hear with other Mens Ears; and though the Testimony of others may often fail us, and is subject to a double Inconvenience through the Incapacity and Unfaithfulness of Witnesses; yet, as in the former case, so here, when all Circumstances are weighed and considered, and, after the utmost Trial, no Reason can be found to with-hold our Assent, but all things stand undisprovd, and no just Scruple appears, but only a bare possibility of being deceived; and this arising, not from any defect, but that of human Nature it self, here God's Goodness and his Truth must needs interpose, to take away that only Impediment, which otherwise must unavoidably hinder any thing from ever being known to be infallible.

The only Certainty which we can have, that our Senses are true, is this, That God will not suffer them to be deceived, where the Disposition of the Medium and Distance of the Object, and all other Circumstances, are rightly qualified: because that would be inconsistent with his Attributes of Justice, Goodness and Truth. But it would be inconsistent with these Attributes, not upon the Account of our Bodies; for they would be provided for as well, though our Senses were deluded; we should see, and hear, and taste, just as we do now, though we were never so much deceived in these Sensations: therefore the Truth, and Goodness, and Justice of God, are engaged not to suffer us to be deceiv'd, in respect to
to our Souls, not in regard to our Bodies; and if we have no Certainty that our Senses do not deceive us, but because God would not suffer such a Cheat to be put upon us, as we are intelligent and rational Beings; we have the fame and much greater Reason to conclude, that he would not suffer us to lie under such a Delusion, in reference to our eternal Interest. If God would not suffer our Minds unavoidably to lie under a temporal Delusion of no great consequence; have we not much more Reason to conclude, that he would not suffer us unavoidably to be deceived by any means whatsoever, in reference to our eternal Interest? For in this case, to be deceived is to be destroyed; and to suffer it, is a thousand times worse, than if he should suffer all Mankind at once, not only to be deceived by their Senses, but to be poisoned by that Deceit: And therefore the special Providence and particular Care of God, must be concerned to prevent it. If we have nothing to object but the Imperfection of humane Nature, we may rely upon God, that this shall never mislead us, in a matter of such consequence, whether the Imperfection be in our Senses, or in the Testimony of others. In short, the Miracles related in the Scriptures will as effectually prove a Divine Revelation to us, as they could to those that saw them; but the difference is, that they believed their Senses, and we believe them; and all things considered, we have as much reason to believe upon their Evidence, as they could have to believe upon the Evidence of their Senses.

Let us consider History as a Medium, by which these Miracles become known to us, and compare this Medium with that of Sight. If a Man would be sceptical, he might doubt whether any Medium of Sight be so fitly disposed, as to represent Objects in their due Proportion, and proper Shape: he might suspect that any Miracles which he could see, were false, or wrought only to amuse and deceive him, and

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there would be no way to satisfy such a one, but by telling him, that this is inconsistent with the Truth and Goodness of God. So in this other Medium of History, which to us supplies the want of that of Sight, a Man may doubt of any Matter of Fact, if he pleases, notwithstanding the most credible Evidence; but in a Matter of this Nature, where our eternal Salvation is concern'd, we may be sure, God will not suffer Mankind to be deceived, without all possibility of discovering the Deceit. The Circumstances have all the Marks of Credibility in them; and therefore, if they be duly attended to, cannot but be believed; and the Doctrine of which they are brought in Evidence, being propounded to be believed, under pain of Damnation, requires that they shall be attended to, and consider'd: and that, which is in its Circumstances most credible, and in its Matter is supposed necessary to Salvation, must be certainly true, unless God could oblige us to believe a Lye. For not to believe things credible, when attended to and known to be such, is to human Nature impossible; and not to attend to things proposed, as from God, of Necessity to Salvation, is a very heinous Crime against God, and to think that God will suffer me to be deceived in what I am oblig'd, in Honour and Obedience to him, to believe, upon his Authority, is to think he can oblige me to believe a Lye.

But it may be objected; If this be so, how comes it to pass, that they are pronounced blessed, who have not seen, and yet have believed, John xx. 29. which seems to denote, that a peculiar Blessing belongs to them, because they believe upon less Evidence. I answer, that they are there pronounced Blessed, who had so well considered the Nature and Circumstances of things, the Prophecies concerning the Messias, and what our Saviour had delivered of himself, as to believe his Resurrection upon the Report of others not
not because others might not have as sufficient grounds for their Belief, as those who saw him after his Resurrection, but the Evidence of Sense is more plain and convincing to the generality of Men, tho' Reason proceeds at least upon as sure and as undeniable Principles. A Demonstration, when it is rightly perform'd, is as certain, as the self-evident Principles upon which it proceeds, though it be so far removed from them, that every one cannot discern the Connexion. Demonstrations may be far from being easy and obvious, but are oftentimes, we know, very difficult and intricate, which yet, when they are once made out, are as certain as Sense itself. The Blessing is pronounced to him, who believes not upon less Evidence, but upon that which at first seems to be less, which is less observable, and less obvious to our Consideration, but not less certain, when it is duly consider'd. For which Reason our Saviour, after he had wrought many Miracles, that were effectually attested by sufficient Witnesses, required Faith in those who came to be healed of him, because the Testimony of others was the means, which in Ages to come, was to be the Motive of Faith in Christians, and he thereby signified to us, that there may be as good Grounds for Faith upon the Report of others, as we could have from our own Senses, and generally those who came in Unbelief, went away no better satisfied. Wherefore it is said, that in his own Country, because of their Unbelief, he could do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them, Mark vi. 5. The same Evangelist acquaints us that our Saviour said, that the Children of the Bride-Chamber could not fast as long as the Bridegroom was with them, Chap. ii. 19. Not for want of Power certainly, but because it was not fit and proper for them. And he could not do his mighty Works, because they would be ineffectual, and would be lost upon them, he could do nothing insignificant
or in vain: If they would reject what had been so fully witnessed to them, they would not believe, whatever Miracles they should see him do. *Luke x. 23.*

the Disciples are pronounced *blessed*, because they had seen the Miracles of our Saviour, and heard his Doctrine. Which is very well consistent with the Blessedness here ascribed to those, who had believed what they had never seen. The Disciples were blessed, in those Means and Opportunities granted them, beyond what others enjoyed: Those, who had not the same Evidence, were blessed, in that they, by the Grace of God, overcame those Difficulties which stood in the way; and had the same Faith with them, who had not the same Temptations to Incredulity. For he is said to be a happy Man, who obtains his End without Difficulties to encounter, before he can arrive at it; and he likewise is accounted remarkably happy, who overcomes all Opposition to gain his End. And those in the middle State, who find some Difficulties, but not so much considerable, are such, as in respect of both the other, are esteemed less happy in the manner and means of obtaining it, tho' the Event be the same, and they attain the Enjoyment of the same End.

Our Saviour cannot be supposed in either of these places to speak of the final State of Blessedness in Heaven, and to determine at one time that they shall there enjoy more Happiness, who *have seen*, and to declare at another, that they shall be more happy, who *have not seen*. For how can it be consistent, that Men should be peculiarly entitled to the Blessedness of Heaven upon so opposite Terms, some for having seen, and others for not having seen? But our Lord speaks of the Blessedness of the means of Salvation, with respect to the greater or less Difficulty which accompanies them. The Words are spoken of the time present: *Blessed are the Eyes, that see the things which ye see; and Blessed are they, that have not seen,*
seen, and yet have believed. And no Man can conceive, that all, who had believed upon the Report of others, should upon this account and consideration be advanced to greater Degrees of Blessedness in Heaven, than St. Thomas, and the rest of the Apostles. But our Saviour gives St. Thomas a gentle Re-proof for his Incredulity, by telling him, that since he did not believe, till he had been compelled to it by the utmost Conviction, that any Man can receive from his own Senses in any case; It was a very happy and blessed thing for the generality of Christians, that they were not so difficult and slow of Belief, but could believe without the same Means which had been afforded him, but was not vouchsafed to them. If all Men were as diffident as he had been, how few would be saved? But it was happy for other Christians, that in this they were not like him.

It is very remarkable, that amidst all his Miracles, our Saviour directs his Followers to Moses and the Prophets, and appeals to the Scriptures for the Authority of his very Miracles, and that even after his Resurrection, he instructs his Disciples, who saw and discourse’d with him out of the Scriptures, to confirm them in the Truth of it, Luke xxiv. 26, 27. He requires the Jews to give no greater Credit to his own Miracles, than that which he implies, they already gave to the Writings of Moses, so as firmly and steadfastly to believe that he came from God. And we having all the Helps and Advantages which the Jews had to create in them a Belief of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and many more and greater Motives (if it be possible) to believe those of the New, must therefore have sufficient means to excite in us that Faith which our Saviour required of those who saw his Works, and heard his Doctrine; which certainly was a Divine Faith, and all the Faith, which if it be accompanied with sincere and impartial Obedience, is required in order to Salvation.
Upon the whole Matter, I conclude, that the Truth of the Christian Religion is evident even to a Demonstration: for it is as demonstrable that there is a God, as it is that I myself am, or that there is any thing else in the World; because nothing could be made without a Maker, or created without a Creator; and it is as demonstrable, that this God being the Author of all the Perfections in Men, must himself be infinitely perfect; that he is infinitely Wise, and Just, and Holy, and Good; and that according to these Attributes he could not suffer a false Religion to be imposed upon the World in his own Name, with such manifest Tokens of Credibility, that no Man can possibly disprove it, but every one is obliged to believe it.